

THE ROMAN DE LA ROSE AND CHAUCER

by

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I. GENERAL COMMENTARY

In the history of French and English literature, the Roman de la Rose occupies a place both typical and unique. Even in its own time the Roman was extremely popular, and there are still some three hundred manuscripts of it which have come down through the ages, and there were certainly many more in circulation which have been lost or destroyed. Within the Roman are found many of the attitudes and topics that most concerned the medieval man---woman, the clergy, courtly love, religion, philosophy and allegory itself. The work is unique for as many varied reasons as it is typical, and the most prominent of these, perhaps, is that the work is the effort of two men who were fantastically diverse both in their interests and in their abilities, and who, because of this, produced what is in all respects but one not a single, coherent work, but two.

We know very little of Guillaume de Lorris, who began the work, and a great deal of what we do know about him comes to us from Jean de Meun, who continued and completed the Roman some forty years after Guillaume's death. In what must have been an attempt to preserve some knowledge of both authors, lest other facts about them be destroyed or lost, which unfortunately was not uncommon, Jean concealed his explanation of the circumstances which caused him to continue the work within the poem itself. At line 10526 he introduces Guillaume's name:

Vez ci Guillaume de Lorris,
Qui Jalousie, sa contraire,
Fait tant d'angoisse e de deul traire
Qu'il est en perill de moutir
Se je ne pens dou secourir.¹

And at line 10561 he continues:

Ci se reposera Guillaume,
 Li cui tombleaus seit pleins de baumes,
 D'encens, de mirre e d'aloe,
 tant m'a servi, tant m'a loé!
 Puis vendra Johans Chopinel
 Au cuer joli, au cors inel,
 Qui naistra seur Leire a Meun,

(III, 166, 10561-567)

telling us who he is and where he was born. We then learn that Jean continued the work about forty years after Guillaume's death:

Car, quant Guillaume cessera,
 Johans le continuera,
 Empres sa mort, que je ne mente
 Anz trespassez plus de quarante,

(III, 167, 10587-590)

The exact dating of either portion is rather difficult, as neither Jean nor Guillaume is specific about the time he began or finished writing. Jean does mention the death of Manfred in 1266, but not the crowning of Charles of Anjou, king of Sicily, as king of Jerusalem in 1277.² Thus his work was probably completed, for the most part, shortly after 1267, putting Guillaume's portion somewhere around 1225-1227. This, of course, is purely hypothetical. We know that Guillaume was an aristocrat and fairly learned, although not erudite, for he believed Scipio a king.³ He knew Latin, and his purpose in writing the Roman was evidently to bring Ovid's Art of Love up to date, as we see in Love's lecture to the lover. A more enticing theory is that he began writing the Roman as the result of a personal experience: that Guillaume was carried away with his love or desire for a young girl who greeted him with Bel

Acueil; that he was so forward that he frightened the girl and she drew back from him (Dangier repelling Bel Acueil); that the would-be lover saw his mistake and decided on a more moderate course (asking only to kiss the rose); but for one reason or another the girl was lost to Guillaume (Bel Acueil imprisoned and given La Vieille as a guard, the girl herself given a nurse). Considering what we know of Guillaume's character and personality, this theory is not improbable. He may have decided to set down the entire episode in allegorical form, treating it with all the tenderness and delicacy of feeling he must have had for the girl herself. Guillaume died before he was able to complete the work, and Jean, as he tells us himself, determined to finish the job.

And finish it he did. Born Jean-sur-Meu or Jean Clopinel (Limping John), with temperament and tastes which made him completely unsuitable for the task, with apparently no interest in or talent for allegory, he added to Guillaume's rather meagre 4058 lines of poetry another 17722 of his own. It does not take long to realize that Guillaume's delicate, allegorical love story has been brought down to earth with the sharp, painful intrusion of reality. Jean was interested in the actual, and the Roman is not the only evidence of this. Jean translated the de re Militari of Vegetius; the Marvels of Ireland of Giraldus Cambrensis, which is lost; the Letters of Abelard and Eloise; a treatise of the English monk Alfred; and the de Consolatione Philosophiae of Boethius. Besides all this, he wrote

the Testament, a poem of 2175 twelve-syllable lines, between 1291 and 1295, and may have written the Codicille, a poem of eleven strophes of eight lines each. Jean died not later than November 6, 1305, for on this date "la maison ou feu maistre Jehan de Mehun apuloit demourer" was given to the National Archives.⁴ His home on the Rue Saint-Jacques was regarded as a landmark until it was destroyed around 1550.

The materials that Guillaume and Jean relied upon in formulating the Roman are not unusual, nor is the medium of allegory. The use of dreams has been frequent in literature, and in medieval times they were divided basically into two categories---those apocalyptic in nature and sent by God, and those which were merely fantasies and delusions. This tradition, complete with horn of ivory, goes down to Spenser, who made good use of it in his own work. The apocalyptic dream appeared frequently in French literature until the thirteenth century, when its popularity began to decline. Guillaume is therefore unique, not in his use of the dream, but in his use of the dream as a device, as a method of developing his allegory, without questioning the origin or purpose of that dream. Coupled with this is the fact that the so-called "natural opening" had been used in Old French, Provençal and Middle Latin poetry, and by this time had become common to love poetry as well as to religious and theological poetry, so that Guillaume's appropriation of this was not new either.⁵ Guillaume, being an aristocrat, employed the courtly style and tradition in writing. In twelfth

century France the entire tradition had undergone a type of narrowing: rather than following the exploits of a hero on a crusade or other adventure in an exotic, far-off land, the emphasis had shifted to the progress of a single love affair in a single place---often a garden. The ideals of chivalry were, however, extremely important and Guillaume adopted and adhered to them completely. Guillaume was in no sense a rebel, and part of the charm of his poem arises from the careful, gentle way in which he treats the subject. Since courtly love is, above all, adulterous, Guillaume's accomplishment is not a small one. In keeping with his subject he uses the courtly style--- high and rather elevated in tone, ornate in detail, with detail realistically describing those objects which are not real, and in general keeping to the chivalric ideal of the lover who speaks prettily and well.

Guillaume did have more specific sources than these. The use of dreams was so widespread it is difficult even to attempt to catalogue them---in the Bible we find Joseph's dreams and Jacob's ladder side by side with the Book of Revelations; in Latin literature Boethius helped develop the dream motif; medieval Irish literature is filled with visions in which a saint sees hell, purgatory, heaven, or all three, and this tradition inspired the Apocalypse of St. Paul, an apocryphal work in which the angel Michael lifts Paul up so he can see the miseries of earth, the City of Christ, and Hell and Paradise with all the Old Testament fathers there.⁶

The use of allegory was also widespread, particularly in religious and philosophical works connected with the Bible--- the parables, the Jewish exegesis, the gnosis of Alexandria and the allegories of Philo the Jew. Prudentius in Psychomachia (248-ca. 410) depicts the battle of the Vices and the Virtues, and Martinus Capella's Nuptials of Philology describes Philology's marriage to Mercury and the birth of their children, the seven liberal arts. And "A la fin du douzième siècle et au commencement du treizième, lorsque Guillaume de Lorris entreprit le Roman de la Rose, la poésie allégorique était en pleine florison. C'est l'époque où pérurent l'Anticlaudianus et le de Planctu Naturae, d'Alain de Lille; le Besant de Dieu, de Guillaume le Clerc; le Roman des Eles, le Songe d'Enfer, la Voie de Paradis, de Raoul de Houdan; le Tournoiment d'Antichrist, de Huon de Méry; les deux romans de Carité et de Miserere, du reclus de Molliens; les Bestiaires,... et une foule d'autres compositions au même genre."⁷ Raoul's Romance of the Wings (Roman des Eles) portrays chivalry as a dove whose wings represent Largesse (generosity) and Courtoisie (courtesy), and are made of wondrous feathers. Love is depicted in this work as taking the form of a rose, of wine and of an endless sea.⁸ Alain de Lille's (Alanus de Insulis) Anticlaudianus was probably completed in the 1180's and is one of the best allegories of the twelfth century. Alain, who died in 1202, was probably a Fleming who taught in Paris, and was called "Doctor universalis" by his contemporaries. In the Anticlaudianus Nature tries to act perfectly but cannot

without the aid of her heavenly sisters---Concord, Plenty, Favor, Youth, Laughter, Shame, Modesty, Reason, Dignity, Prudence, Piety, Faith, Virtue and Nobility. They all decide to make man a mirror of their powers, and Wisdom carries Prudence and Reason to God. With the help of Theology they procure man a soul. Alecto and her evil forces gather together to battle the Virtues, but good ultimately triumphs.⁹

Coupled with this is the Ovidian tradition---the translators, imitators and interpreters who found so much fascination in Ovid. Guillaume used Andreas Capellanus's *De arte honeste amandi* (1174-1186). Crétien de Troyes was evidently the first Frenchman to translate Ovid, around 1160, but this work is lost and the exact nature of it uncertain. There were "pas moins de trois du treizième siècle; celle d'Elie, celle de Jacques d'Amiens et la *Clef d'Amours*."¹⁰ Ernest Langlois also considers the influence of *Pamphilus*, an anonymous twelfth century poem, extremely important. It is a dialogue, "une sorte de drame dont les personnages mettent en pratique les conseils donnés par Ovide dans ses poèmes sur l'amour..."¹¹ There are four characters---a young girl, Galatee; a young man, Pamphile; Venus; and an old woman, La Vieille. Pamphile's situation and his reactions to it are quite similar to those of Guillaume's lover, and the old woman, La Vieille, has enough spirit that she might plausibly be the specific inspiration for Jean's later expansion of the character.

Jean's sources, on the other hand, are in some respects

more general and in others more particular. He was familiar with all the known ancients of his day and at one time or another they all turn up in his poem. Since he was not an allegorist, he did not concern himself with allegorical precedents, and his main literary sources are Alain's de Planctu Naturae, Boethius's de Consolatione Philosophiae, Ovid and Guillaume de Saint-Amour, to which he reacts rather than imitates. All the main topics of discussion at that time, and some of his own invention, pop up throughout the poem whether the story demands it or not, for, in truth, Jean was not particularly concerned with what the story demanded. He used the plot-line only as a vehicle for introducing those subjects he preferred to talk about and for eventually bringing Guillaume's tale to a happy conclusion. Side by side with those "known ancients"---Aristotle, Plato (Timaeus), Virgil, Ovid, Horace, Juvenal and Lucretius---we find lectures about mythology, the clergy, metaphysics and theology. Jean, because of his satire and learning, is sometimes called the "Voltaire of the Middle Ages."¹² To quote C. S. Lewis, "It was the misfortune of Jean de Meun to have read and remembered everything; and nothing that he remembered could be kept out of his poem."¹³

The tone of Jean's portion is far removed from that of Guillaume, as is his subject matter. He was a member of the bourgeois class and wrote in the manner of the fabliau---humorous, lightly didactic and sometimes satirical.¹⁴ A man of many opinions about practically everything, Jean does not sermonize---

not, probably out of any belief that he should not moralize or direct his reader, or even because the nature of his opinions was such that they were irreconcilable, but rather because his interest appears to be in airing and expressing his views, and his pleasure in putting down as many ideas as he can. He writes with great energy if not always at a tolerable length, and often his enthusiasm seems to increase in proportion to the length of time he deals with that topic, as a sense of proportion and appropriateness is not one of his stronger qualities. Jean's style had an impact of its own on Chaucer, who happily had both a sense of the appropriate and of the right proportion for any given piece, and who refined and transformed this style into his own. In Chaucer we can find evidence of the influence of both Guillaume and Jean.

Guillaume uses the rather standard eight-syllable line, with caesura in the middle, with two strong accents on either side of it. The very construction of the French language is such that these accents are less strong than we would normally assume them to be in English, and the rise and fall of the verse is somewhat more restricted to the English ear. This slight monotony of accent or tone is exactly what aids Guillaume in conveying the delicate image, and in sustaining that atmosphere, for the reader. He unites his lines in rhymed couplets. Guillaume uses a great many feminine rhymes and this also adds to the ethereal quality of the allegory. The rhyme words themselves are not as emphatic in French as in English, as in French

each syllable receives equal emphasis, or very nearly so. With this technique Guillaume tells his story. When he was twenty he fell asleep:

Ou vintième an de mon eage,
 Ou point au'Amors prent le paage
 Des jeunes gens, couchiez m'estoie
 Une nuit, si con je s'loie,
 E me dormoie mout forment;
 Si vi un songe en mon dormant
 Qui mont fu biaux e mont me plot;
 (II, 2, 21-27)

and what he is going to tell:

Ce est li Romanz de la Rose,
 Ou l'art d'Amors est toute enlose,
 (II, 3, 37-38)

Already we have a clear picture of the youthful courtly lover, fresh and eager, who has been enlisted to recount his dream. He communicates his joyous enthusiasm to us:

Jolis, gais e pleins de leece,
 Vers une riviere m'adrece
 Que j'oi pres d'illueques bruire;
 (II, 6, 103-5)

This is the river of life, and the youth follows it to a garden which is enclosed by a wall. This is the garden of love, and along the wall are pictures of those who cannot enter the garden. Among these are Hate, Felony, Covetousness, Avarice, Envy, Old Age, Papelardie or Hypocrisy, Illness, Poverty, Sadness and others who are unsuitable, for any reason, to enter the garden. Again we recall that this is a garden of physical love, for Old Age and Illness are also sufficient to keep one out. Papelardie is chastity, which equals hypocrisy when a maiden chooses not to submit to a lover's wooing on ostensibly

religious grounds, when in fact her refusal may be based on completely different criteria---such as tormenting the lover a little---or she may not want to refuse at all. The exclusion of Poverty and Sadness reminds us also that this garden is reserved for courtly lovers only. The lover meets the portress Idleness (Oiseuse) and her friend and lord of the garden Pleasure (Dedit). Only those having time for pleasure can enter the garden; performing the duties of a courtly lover is certainly time-consuming, and the rising middle class and peasants had no time to indulge in the pleasures Guillaume speaks of.

Occasionally Guillaume uses a semi-refrain, similar to a leit-motif or a key theme of Verdi, which recalls something either vague or definite---a mood or emotion, a particular image or event.

D'oisiaus chantanz avoit assez
(II, 33, 643)

Ces autres oisiaus par chanter
(II, 34, 656)

Tant estoit cil chanz douz e biaux
Qu'il ne sembloit pas chant d'oisiaus
(II, 35, 669-70)

These occur separately in a passage where the youth is wandering about the garden, admiring its beauty, and in it we see some of the exquisite description of which Guillaume is so capable:

Melles i avoit e mauviz,
Qui beoient a sormonter
Ces autres aillors papegaus,
E mainz oisiaus qui par ces gauz
E par ces bois ou il abitent,

En lor bel chanter se delitent,
 Trop par faisoient bel servise
 Cil oisel que je vos devise.
 Il chantoient un chant itel
 Con fussent ange espiritel;
 E bien sachiez, quant je l' oi,
 Mout durement m'en esjoï;
 Qu'onc mais si douce melodie
 Ne fu d'ome mortel oïe.
 Tant estoit cil chanz douz e biaux
 Qu'il ne sembloit pas chant d'oisiaus,
 Ainz le peüst l'en aesmer
 A chant de sereines de mer,
 Qui, por lor voiz qu'eles ont saines
 E series, ont non sereines.

(II, 34-35, 654-74)

The fluidity of the Old French and the absence of very strong accents, coupled with the soft sh, l, s, and z sounds all help convey the overwhelming beauty of the bird's song.

The lover continues wandering through the bird-haunted garden, admiring the fennel and mint, and soon comes across Mirth, Gladness, Beauty, Riches, Largesse, Franchise and Courtesy dancing around the God of Love, who retains his identity throughout the work as Venus's son and quite distinct from her. Guillaume describes the characters and the encounter, and through his words each one, despite the fact that they are all abstractions, is delineated in a different way: the lover notices, for example, that Gladness's eyes laugh before her mouth. He also encounters Douz Regarz, who represents the look of the woman he desires. (Later the lover will meet Douz Pensers and Douz Parlers, the sweet thoughts and the sweet speech of his beloved, but Guillaume, at this point in the lover's progress, allows him only Douz Regarz.)

In his description of the garden, Guillaume again uses repetition as a unifying device:

Ou vergier mainte espice
Close de girofle e ricalice
(II, 70, 1342-43)

Ou vergier ot arbes domesches
Qui charjoient e coinz e pesches,
Chastaignes, noiz, pomes e poires,
Nesfles, prunes blanches e noires.
(II, 70, 1347-50)

Ou vergier ot dains e chevriaus,
(II, 71, 1375)

The beautiful May morning, the birds, the forbidding wall and wicket gate, the lush, ripe garden, all have a tremendous impact on the young lover, but this is the physical atmosphere in which love must thrive. The youth then sees, underneath a pine tree, a "pierre de marbe" (II, 74, 1432) from which a fountain springs---the fountain of love. And "dedez la pierre escripts" (II, 75, 1435) is the legend "Se mori li biaux Narcissus" (II, 75, 1438). Guillaume briefly recounts the story of Narcissus and the lover then notices two crystal spheres in the bottom of the fountain which reflect everything in the garden. These, probably, are the eyes of the lady.

This small excerpt, taken from the very beginning of the poem, represents the major influence of Guillaume's portion of the work. That influence is primarily one of form, and the bright May morning, the birds, the dream and the dreamer, the lovely lady whose descendants are exact copies of her in looks and dress, the garden, the fountain and the rose or rose tree

all become the standard equipment for the dream poems of the future. Guillaume's imitators were able to reproduce the device, but not the touch of delicate description and individuality which kept Guillaume's abstractions alive, not flat and stereotyped, and his garden fresh and fragrant, not sterile.

One of the objects the lover sees reflected in the spheres is a beautiful rose tree surrounded by a thorny hedge;

Ou miroer entre mil choses,
Choisi rosiers chargez de roses,
Qui estoient en un destor,
D'une haite clos entor;

(II, 84, 1615-18)

The lover is attracted immediately by the rose tree and by one bud, still tightly closed, that is perfuming the air. The rose represents, for the lover, the ultimate attainment of the lady's love. He goes right over to pick the flower:

E quant jon senti si flairier
Je n'oi talent de repairier
Ainz m'aprochasse por le prendre,
Se j'i osasse la main tendre;

(II, 87, 1671-74)

But before he can pick it:

Mais chardon agu e poignant
M'en aboient mout esloignant;
Espines trenchanz e agües,
Orties e rounces crochues
Ne me laissoient avant traire,
Car je me cremoie mal faire.

(II, 87, 1675-80)

These lines convey the lover's stunned amazement at what has happened to him. In a garden as lovely as this, perhaps the last thing he would have expected is an attack; but his assailant is the "dieu d'Amors," who, after all his assistants have

sufficiently bombarded the astonished lover with their arrows, demands that he yield. Naturally enough, the young man offers no objection to this. The god wishes to instruct the paralyzed lover in the proper deportment of a man about to become Love's servant:

Qu'Amors, qui toutes choses passe,
Me donoit suer e hardement
De faire son comandement,
(II, 93, 1790-92)

This is the portion in which Guillaume brings Ovid up to date, just as in Andreas, and Love takes a "petite clef" and locks the young man's heart. Love advises the young man to be courteous, kind, to speak well, to be generous and tells him that:

C'est Douz Penses, qui lor recorde
Ce ou Esperance s'accorde.
Quant li amanz plaint e sospire,
E est en duel e en martire,
Douz Penses vient a chief de piece,
Qui l'ire e la dolor despiece,
E a l'ament en son venir
Fait de la joie sovenir
Que Esperance li promet;
(II, 134, 2645-53)

At line 2767 Love vanishes and the lover is left on his own. From here on the tempo of the allegory picks up and the story bears a passing resemblance to the adventure story. The youth Bel Accueil comes to assist him. Bel Accueil is sympathetic, helpful but not aggressive, mild in manner and rather easily shocked. And since, through Bel Accueil, the lady has shown that she is receptive, Bel Accueil takes the lover inside the hedge. Bel Accueil offers him a leaf from the tree, but the

lover, youthful and impatient, wants the rose instead. His audacity shocks the sensitive Bel Accueil. At this time, also, the flower-leaf controversy was still at its peak in France, and this episode would have had a special pertinence for the medieval reader.

The presumption of the lover wakes and alerts Dangier, who drives the lover back outside the hedge and puts Bel Accueil to flight. Having been so strongly repulsed, the lover sits down to think the matter over more rationally, particularly since he now has no other immediate option, and Reason enters the picture. She rebukes the lover for the course he has undertaken, and in a sense she is a rival of the lady, presenting an opposite course to the youth. She explains that the rose is too well guarded for him to continue his suit. From his response we can draw the same moral as did the medieval man, and as men will probably continue to do so long as love exists in its earthly form. The youth ignores Reason's just and careful case; he has no opposing argument---his only answer to her is will, volonté:

"Dame, je vos vueil moult prier
Que me laissiez a chastier.
Vos me dites que je refraigne
Mon cuer, qu'Amors plus non soapreigne:
Guidiez vos donc qu'Amors consente
Que je refraigne e qu' je dente
Le cuer qui est siens trestoz quites?
Ce ne puet estre que vos dites:
Amors a si mon cuer denté
Qu'il n'est mais a ma volonté;

...
Je voudrois morir ançois
Qu'Amors m'eust de fausseté

Ne de traison areté.
 Je me vœuil loer ou blasmer,
 Au derrenier, de bien amer;
 Si m'enuie qui me chastie.

(II, 155-6, 3075-84,
 3090-95)

Seeing that she is doing no good, Reason leaves, and the lover approaches Dangier to ask if he might love the rose at a distance. Pity, a force within the lady, is also her enemy and is working for the purposes of the lover. She persuades Dangier to bring back Bel Accueil and allow the lover once more within the hedge. Again presumptuous, he asks Bel Accueil to let him kiss the rose. Bel Accueil, however, has nothing to do with this end of things because of Chastity. Venus decides to intervene, and at her touch Bel Accueil grants the youth his wish. As the God of Love is lord of the garden and has instructed the lover in the proper conduct and code of the courtly lover, he represents a refined and disciplined love, whereas his mother represents a natural sexual response. That she has allowed the young man so much frightens the lady herself, and she immediately summons all her forces about her for defense. Jealousy and Evil Tongue (Male Bouche) accost Shame, who must defend Bel Accueil for his lapse of duty and discretion. Shame says he will guard Bel Accueil more carefully in the future, but Jealousy wants Bel Accueil imprisoned anyway. They build a special castle with a large tower and put the unhappy Bel Accueil in it with La Vieille, the old woman, to guard him. The castle has a moat around it to keep the lover

out, and Shame, Male Bouche, Rangier and Fear guard each of the castle's four gates. The Lady has been given a nurse to guard her "Bel Accueil" which seems to act on its own volition.

Guillaume again employs the refrain in the lover's lament for the imprisoned Bel Accueil:

E Bel Accueil est en prison,
(II, 195, 3916)

Que Bel Accueil fu en prison
(II, 199, 3995)

Ha! Bel Accueil biaus dous amis,
(II, 200, 4003)

Ha! Bel Accueil, je sui de voir...
(II, 202, 4047)

This is where Guillaume's portion of the allegory ends, and, to be more accurate, this is also where the allegory ends. At line 4058 Jean picks up the story. He uses the same verse form as Guillaume, but in his hands the poetry becomes less descriptive and more concerned with action, the metre jerky and abrasive. To quote C. S. Lewis, "What Jean really does is to substitute a third-rate literal story for a first-rate allegorical story, and to confuse the one with the other so that we can enjoy neither."¹⁵ Despite the justice of Mr. Lewis's comment, we are still able to enjoy both, providing we remember that underneath his wooly exterior the sheep has turned into a wolf.

Because of all this turmoil and hostility the lover wavers in his allegiance to Love. Reason sees her chance and flies down again. Reason is the only abstraction which retains

her former identity without much change, except that Jean's Reason is more long-winded than Guillaume's. Reason had a definite appeal for Jean, as his own interests lay in that direction, and this is probably why he could not pass up the opportunity to bring her back again, even though her function, as far as Guillaume was concerned, was over.

Jean gives Reason a speech of about three thousand lines, and this comprises the first of nine digressions which are held thinly together by the remains of Guillaume's story. Reason speaks of youth, generosity, age, Charlemagne, poverty, hypocrisy, Ptolemy's Almageste, Lucretius, Greece, ancient history and mythology, Plato, fidelity---and the list goes on. Into this speech Jean introduces the idea that courtly love is hypocritical, and that it is only a parody of Divine Love, an idea that would indeed have shocked Guillaume. Reason views sex as "noble in its place and not to be repented of," and is both surprised and shocked when the lover accuses her of being indecent.¹⁶ She has learned her speech from God Himself:

"Beaus amis, je puis bien nomer,
Senz mei faire mal renomer,
Apertement, par propre non,
Chose qui n'est se bone non;
Veire dou mal seurement
Puis je bien paler proprement,
Car de nul rien je n'ai honte,

...

Se je nome les nobles choses,
Par plain texte, senz metre gloses,
Que mes peres en paradis
Fist de ses propres mains jadis
E touz les autres estrumenz
A soutenir nature humaine,
Qui senz aus fust or casses e veine;"

(III, 24-5, 6945-51,
6957-64)

The lover has no answer to this except to respond that at least God did not call these things by those names.

The lover then thanks Reason for her help and, once more, she leaves. We are then introduced to a new character, Ami, whom Jean invents to be a friend to the lover. Ami assures the lover that Dangier is not really so fierce after all and suggests that he deceive the guardians of the gates. It is becoming increasingly apparent that the lover and Ami view Dangier and his assistants as real flesh-and-blood foes, and that the delicate play between the lady and the gentleman is coming to an end. Ami then launches into his own digression of one thousand lines---Digression II, which includes reflections on the Golden Age when there was no marriage, and Ami's energetic assaults on women in the guise of a jealous husband, addressing his wife. In a sense, part of La Vieille's sermon is an answer and balance to this speech.

The action then resumes and Richesse refuses to let the lover enter the castle by way of much-giving because she does not know him. The God of Love then summons all his forces for an all-out attack on the castle, and he foresees that Jean will complete Guillaume's story (here Jean explains how he came to write his part of the Roman). Everyone decides that Venus should be called, but the God of Love explains he cannot call her at will; this makes explicit the distinction between

Venus and her son. False-Beeming (Feux Semblant), who is there with Constrained Abstinence to make up the two aspects of religious hypocrisy, explains why he is good to have around in Digression III of one thousand lines. He also inveighs against the mendicant orders and the clergy in general. These two dress as pilgrim and friar and persuade Male Bouche to be shriven. When he kneels down they strangle him and throw him overboard into the moat. This harsh treatment of the subject is far from Guillaume's story, and we realize that the last shred of allegory has disappeared.

Courtoisie and Largesse then join the group, and La Vieille trundles off to prepare Bel Accueil for the lover's forthcoming visit. She has developed a great liking for Bel Accueil and prepares a chapelet of flowers for him to wear. He demurs---a hesitation more suitable to Shame or Fear---and then accepts. And he accepts because of his vanity---a trait we attribute to women and which is not appropriate to the gentle Bel Accueil:

Bel Accueil, senz dire autre chose,
 Le chapel prent, e si le pose
 Seur ses crins blons, et s'asseüre;
 E la Vieille le rit e jure
 S'ame, son cors, ses os, sa pel,
 Qu'one ne li sist si bien chapel.
 Bel Accueil souvent le remire
 Dedenz son miroer se mire,
 Saver s'il est si bien seianz:

(III, 254, 12727-35)

La Vieille then goes off into a highly autobiographical "sermon" for some two thousand lines, which constitute

Digression IV. She speaks first of her past loves and beauty, and elaborates a little on the wiles women use to trap their men. She also asserts that marriage takes away a woman's natural freedom, her natural rights, and because of this she will spend the rest of her life trying to regain that lost freedom. On these grounds she defends all promiscuity, referring all the while to classical mythology.

When all has been made ready the lover goes up to the tower and again asks for the rose. This time Dangier, Shame and Fear chase him out. The main body of Love's army comes to assist, and after an unexciting skirmish Love sends a messenger to Venus, who is with Adonis. Digression VI tells their story. Venus comes to help and she and the God of Love decide to demolish the opposing garrisons. Jenn then introduces Nature working at her forge. She is striving to keep ahead of Death, who catches all individuals, but not the inviolable form. So Nature keeps stamping out new coins to prevent his overtaking her. She is glad to hear that love will out, and in four thousand lines of Digression VII she talks the matter over with Genius, God of Reproduction. Nature decides to send Genius to Love's army with a pardon for all the barons because they have broken Nature's laws. When Genius gets there he gives his own little two thousand line sermon in Digression VIII. When he finishes all the barons cry "Amen," and Venus demands that the castle surrender, which it will not. She aims her bow at an image as fair as the one Pygmalion loved, and in Digression IX

Jean tells their story. Venus shoots her fiery arrow, the castle catches fire and the defenders flee. Bel Accueil is rescued, and he gives the lover the rose.

Thus the tale is brought to its conclusion. The final battle reminds us of an Indian assault on a cavalry outpost, and it is clear that Jean has forgotten, if indeed it ever mattered to him, that these originally were not real characters at all but abstractions, and that the fight he just recounted would have been impossible in the allegory Guillaume intended. But if Jean fails at allegory, he is a wonderful poet when he describes Nature and enters the realm of natural description:

Que Nature fist onques maistre;
Car, or seit que bien entendissent
Sa beauté toute, e tuit vousissent
A tel pourtraiture muser,
Ainz pourraient leurs mains user
Que si tres grant beauté pourtraire.
(IV, 137-8, 16204-9)

The more he tries to describe her, the less he knows what to say. And although his descriptions are not lush, as are Guillaume's, his are the more natural and fresh.

The entire Roman was an instant success. Rutebeuf's Voie de Paradis (composed after 1261) and Thibaut de Champagne's Roman de la Poire (1237-70) were both influenced by Guillaume, and the latter may be the first French poem to conceal names in acrostics.¹⁷ On the walls of the room Chaucer describes in the Book of the Duchess the story of the entire Roman is portrayed. "Mais ce ne sont là que des représentations imaginaires. Plus réelles" are the following tapestries: Jacques Dourdin gave to

the Duke of Burgundy in 1386, who was called Philippe le Hardi, some tapestries "Sur l'histoire du Roman de la Rose" (I, 41), as did Pierre Beaumetz in 1387 and Nicolas Bataille in 1393.

The Roman also provoked a great deal of controversy, but this was Jean's work, not Guillaume's. Christine de Pisan's Epistre au Dieu d'Amors formulated all La Vieille's complaints about the insults and deceitfulness of men, and Bousicant, Granson and Saneere wrote the Livre des Cent Ballades.¹⁸ On the other hand, Jean de Montreuil exhorted his friends to write defenses of the Roman: "The more I study...the gravity of the mysteries and the mystery of the gravity of this profound and famous work of Master Jean de Meun, the more I am astonished at your disapprobation."¹⁹ Jean Gerson, chancellor at the University of Lille, denounced the "vicious romaunt of the rose," and if there were only one copy and it were worth a thousand pounds, he would sooner burn it than sell it to be published.²⁰ On May 18, 1402, he wrote another, stronger denouncement of the Roman which was answered by Pierre Col, and in 1444 Estienne Legris, canon of Lisieux, composed a Repertoire du Roman de la Rose.²¹

In some two hundred of the three hundred manuscripts of the Roman there is appended to Guillaume's poem an eighty line conclusion by an anonymous poet. Presumably this was added during the forty year lapse when Guillaume had died and Jean had not yet begun the work. Nonetheless, this tail continued to be included with the entire poem when both parts were

completed. In inferior verse, the addition tells how Pity, Beauty, Bel Accueil, Loyalty, Douz Regarz and Simplece all come out when Male Bouche falls asleep and they present the rose to the lover. He is allowed one night with the rose and then it is returned to its prison (II, 330). In modern additions of the work this part is usually omitted.

Soon French poets began to adapt Guillaume's formula of the May morning, the garden, the dream and the birds; in their hands these crystalized into conventions. One of the most prominent of these poets is Guillaume de Machaut, who was also a skilled musician. He is said to have created or perfected the fixed forms---the ballade, rondeau, virelai.²² Machaut also invented a genre of his own, the "dit"---half narrative, half lyrical---and the Fontaine Amoureuse (or Le Livre Morpheus) is one of these. It uses a garden much like Guillaume's, and is significant as it employs a delayed dream technique, the dream coming practically at the end of the poem. The shift in emphasis from the dream to theorizing about love indicates again that the dream has been diminished to a convention, and this is very clear in another of Machaut's works, Le Dit dou Lyon, which Chaucer says he translated. Machaut's chief preoccupations were with the "fine-spun niceties and laboured technicalities of the dominant system of courtly love," and from his poetry alone an "ars amatoria" for the fourteenth century could be compiled, including all the secret symptoms of the lover---the rapid changes in the lover's color between white,

red, black, and bluish-green; the shuddering and shivering; the flushing and paling; the starting, swooning, reeling and writhing.²³

Machaut is somewhat like Jean in that he can write vivid and beautiful descriptions when not pursuing his favorite themes. Closer to Guillaume's freshness and simplicity are some of the works of Froissart. He is best known for his Chronicles, although he himself wanted to be remembered as a poet. His poems are usually conventional, despite the fact that in L'Espirette Amoureuse and the Chronicles he introduces much entertaining autobiographical material. When Froissart uses the dream setting, the dream usually slips into the background in favor of some other theme or interest.

Eustache Deschamps was a disciple and possibly a relative of Machaut, although he injects autobiographical details into his work as does Froissart. He is more a direct descendant of Jean de Meun than anyone else, although he lacks much of Jean's power. He is a satirist, cynic, critic and moralist. Deschamps and Chaucer may have met, but it is certain that Deschamps knew that Chaucer had translated the Roman. Deschamps sent him at least one ballade and the Miroir de Marriage, which Chaucer apparently enjoyed. Deschamps calls him "Socrates plein de philosophie," as well as Seneca and Ovid, and has great praise for Chaucer as a translator:

Tu es d'amours mondains dieux en Albie,
et de la Rose, en la terre Anglique,
"

En bon anglès le livre translatas;
 et un vergier ou du plant demandas
 de ceulx qui font pur eulx auctorisier,
 a ja longtemps que tu edifias,
 grant translateur, noble Geffroy Chaucier. 24

Considering Chaucer's knowledge of French and of French writings, it is not surprising that he undertook, probably during his apprenticeship, the translation of the Roman de la Rose. We know from Deschamps and from Chaucer himself that he did exactly this. In the Prologue to the Legend of Good Women we are told that Chaucer has offended the God of Love by writing Troilus and by translating the Roman and must therefore write the legend about women faithful in love to atone for this.²⁵ The question is, is the manuscript we have of that translation the work of Chaucer? If it is, there is no reason why the God of Love should have been offended by it, for it is completely within the courtly tradition and is a translation of Guillaume's work, not Jean's.

Two English versions of the work are preserved: one from the Chaucer folio of 1532, now part of the Hunterian collection at Glasgow; the other in Bell's edition of 1856. The beginning and ending of the translation are faithful to the French version, but the middle portion is not, and this fact suggested a multiple authorship to several scholars. Until 1893 Chaucerian scholars believed the English Romaunt divided itself into two unequal parts. The first, they believed, ran to line 5169, with a break of one hundred lines after 4842. The second portion picked up five thousand lines later at 10716 and ran to

12564, the end. On this premise a lively discussion developed about 1870 as to whether or not this was Chaucer's work. In 1870 Professor Child of Harvard declared it was not, and in 1880 Skeat published a detailed account of the reasons why he agreed with Child. Skeat based his argument on three points: that one hundred and ninety words appeared nowhere else in Chaucer but in this work, that there were too many northern and midland forms for the work to be genuine, and that there were too many imperfect rhymes for the poem to be attributed to Chaucer. Dr. Lounsbury in 1892 declared that indeed the work was Chaucer's, remarking that the nature of the work may have called for words Chaucer would not otherwise have used, that Chaucer was quite evidently familiar with the northern dialect, and suggested that the quality of the scribes was poor, accounting for the imperfect rhymes.²⁶ This brought a counter-argument from Kittredge later that year.

The entire picture changed in 1893 when Professor Kaluza demonstrated there were not two fragments but three. Fragment A goes from line 1 to 1705 and there is little question but that this is Chaucer's own. Fragment B goes from line 1706 to 5810 and contains nearly all of the imperfect rhymes and northern forms, and is not as faithful to the French. The last fragment, C, is like A in its fidelity to the text, contains a few false rhymes and may be the work of an accomplished Chaucerian.²⁷ Unfortunately none of this settles the question of Chaucer's writing the Legend as an atonement, for the portion he transla-

ted is, again, from the first part of the Roman.

Because Chaucer wrote in Middle English and not Old French, his work is affected by this as well as by his own handling of the material. He keeps the octosyllabic couplets with the two accents on either side of the caesura. These accents are usually much stronger than in Guillaume's French. In some cases Chaucer has taken a rather jerky passage and has made it smooth and regular:

Mout a dur cuer qui en m'aime,
Quant il ot chanter sor la raine
As cisiaus les douz chanz piteus.
(II, 5, 81-83)

and Chaucer's:

Hard is the hert that loveth nought
In May, when al this mirth is wrought,
Whan he may on these braunches here
The smale briddes syngen clere
Her blisful swete song pitous.
(566, 85-89)

The stronger accents, the hard h and ought sounds, the liquid g's make Chaucer's rendition of this passage much more insistent, fresh and alive. Although Chaucer can render Guillaume's verse very melodically, he is not the delicate poet the Frenchman was, and where Guillaume's delicate touch is most evident, in English the vigor of the language prevents this. Here the lover first spies the garden:

Quant j'oi un poi avant alé,
Si vi un vergier grant e lé,
Tot clos de haut mur bataillié,
Portrait dehors e entaillié,
A maintes riches escritures.
(II, 7, 129-33)

Tho gan I walke thorough the mede,
 Downward ay in my pleiying,
 The ryver syde costeiyng.
 And whan I had a while goon,
 I saugh a garden right noon,
 Ful long and brood, and everydell
 Enclosed was, and walled well
 With highe walles embatailled
 With many riche portreitures.
 (566, 132-41)

Guillaume's lover is walking slowly and lightly by a river, but Chaucer's lover swings along merrily until he pauses to remark about the wall around the garden. The lover then notices the portrait of Hate:

Enz en le milieu vi Haine,
 Qui de sorroy e d'ataine
 Sembla bien estre moveresse;
 Corroceuse e tenconeresse,
 E pleine de grant cuvertage
 Estoit par semblant cele image;
 Si n'estoit pas bien atornee,
 Ainz sembloit fame forsenee.
 (II, 8, 139-46)

Anydde saughe I Hate stonde,
 That for hir wrathe, yre, and onde,
 Semede to be a moveresse,
 An angry wight, a chideresse;
 And ful of gyle and fel corage,
 By semblaunt, was that ilk image.
 (566, 147-52)

Chaucer's Hate is far more vivid and fearsome than Guillaume could make her. And Covetousness:

Après fu pointe Covoitise;
 C'est cele qui les genz atise
 De prendre e de neient doner,
 E les granz avoirs aüner;
 C'est cele qui fait a usure
 Prester mainz por la grant ardire
 D'avoir conquerre e assembler;
 (II, 9-10, 169-75)

And next was peynted Coveitise,
 That eggeth folk, in many gise,
 To take and yewe right nought ageyn,
 And gret tresouris up to leyn.
 (567, 181-84)

By Chaucer's time it was becoming "progressively rarer for French dream-poetry of the fourteenth century, which carried on the tradition of the Roman de la Rose, to be consistently allegorical."²⁸ The introduction of real people had become much more common, although the longer narrative poems still borrowed abstractions from Guillaume occasionally. In the Book of the Duchess there is no God of Love, for Chaucer had substituted real figures---Blanche and John of Gaunt---for the allegorical figures. Also, rather than having the dream as an end in itself, Chaucer uses it as part of an overall effect, as a kind of elegy, with many comic touches mainly due to the ignorant and naive narrator:

Me thoughte thus: that hyt was May,
 And in the dawaynyge I lay
 (Me mette thus) in my bed al naked,
 And loked forth, for I was waked
 With smale foules a gret hep
 That had affrayed me out of my slep,
 Thorgh noyse and swetnesse of her song.
 (270, 291-96)

Although in the House of Fame Chaucer adheres to the tradition of the didactic dream (the eagle taking Geoffrey to hear love-tidings), as he does to the tradition of prophecy in Chaunticleer and his dream, he often uses it as one of a number of techniques which together comprise the totality of the poem.

The descriptions of the May morning, the garden of Love

the songs of the birds also take on a different purpose. They become, as conventions, both signals to the reader indicating he should be alert to these and yet they recede to become aspects of a situation which Chaucer describes subjectively. In the Book of the Duchess he continues rejoicing in the songs of the birds:

for som of hem song lowe,
 Som high, and all of oon acord.
 To tell shortly, att oo word.
 Was never herd so swete a steven,---
 But hyt had be a thyng of heven,---
 So mery a soun,

(270, 304-9)

and again:

For instrument nor melodye
 Was nowhere herd yet half so swete,
 (270, 314-15)

And if we have missed the association with the Roman and the conventions he drew from it, Chaucer spells this out more clearly:

And alle the walles with colours fyne
 Were peynted, both text and glose,
 Of al the Romaunce of the Rose.
 (270, 332-34)

The May morning and the dream setting occur in Chaucer's four early works---The Book of the Duchess, The House of Fame, The Parliament of Fowles and of course the Romaunt of the Rose. And even though he repented his translation of the Roman in the Legend of Good Women, in that very work Chaucer uses the same conventions he took over from Guillaume.

Jean de Meun influenced Chaucer, however, more profoundly

than Guillaume. It is clear that Chaucer drew upon the personality of La Vieille for his Wife of Bath. Her account of her past husbands recalls La Vieille's boastfulness about all her past lovers, and both women feel the pang that comes with the realization that youth and beauty have fled. The Wife does not defend all promiscuity as does La Vieille, for she has taken all her husbands at the church door. That the Wife is able to gain control of her various husbands' money and property gives evidence to La Vieille's assertions that in marriage a woman's natural rights are taken away and she continues to try to regain these in any way she can:

We love no man that taketh kep or charge
Wher that we goon; we wol ben at oure large.
(79, 321-22)

and later:

He gaf me al the bridel in myn hond,
To han the governance of hous and lond;
And of his tonge, and of his hond also;
And made hym brenne his book anon right tho.
And when that I hadde geten unto me,
By maistrie, al the sovereynetee,
And that he seyde, 'Myn owene trewe wyf,
Do as thee lust the terme of al thy lyf;
Keep thyn honour, and keep eek myn estaat'---
After that day we hadden never debat.
(84, 813-22)

The Wife's ideas on democracy also derive from Jean:

Noblesce vient de bon courage,
Car gentillece de lignage
N'est pas gentillece qui vaille
Pour quei bonte de cuer i faille;
Pour quei deit estre en li paranz,
La proce de ses paranz,
Qui la gentillece conquistrent
Par les travaux que granz i mistrent.
(IV, 236-7, 18619-26)

One large difference between La Vieille and the Wife is that in the former there is no hint of the poignancy and irony that Chaucer gives to the Wife.

Chaucer is also indebted to the speech of La Vieille for the proper etiquette for a young lady, which he uses in the Prologue to the Canterbury Tales in describing the Prioress:

At mete wel ytaught was she with alle;
 She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,
 Ne wette hir fyngres in hir sauce depe;
 Wel koude she carie a morsel and wel kepe
 That no drope ne fille upon hire brest.
 In curteisie was set ful muchel hir lest.
 Hir over-lippe wyped she so clene
 That in hir coppe ther was no ferthyng sene
 Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte.
 (18, 127-35)

The Roman is a storehouse of narratives, and Chaucer also drew upon these. One, the story of Virginus (II, 265-66, 5589-658), he lifted whole from the Roman and set up as the Physician's Tale. Appius has picked a false quarrel with Virginus because he wanted Virginia, daughter of Virginus, as his paramour and she had repelled his advances. Appius said that Virginia was actually a slave taken from him when she was a baby, and must be returned. Knowing that Virginia would rather die than be shamed, Virginus kills her and sends her head to Appius on a platter. The judge orders Virginus to be killed, but the people rise up to defend him and he is reprieved. Appius is imprisoned but kills himself before he can be tried. The unjust judge is also sentenced by the people, but is reprieved by Virginus.

In Chaucer's version there is less narrative and greater use of dramatic technique. He also makes two additions: one is a passage describing Virginia's loveliness (145, 30-66), and this is immediately followed by a short discussion of the problems of bringing up daughters (145, 67-104). Virginia is the focus of Chaucer's tale---her virginity, her loveliness, her virtue---and her actions and speech are more important than the narrative aspect. Thus Chaucer has Virginia herself make the decision to die:

"Goode fader, shal I dye?
Is ther no grace, is ther no remedye?"
"No, certes, deere doghter myn," quod he.
(147, 235-37)

She riseth up, and to hir fader sayde,
"Blissed be God, that I shal dye a mayde!
Yif me my deeth, er that I have a shame;"
(147, 247-49)

These are not, of course, the only influences of the Roman on Chaucer, but a few of the more obvious ones. It may be that Chaucer drew more upon the Roman in his portrait of Greseyde than on the work of Boccaccio, but this is difficult to tell, for with Chaucer, as with so many love poets after Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, the ideas and conventions from the Roman merge subtly with the author's own until it is nearly impossible to separate the two. Nor does the history or influence of the Roman end with Chaucer, but continues to the time of Spenser. The Roman de la Rose is a fascinating work in its own right, unique yet representative of its time, and it is curious indeed that it comes down to us more in

imitation than in substance.

II. INTRODUCTION

It is the speech of La Vieille that provided Chaucer with the skeleton of the Wife of Bath, as she is seen in the Prologue, her tale and occasional repartee with her fellow pilgrims. The Wife's debt to La Vieille is obvious and the similarities need not be enumerated here, as they may be readily observed in the speech itself. Except for the less familiar Physician's Tale about Virginus, which is quite brief, the Wife best exhibits Chaucer's adaptation of material from the Roman---the character traits of both women are similar, their philosophies, and even some of their language. That a personality is involved makes the comparison more significant, and the fact that core of the Wife is found in a relatively compact space---albeit a rambling speech---are the reasons I have chosen La Vieille's digression above any other.

At this point in the narrative the lover has been persuaded to visit Bel Accueil, and La Vieille has gone up to Bel Accueil with a chapelet of flowers for him to wear. This is to prepare him for the lover's forthcoming visit. Once he has put on the chapelet, La Vieille settles down to sermonize for about two thousand lines, beginning at 12740.

In rendering this translation I have tried above all to give the reader an idea of Jean's thoughts and his expressions as he put them down in this speech, and to keep the meaning and the words intact wherever possible. I have endeavored, wherever possible, to use a four stress line and to convey as much of the feel of the verse form as the limits of the meaning

would allow without distortion or reworking of the lines in any way. Where I have altered the verse or wording I have indicated the change. I also followed the poem line for line, putting generally the same words in each line as in the original, with much the same punctuation, except where noted, in order better to convey the sequence of ideas as they are expressed, with allowance for the difference in language. Jean's thoughts are not always clearly expressed or coherent, and in La Vieille's speech I have tried to render the lines so as not to clarify what is by nature unclear, to provide transitions where there are none in the original, or to smooth out places that are rough. I have tried to keep the essence of Jean's work, not to overhaul it by a translation that is too correct or methodical.

III. LA VIEILLE'S SERMON

"Ha, Bel Accueil, you have such value, 12740
 So much beauty and so much merit!
 The time of my beauty is all gone,
 And yours is yet to come.
 For I must but sustain myself,
 Without recourse to magic or a wand;¹
 You are yet in infancy,
 And do not know what you will do,
 But know well what will happen to you,
 Whatever happens, soon or late,
 And the flame which burns all;² 12750
 And will bathe you in the bath
 Where Venus bathes her maidens.
 Know well you will feel the burning torch;
 Now I advise you to dress yourself
 Before you go there to bathe,
 And also give me your ear to learn;
 Because it is perilous to bathe there
 For a young man who has not learned;
 But, if you follow my advice,
 You will arrive at a good port. 12760
 Know if I were as wisely instructed,³
 When I was your age,
 In the games of love as I am now;
 For I had greater beauty then,
 But now I must lament and complain
 When I recall my vanished beauty,
 And see that it must age,
 When I remember my beauty,
 That made these young men jump;
 It made them so excited 12770
 It astonishes me to name it.
 It was then of great renown,
 Everywhere ran the reputation
 Of my great and famous beauty;
 Such crowds were in my house
 Such that man never saw;
 Much they pounded my doors at night,
 I made it a painful thing for them
 When I broke my promise to them,
 And this happened very often, 12780
 Because I had other companions.
 Enough foolish things were done,
 Of which I have run on enough;
 My doors were often broken,
 And they made many battles such
 That when they were finally separated
 Limbs were lost and lives,
 By hate and envy,
 Such came about from quarreling.

So master Albus the good reckoner⁴ 12790
 Wanted to take care
 And came with his ten numbers⁵
 To certify the number there,
 But he could not ascertain
 The number of disputants there,
 Though he could multiply very well.
 Then was my body firm and strong,⁶
 More than a thousand deniers had I,
 Of silver money I have not now;
 But I behaved too foolishly. 12800
 Beautiful and young and ignorant and foolish,
 I was never at the school of love
 Where one learns theory,
 But I knew all by practice;
 Experimenting has made me wise
 And I have experimented all my life;
 In knowledge I come to the battle.
 It is not right that I should miss
 A chance to teach you all I know,
 After all my experimenting. 12810
 He who counsels the young does well.
 Certainly it is no marvel
 That you know nothing of it
 Because you are still a fledgling,⁷
 But such as I will only stop
 When science at the ending there
 Will give me a professor's chair.
 Do not chase off or despise
 All that is of a great age;
 Therein the good sense and experience 12820
 Of many such are found.
 What at least, at last, remains for him
 As best are practice and good sense,
 However he has bought it.
 And since I have both sense and wit
 Which come not without great shame,
 Many a worthy man I deceived
 When he arrived in my snare;
 But so was I deceived by many,
 That I myself perceived my fate 12830
 But, unhappily, too late!
 Then I still had my youth,
 My door used to open much,
 Open both by day and night,
 I stood always near the sill,
 'No one comes today, nor yesterday,'
 I thought, 'Poor miserable creature!'
 It is in sorrow I must live!
 My heart was cleft in two.
 Then I left that country 12840

When I saw my door in such repose,
 And my repose the same,
 As I could not endure the shame.
 How could I endure,
 When this handsome young man comes,
 Who once loved me so much,
 That he could not let me go,
 And I saw them pass
 And he looked at me askance,
 And formerly esteemed me so?
 They jumping passed me by
 And valued me not worth an egg
 Not even those who used to love me;
 They called me a shriveled old woman,
 And some said much worse
 When they passed me by.

12850

On the other hand, gentle child,
 No one who was not beguiled
 Or tried not to have unhappiness
 Did neither think nor know
 What sorrow held my heart
 When musing I remembered
 The pretty speeches, the sweet pleasures,
 Sweet dalliances, sweet kisses,
 And the very sweet embraces
 That flew away so soon.

12860

Flew? Truly, with no return.
 Rather I should be put in a tower
 To be always imprisoned
 Than to have been born too soon.
 God! Into such discontent
 Their lovely gifts have put me!
 Miserable! Why was I born so soon?
 And what was their remedy,
 Into what torment has put me!

12870

To whom can I complain, to whom,
 But you, son, that I hold so dear?
 Nor can I take other revenge
 Than to teach my doctrine to you.
 For, handsome youth, to indoctrinate you
 That, when you are taught,
 I will avenge myself on those scoundrels.
 For, if God please, when that occurs,
 Remember this sermon.

12880

Know that you will retain some
 So you will be able to recall,
 You will have a great advantage,
 By right of your age;
 As Plato said: 'It can be seen
 The memory will retain more
 Of what one learns in youth before

12890

From him who knows science.'

Surely, young man, hold your youth,
If mine were present now,
As yours is here and now,
I could not exactly write
The vengeance I wish of them and spite
By all the places I have come,
I did so many marvels

12900

There never was the like,
Those scoundrels who took me lightly,
And reviled and despised me,
And so vilely passed me by;
And he and others would pay for
Their great arrogance and spite,
No pity for them or respite
For, with the sense God gave me
If I had sermoned you,
Do you know in what state I would put them?
I would pulverize and press them,
Walk over them at random,
The worms would want to eat them,
They would lie naked in the dung.

12910

Especially those who were first
Of loyal hearts loving me
And would more gladly pain themselves
Than serve and honor me.

Nor would I let them live
Worth a clove of Garlic, if I could,
That all that was in my purse would
Put them all in poverty,

12920

And I would make them every age
Stamp their feet in livid rage.
But regretting is worth nothing:
What is gone is not to come.

One can never hold anything
Because the face is shriveled
And he cannot fear my threats.
But it does me good to speak
Of the scoundrels who despised me.
By God! So he pleases me still

12930

When I have meditated well;
Delight moves in my thoughts
And brings back the gaiety of my limbs
When I remember my good times.

And the gay life
Which I desired so
Rejuvenates my body
When I think and remember them;

12940

It does me a world of good
When I recall all that was done,
At least I had my joy

No matter how I was deceived,
 A young girl is not lazy
 When she leads a joyous life,
 Especially when she thinks
 To amass her cupboard full.¹⁰

Then I came to this country,
 Where I encountered your mistress,
 Who took me in her employ
 To guard you in this enclosure.¹¹
 God! who is master and guard of all
 Grant that I may be a good guard!¹²
 So I will certainly do

12950

By your handsome manner;
 But guarding can be perilous,
 For the great marvelous beauty
 Nature put in you,
 Is so instructed in you
 Accomplishment and sense, worth and grace,
 And because time and place
 Come together at a good time
 We need not fear being disturbed
 From saying what we will,
 At least we will not be frightened.
 I will counsel what you should do,
 Nor should you marvel

12960

If I interrupt my speech a bit,
 I tell you well, before the attack.
 Do not desire to fall in love!¹³
 But if you want to be occupied
 I will show you willingly
 The roads and the means
 By which I was able to go,
 Before my beauty fled."

12970

12976

[La Vieille pauses briefly and the lover wonders about
 the effect the tale will have on Bel Acueil, who nonetheless
 proves the lover's true friend.]

"Beautiful, sweet, tender son
 You will learn of Love's games,
 So you will not be deceived
 When you have been counseled,
 So long as you conform to my art,
 For no one, if not well-informed,
 Can pass without being taken.¹⁴
 Now think to give ear and to listen
 And put all to memory,
 Because I know all the history of it.

13001

13010

Handsome youth, who would play at love,
 The sweet evils are also bitter,
 Know the commandments of Love,
 But do not let Love lead you;

And here all I tell you
 As certainly I see
 That you have been endowed by Nature
 With a full measure of each
 Such as you must have.
 Of these rules you must learn 13020
 There are ten, which well numbers them.
 But foolish is he who encumbers
 Himself with the last two rules and numbers,
 Which are not worth a false denier.
 Well one may concede¹⁵ the eight to you
 But whoever follows the other two
 Loses his effort and is a fool.
 One cannot read of them in school,
 Too disagreeably the lovers charge
 Who wishes lovers had hearts large 13030
 And put the rules there in one place:
 It is a false text, a false teaching.
 So advises Love, Venus's son,
 Do not believe aught of this.
 Whoever believes this will pay dear
 As will at the end appear.¹⁶
 Handsome son, never be free;¹⁷
 Put the heart in various spots,
 Do not give it to one only;
 Do not give it or lend it, 13040
 But sell it very dear
 And always raise that cost¹⁸
 Taking care the one who buys it never
 Never makes a good bargain,
 Or aught he does change it at all
 Better hang oneself or drown.
 Above all else remember this,
 To give with a closed fist
 And to take with open hands.
 To give is certainly great folly, 13050
 But it is little for those to give
 When one can make a profit,
 Or when in giving one can guess
 The return gift not worth less.
 Such giving you may well abandon.
 Giving is good when he who gives
 His gift multiplies and gains;
 Who of this giving certainly
 Will not repent.
 To such giving I well consent. 13060
 Now of the bow and five arrows
 Full of such good qualities
 Are launched very easily,
 To let fly and wisely know

The Love gods, the good archers,
 Of the arrows that fly from the bow
 Shoot not better than you do.
 Who now betimes has shot them;
 But you have not always known
 Where the attack will fall,
 As when one of them at random flies,
 All who are there may receive it,
 Who do not guard against the archers;
 But, who looks at yor deportment,
 So well you know how to move
 That one cannot teach you anything,
 So you may wound all,
 If God please, and have great prize.

13070

So I need not prepare myself to
 Teach you about the finery
 Of dresses or of garments
 From which you make your raiment,
 To seem from those more worthy;
 They cannot do anything at all
 When you know the song by heart
 That you have to sing to me,
 As we are going to occupy ourselves
 With the picture of Pygmalion;
 Take care that you dress well,
 Know more of it than oxen of laboring;
 To acquaint you with these means
 Is not my present task.

13080

13090

And if all this does not suffice
 Anything you hear me say
 Later, if you pay attention,
 You may take a good example.
 But ahead of you well I must say:
 If you want to choose a friend,
 Be sure your love well put
 If a handsome young man takes it,
 But do not put it permanently.
 Love several others wisely,
 And I tell you to desire of him
 To amass gifts from all of them.
 Make good acquaintances of rich men,
 If they have not greedy, stingy hearts,
 To know well how to pluck their parts.
 What Bel Accueil wants such to know
 He must say for each to hear,
 That he would not take another friend
 For a thousand marks of fine ground gold;
 And swear that he wanted so
 To suffer is another would take
 His rose, which is well sought-after,

13100

13110

For gold and all fine jewels.
But his fine heart is so loyal
That none shall ever hold his hand
Except she who held it before.

If there be a thousand, to each one say:
'The rose you would have all alone, dear sir; 13120
Never will others have part of it.
May the gods curse me if I part with it.'
So she swears and gives her word;
If she perjure, she will not burn,
The gods laugh at such an oath
And freely pardon her.

Jupiter and the gods laugh
When the lover breaks his word;
And many perjure themselves, 13130
The gods by lovers loved.
When Jupiter assured
Juno, his wife, he swore to her
By the river Styx, and loudly
Gave his word falsely.

It especially will assure
The fine lovers to swear by
Saints and relics, monasteries and temples,
When the god gives them examples.
But he is especially foolish, God love me,
Who believes what any lover swears, 13140
Because their hearts are mutable.
Young men all are not stable,
Nor are the old ones often true
They break their oaths and assurances.

And know one thing true;
He who is master of the fair
Must take his income everywhere;
If he cannot grind at one mill
He goes swiftly to another.¹⁹
The poor mouse especially must secure 13150
And gather at great peril his store,
Who has only a hole as refuge.
It is like this of women,
Who of all walks mistress is,
What some will do to get her;
Let her take gifts from everywhere;
For many have foolish thoughts,
Who have well meditated,
That she wants one friend only.
For, by St. Lifart de Meun!²⁰ 13160

Who puts her love in one sole place
Has not a heart left frank or free,
And has been badly dealt with.
Well such women deserve
Who had enough annoyance and pain

Who for one man's love troubles herself.
 If she must go to him for comfort,
 There is no one to comfort her;
 And there are those who fail more
 Who put their hearts in one spot lone: 13170
 Each in the end flies them all,
 Unhappy they are left alone.

A woman cannot achieve a good result of it.
 Dido, Queen of Carthage, 21
 Was not able to hold Aeneas
 Who had given him such advantages
 That he had been received poor
 And reclothed and nourished,
 Unhappily fleeing the beautiful country
 Of Troy, where he was born. 13180

His companions especially admired
 For in her was very great love;
 She had his ships all overhauled²²
 To serve him and to please him;
 Gave him, to have his love,
 Her city, body, and belongings;
 And he assured her
 And he promised and he swore
 Hers he was and always would be,
 That he would never leave her; 13190
 They had scarcely any joy of it,
 Because he broke his faith

Without permission, in boats by sea,
 For which the beautiful lost her life;
 That she murdered herself the next day
 By the spear, by her own hand,
 Which she dealt herself in her chamber.
 Dido, who remembered her friend,
 And saw that she had lost his love,
 Took the spear, and all naked 13200
 Stood up, above the point,
 Put the point at her two breasts
 And on the spear let herself fall.
 There was great pity to see it,
 That she wanted to do such a thing;

Hard is he who does not pity
 When he sees the beautiful Dido
 On the point of the blade.
 She drove it in the middle of her body
 Such sorrow had she from him who wronged her. 13210

Phyllis likewise so waited for
 Demophon that she hung herself,
 For the appointed absence he trespassed
 Who swore and broke his oath.

What did Paris of Cenone,
 Who heart and body gave him;

And who got what love returned?
 So he took back the love he gave;
 So he wrote of it in a tree,
 Little letters with his knife,
 Beside the river, in place of a oart
 But did not value it worth a tart.
 These letters stayed on the bark
 On a poplar tree and signified
 That Xanthus would return to it
 Before he would leave her.
 Well Xanthus should return to his fountain
 For he left her then for Helen.

13220

That Jason, for his part, from Medea,
 Vilely again betrayed by him
 The falseness of the broken word,
 That she to preserve him from death
 From the bulls that threw fire
 From their mouths and were coming
 Jason to burn or destroy,
 When without fire or wound
 With her charms she delivered him;
 And the serpent she intoxicated
 So that he could not wake,
 She made him sleep that soundly;
 Some horsemen born of the earth,
 Violent, fierce, enraged,
 Who wanted Jason to destroy,
 When he threw a stone among them,
 She made them reciprocate attack
 And so destroy each other;
 And she enabled him to take the fleece
 By her art and by her poison.

13230

13240

Then she rejuvenated Aeon,²⁵
 So Jason could retain him;
 Nor did she want more from him
 Than he should love her as his custom,
 And her recompence regarded
 That he should keep his faith.
 Then the awful traitor left her,
 The false, the disloyal, the thief;
 Then her children, when she knew it,
 From all that she had done for Jason,
 She strangled, from sorrow and rage;
 Then she did not act wisely
 When she abandoned the mother's pity,
 And did more than a bitter mother-in-law,
 A thousand examples more I know,²⁴
 But too great a number to tell now.

13250

13260

Briefly, they all betray and wrong,
 All are ribalds, they are everywhere,
 So they do like treachery,

Never putting their hearts in one place.
 Foolish is the woman giving one her heart,
 She must have several friends, 13270
 And if she is able, do her pleasure,
 To put them in situations miserable.
 If she has no graces, let her acquire them,
 And be to them always very proud
 Her love more to deserve,
 And pain themselves for her to serve.
 And those acquire with effort
 Who would not take her love by force.
 Let her know of games and songs
 And fly noises and disputes. 13280
 If she is not lovely, let her adorn herself,
 The most ugly has more elegance.
 And if she see fall,
 Which would be great sorrow to see,
 The beautiful blond hairs of her head,
 Or if by chance she must shear them,
 For any great malady,
 Then her beauty is made all ugly;
 Or if they have been by anger torn,
 By ribalds all rent, 13290
 So they cannot be done up,
 In order to recover the great tresses,
 Make sure that she can carry on them
 Hairs of some dead woman,
 Or some blond padding
 And without difficulty roll her hair.
 And on her ears wear horns,
 Not like goat or unicorn,
 That if they look horns,
 They are not able to break apart; 13300
 And if she must tint her hair,
 Let her take many herbs of the earth,
 Because these have power and medicines,
 Fruit, wood, leaf, bark and roots.
 And should she lose her color,
 And have an especially sad heart,
 Let her obtain moist ointments
 In her chamber, in her boxes,
 Always in order to rouge herself;
 But take care that none of her guests 13310
 Can either see or smell them,
 They would make much mischief of it.
 If she has as a beautiful white throat,
 Guard that whoever cuts her dress
 Cut so it is well low-cut
 To set off the tender flesh.
 A half-foot behind and half before,
 There is nothing more deceiving.

And if she has shoulders too large
To please at dancing and at balls 13320
Carry cloth to drape the dress,
So her stature is less ugly.

And if she has hands not beautiful and pure
Or bumps or pimples on them,²⁵
Let her take care no one sees them,
Make them pricked with a needle;
Or hide them inside her gloves,
So neither bump nor scab appears.

And if her breasts are too heavy,
Let her take cloth or kerchief, 13330
Then tie it under her breasts
And all around her hip
Then to attach it, sew or knot.
Then she can go to play.

And like a good girl
Keep her Venus chamber clean;
If she is wise and if well-taught
She will not leave of cobwebs aught---
But sweep or shave, or burn or clean,
So that no dust can gather. 13340

And if her feet are ugly, she should cover them,
And fat legs also cover.
Briefly, she knows no injury
Or fault she cannot mend, it is especially bad

If she knows she has bad breath,
Never be ill or pained of it,
But be careful never to fast on an empty stomach,
Or to speak while fasting,
And take care, if she can, so well her mouth
To watch, that nearby people come not near. 13350

And if she is to laugh provoked
Do so wisely and so prettily
That she describe two dimples
On each side of her lips;
Not to puff too much the cheeks
And not impair her equestries.
Never open her lips with laughing,
But hide her teeth and cover them.
A woman must laugh with closed mouth;
For it is not a pretty thing 13360
When she laughs with mouth extended:
Too much apt to be large and split.

And if she has not teeth well-ordered,
But ugly and without order born,
If she shows them by her laugh
Less she will be esteemed.

At crying take on another style,
Each being facile enough
To cry well at each place

For what makes her cry is 13370
 Not illness, shame or torment,
 Always have ready tears,
 All rain down and cry alone
 In such guise as they wish.
 But one must not ever move
 If he sees them crying tears
 Like a kind of tears that rain,
 A woman is never all tears or rain,
 Not all sad, not all unhappy,
 This is only trickery. 13380
 The tears of a woman are only a ruse
 And it is not sadness that bothers her;
 But guards that by voice or by work
 Nothing of her thoughts is discovered.²⁶
 When at table she has good habits
 And is of a genial countenance;
 But when she comes there to sit,
 To make herself by the house be seen,
 And to each one to signify
 That she knows her task, 13390
 Go to front and back,
 And the last one sit down;
 And make herself wait a little
 So she can sit importantly.
 And when she is seated at the table,
 Make all, if she can, at her service,
 Before the others she must carve
 And give out some bread
 And must, so to deserve grace 13400
 Before her companion to serve
 Whoever must eat from a plate:
 Before him put a leg or wing,
 Or beef or pork before him place
 According to his nourishment,
 Some fish or meat;
 She has no heart to serve niggardly
 So he will not suffer want.
 And watch she does not wet
 Her fingers in sauce up to the joint,²⁷
 Nor that she has her lips oily 13410
 From soup, or wing, or fatty meat,
 Or pile too many morsels up,
 Or put too big ones in her mouth.
 With the end of her finger touch the morsel
 She must dunk in the sauce,
 Whether it be green or brown or yellow,
 And wisely carry her piece of meat,
 That on her neck nothing falls
 Of soup or sauce or pepper.

And so gently must she drink 13420
 That nothing will drip on her,
 Because too rude or gluttonous
 Others will hold her
 Who see this happen;
 And guard she does not touch the cup
 When she still has a morsel in her mouth.
 So she must wipe her mouth
 That she leave no grease adhering
 At least, on the upper lip
 Because, when grease on it remains 13430
 Where wine is in goblets the little globules stay
 Which are neither clean nor pretty.
 And drink little by little,
 However great her appetite;
 Do not drink all at a gulp
 Not a full cup or full goblet;
 Then drink little and often,
 That she does not provoke the rest
 To say she drinks too much,
 Or with a gluttonous throat, 13440
 But delicately that nothing runs.
 The side of the cup she must not grab
 As many nurses do,
 Who are so gluttonous and picky
 They drink wine with a hollow throat
 Just as in a cask,
 And so much gorging and gulping
 They confound and astound themselves.
 And let her watch she never gets drunk,
 For a man or woman drunk 13450
 Can keep no thing secret;
 And then when a woman is drunk,
 That is no point in her defense,
 And jangles all of what she thinks
 And is all abandoned
 When to such mischief she is given.
 And watch she should not sleep at table;
 That would be too disagreeable;
 Too many ugly things can happen
 As those who go to sleep maintain. 13460
 It is not sensible to go to sleep
 There let her keep a vigil,
 Many by this have been deceived,
 And often have arrived
 On front or back or on the side;
 Breaking arms or head or side,
 Guard that sleep does not hold her;
 Of Palinurus let her remember
 Who governed Aeneas's ship;

- Awake he governed it well,
 But when sleep overtook him,
 He became governor of the sea,
 And his companions near
 Cried much afterward.
- So must a woman guard
 That she waits not too long to play
 When she can well afford to wait,
 Until none would want to hold her hand.
 She must desire Love to amuse her
 When youth amuses her.
- For, when old age overtakes a woman
 Love loses joy, and the overtaking
 Of the fruit of Love, if she is wise,
 She will amass in the flower of her age,
 For, when she loses her senses
 The joy of love is likewise past.
 And if she believe not my advice
 That for mutual profit counseled
 Know that she will repent of it
 When old age blasts her.
- But I know well those who believe,
 At least those who are wise,
 And attend to our rules,
 And say their pater nosters
 For my soul when I am dead
 Who teach them now and comfort;
 For well I know these words
 Will be taught in many schools.
- Beautiful sweet son, if you live,
 For well I see that you will write
 Freely a book from a free heart
 With all my teachings complete,
 And after I depart
 If God please, read it again,
 And be master if without me,
 I give you my permission to read,
 In spite of the chancellors especially
 And in wine-rooms and chambers,
 In ready-rooms, gardens and in groves,
 In pavillions and behind curtains
 And to inform the scholars
 In closets, upstairs,
 In pantries and in stables,
 If you have no more delectable place.
 But that they learn my lessons,
 When you have learned them well.
- And she should not be too much enclosed
 For, when she rests too much
 Less she is by all men seen
 And less known her beauty,

13470

13480

13490

13500

13510

13520

Less coveted and less required.
 Often to great churches go,
 And make visitations,
 At marriages, at processions,
 At games, at feasts, at dances,
 And in all places hold her schools
 And sing to her disciples of
 The God of Love and Goddess.

But well she first was mirrored
 To know she was well-attired. 13530
 And when she feels good opportunity
 And goes into the streets,
 So is the beautiful way to walk
 Not too freely nor too hard,
 Not too high nor bent too low,
 But pleasantly in all crowds.
 The shoulders and the hips should move
 So nobly that one cannot find
 Any of more lovely movement;
 And walk prettily 13540
 On her pretty little shoes,
 That to have done so elegantly
 They join her feet so well
 That they have no creases.

And if her dress she drag along,
 On the walk it declines,
 So she raises it at front or side
 As well to take a little air,
 Or as if she has the habit
 Of turning up her dress 13550
 Wishing to have a freer step.
 Then take care that that free step
 Is seen by each who passes by,
 The beauty of the foot to see.

And if she wear a mantle
 She must carry it in such a way,
 That it does not much the view encumber
 Of her lovely body in its shade.
 And so the body better looks,
 If she is adorned with precious purse,
 Which is not too large or small, 13560
 Of silver adorned with crowds of pearls,
 And the purse is seen by all,
 If there remain three who do not see her,
 Take the mantle in two hands,
 The arms large and extended,
 The way attractive or muddy;
 And she remembers the strut
 The peacock makes with his tail;
 Make them know the mantle there, 13570

Whether fur or green or grey,
Or such as she may have put,
And all the body appears to show
To those she would obtain or enchant.

And if she has not a lovely face,
More let her wisely turn
Her lovely tresses, blond and dear,
And all the nape behind,
When pretty and well-tressed she feels;
It is a thing much pleasing
That beauty of her hair.

13580

Always must a woman take care
That she can resemble a wolf
When she wants to steal the sheep;
For that she may catch at all,
For one she must assail a thousand;
That she does not know the one she takes
Before she has taken him.

Then she must everywhere put out
Her nets to take the men,
For, as she cannot know
Which of them she can hope to have,
At least for one to catch,
To all she must her cross attach;
Then it must not come about
That she hold many foolish taken
Among so many thousands
Who thrash their sides;
Try to see several by chance,
For art aids nature much.

13590

13600

And if she has caught several
She wishes to run through,
Take care how to arrange the thing
That she does not put two at the same hour,
For then they find they are deceived,
When several get together
She is able to leave them well;
That would be very humbling;
For at least they would escape
With that which each would carry,
She should not leave them anything
With which they could get fat,
But put them in such great poverty
They die unhappy and in debt,
Who were rich and affluent,
For the rest is lost.

13610

To love a poor man is of no import
For he is nothing she should value;
So Ovid or Homer
Is not worth two goblets.

13620

It is not worthwhile to love a stranger,
 For he will meet and then retire
 Her body to various grazing places
 As they have fickle hearts.
 To love a guest I counsel not;
 But if while he is passing through
 Deniers or jewel he offer,
 Take all and put them in her coffer,
 And then do his pleasure
 In haste or at leisure.

13630

And guard well that she never takes
 A man of too great elegance
 Or one who of his beauty brags,
 As it is arrogance that holds him;
 So it is God who him rejects
 One who self-pleases, never doubt,
 For Ptolemy spoke of this,
 By whom was made much science loved,
 They have not the power to love well,
 All have bad hearts and bitter;
 And this he would have said to all
 As soon as to each one,
 And several in turn will trick,
 Despoil and rob them;
 Many complaints have I seen
 From women so deceived.

13640

And if any promisers should come,
 Be they true and loyal or rogues,
 Which pray her give her love
 And attach himself with promises;
 And she also to promise him;
 Let her watch well that she not put
 Herself for nothing in his power,
 If she holds not the money previously.

13650

And send he anything in writing,
 Watch whether it is deceitfully written,
 Or if he have a good intention
 From a sincere heart without deception.
 Then write him a little at a time,
 But not without a little waiting;
 Waiting excites the lover,
 If she wait not too long.

13660

And when she hears the lover's request,
 Watch that she does not hurry
 In loving to concede him all;
 Or give or deny all,
 But to keep him in a balance,
 That he might have both fear and hope.
 And when he requires more of her
 And she does not offer it,

13670

The love which strongly enlaces him,
 She takes care to make sure
 By her talents and by force
 That his hope is always reinforced,
 That little by little goes
 The fear which disappears;
 Then she makes peace and concord
 With that which she may him accord,
 And who so with feinted guiles,
 Would swear by saints and relics
 That she wanted only to concede to him
 No other, so that she must pray;
 And say: 'Sir, this is the sum,
 What I do by the Holy Father of Rome,
 For the sincere love I give you,
 Is not for your presents;
 One is not born who takes me
 For any gift, however great it be.
 Many valliant men have I refused,
 For often have many tried to obtain me,
 So I believe you have enchanted me;
 The unfortunate song you have sung me.'
 Then she must intimately embrace
 And kiss him, the more to wound him.

13680

13690

But, if she wants my counsel,
 Tender him nothin until she has him.
 Foolish is she who does not pluck her friend
 Up to the very last feather;
 For, who should know well how to pluck,
 But she who would have better,
 And who would be held more dear,
 More dearly should she sell herself;
 For when one gets her for nothing
 The more she is maltreated;
 She is not prized worth a rind,
 If one loses it, one attaches no importance to it,
 The least is great or important
 When one has bought it dear.

13700

But to pluck in a fitting way:
 Her young men and chambermaid
 And her sister and her nurse
 And her mother, for it is not simple,
 That they consent to the work,
 Making all that they can give her,
 Skirts or slips or gloves or mittens,
 As ravishing as a kite
 When he is about to seize the prey
 So that it cannot escape
 From her hands in any way
 Such that he made his last,

13710

13720

Exactly as one who plays at buttons,
 Let them give coins and jewels.
 Much sooner is the prey achieved
 When several hands are raised.
 Other times they respond: 'Sir,
 Now we must you tell

To see that my lady dress well;
 How can you suffer this fault,
 What would you, by St. Giles!
 For one such as she in this village
 Like a queen should be dressed,
 And riding on a saddle-cloth.

13730

Lady, what are you waiting for
 That you have not asked him for it?
 Toward him are you so humble
 When he leaves you suffering?'
 And she, however much they please her,
 Must ask that they be quiet,
 Who, hope, much belief have raised
 That she has too much suffered.

13740

And if she perceive that he
 Gives her more than he is able,
 And that much suffering will be
 From the grand gifts he nourished her,
 And feel that from giving
 She must try to lecture him,
 Then she must pray him that he lend her
 And swear that she is all prepared
 To return all at a certain day
 Such as he would name.

13750

But she is by me well defended
 Who never returns anything.

So her other friends return,
 Of whom she several has, perhaps,
 But to none of them given her heart.
 She calls each of them her friend,
 So she lament wisely

That her best dress is held security
 Running to each one every day,
 In so distressed a state

13760

And run into such a bad situation
 They could do nothing to please her
 If they do not return her pledges;
 And the young men, if they are not wise
 For the money they will get in the future,
 Put their hands in their purses,
 Or make some gesture to help her cause
 By which to free her security,
 Which cannot rightly be delivered,
 As they are, hope, all within her doors.

13770

In order to imprison the young man,
 They are in any coffer iron-bound,
 That he not know it, hope, though he search
 Under her bread-bin or on a perch,
 In order to be believed by him.
 So she might have the money.
 The third person she serves the same trick;
 A silver belt, or dress,
 Or headdress that she asks of him,
 And then coins she can dispense.

13780

And if he has nothing she can carry,
 And swears, to comfort her,
 And guarantees from foot, from hand,
 That he will bring it the next day,
 Turn him closed ears;
 Not believe, any of it, for it is a trick.
 Much they are all expert liars;
 More have lied to me, the dissolutes,
 And sworn oaths before
 Than there are saints in paradise.
 At least, until he pass,
 Let him make wine his security to send
 For two deniers, for three, for four,
 Or go elsewhere to amuse himself.

13790

So a woman must, if she is not foolish,
 Seem as if she is afraid,
 To tremble, to be fearful,
 Be distraught and anxious
 When ready to receive her friend,
 And make him hear and see
 That in great peril he is received,
 For him her husband is deceived,
 Or guardians, or relatives;
 And that, if the thing were known
 That she wants to do in secret,
 She would be dead, certainly, without doubt;
 She must swear he cannot stay,
 That she will live to perish;
 Then he will stay at her will
 When she has him well enchanted.

13800

13810

If she well remembers
 When her friends are due to come,
 If she perceives that no one sees
 Through the window she may see them,
 All better can she through the door;
 And swear she is destroyed and dead,
 And that for him she will be drowned
 If they know he was within;
 They would war with sharpened weapons,
 Helmets, armor, stake or club,

13820

Nor bread-bins, cabinet nor chamber,
 Could keep them from being dismembered.

Then must the woman breathe
 And appear to be angry
 And attack and on him fall
 And say that so long a stay
 Was not made without a reason,
 And that he held in his house
 Another woman that she knows,
 Whose distractions please him more, 13830
 And that for her she is betrayed
 When for him she is well-hated;
 Well must she be called unhappy
 When she loves without being loved.
 And when he hears these words
 Then he will think her mad
 Believing all so soon
 That she loves him too loyally,
 That she is more jealous of him
 Than of Venus, his wife, was 13840
 Vulcan, when he found her
 With Mars, in delight of love.
 A net of bronze he forged
 Holding them both in strong nets,
 Where games of love joined them together,
 And on both spied he foolishly.

As soon as Vulcan knew
 That they were taken in love,
 Around the bed he stood above,
 He was very foolish when he did that, 13850
 For he had much pain knowing
 What he alone believed before,
 He made the gods to come in haste
 And they laughed, made feasts and celebration,
 When they perceived them in their love.
 The beauty of Venus moved
 Each of the several goddesses,
 Who made many complaints, and gods
 Both ashamed and angry
 For being so taken and chained, 13860
 They were never so shamed as at this situation,
 This was not a great marvel
 That Venus and Mars so put themselves,
 For Vulcan was so ugly
 And so black from his forge,
 On hands and face and throat,
 That for nothing would Venus love him,
 No matter how much her husband asked.
 No, by God! not, if he were
 Absalom of the blond tresses, 13870

Or Paris, son of the king of Troy,
 She needed no one to lead or carry her
 For she knew well, the debonair,
 What all women know how to do.

On the other hand, they are born free;²⁸

It is the law that conditioned them,
 And stripped them of their independence,
 Which Nature gave them;

For Nature is not so foolish

That she had Margot born

13880

Only for Robichon,

An intelligence so fixed,

Or Robichon for Mariette,

Or for Agnes, or for Perette,

We were made, Handsome son, doubt not,

Each for all and all for each,

Each for each communally

And each communally for each,

So that, when they are espoused,

13890

By law taken and married,

To raise up and dissent,

And to murder and contention,

And to aid the education

From which together work the cures,

To make great efforts in many guises

To return to them their independence,

The women and young girls,

However they are, ugly or beautiful.

Freedom to maintain their freedom,

Of which much evil will come and go

13900

In the several days to come

Well in numbers I say,

Truly so, but I exceed them,

For I would be completely free

And would only you encumber

If here I would them number

For, when each man used to see

The woman who much pleased him

He would then ravish her

Until one stronger take her from him

13910

And leave her, if he please,

When he had done his will;

So each other they used to kill

And leave their educations,

Until they made marriages

By the counsel of wise men.

And who would like Horace to believe,

Good words he said and true,

For he knew well how to read and say,

If you wish to have it recited;

13920

For a wise woman has no shame
When she good authority recounts.

Formerly, before Helen were
Battles that put them
In great sadness perishing
Who for such made battles,
But the dead are not all known
When in print they are not read
For this was not the first,
Nor will it be the last,
For these wars come and go
Between those who hold and let go
Their hearts for love of women,
For which they have lost body and soul,
And will lose, if the centuries endure.
Take good care for Nature
In order to see more clearly,
How she has a marvelous power,
Many examples I could make you,
Which are made as good instruction.

13930

13940

The bird of the green woods,
When he is taken and put in a cage,
Nourished all attentively
Deliciously inside,
If he sing, it will seem
From a gay heart, so you think,
When he desires the thick woods
That he loved naturally,
And would like to be on the tree,
No matter how well he is fed;
Always he thinks and studies
How to recover his independent life.
His food he tramples under foot,
With the ardor with which his heart is charged,
And goes along his cage searching,
In anxiety searching around
A window or a door to find
Through which he can fly to his woods.
Then know that all women,
Be they young girls or matrons,
Of whatever condition,
Have a natural inclination
To look for freedom also,
By whatever road, by whatever means
They can to obtain freedom,
To have it always they would like.

13950

13960

Then I can tell you that the one
Who enters into religion
And afterward comes to repent,
From anger bit by bit would hang himself;

13970

And he laments and despairs
 So that he is all tormented
 For grand desires in him spring up
 How he can recover
 The freedom he has lost;
 For the will for it changes not
 For any vestments he can take,
 In whatever place he goes to render it.

It is a foolish fish who goes
 Through the throat of the net,
 Who, when he wants to return,
 Despite himself must stay
 Always imprisoned within,
 To return is denied him.
 The others who stay outside,
 When they see it, rush up,
 And believe that he goes to and fro
 From great delight and joy,
 When they see him turn around
 And seem to amuse himself;
 And to that especially
 They see so clearly

13980

He has food enough inside,
 So that each of them asks,
 Many freely surround the net
 And go around it and turn,
 As he bruises, they survey,
 They want to enter, he to leave.
 But when they are come within
 Taken to be retained for ever,
 Then they cannot tell him
 That he wants not to return,
 But the thing is impossible,
 They are all taken in a fishnet;
 There they will in sorrow live
 Until death delivers them from it.

13990

14000

Life is the same for those in religion,
 The young man who enters an order,
 He will never have large shoes,
 Not know how to make
 Religious headdress for a monk
 That ever Nature or heart can hide;
 Then he is dead and to evil given
 When he was noble and missed his chance,
 He does not make of necessity
 A virtue, by great humility;
 But Nature cannot lie,
 Which makes him want freedom.
 For Horace recounts the same,
 Who knows well such a thing to show:

14010

14020

Those who would like to take
 Him and prohibit Nature,
 And kick her outside of him,
 She will return, well he knows it.
 All Nature returns running,
 In order not to live outside.
 What matters it? Each creature
 Wants to return to his nature;
 They will not leave it for violence
 Of force or conventions.

14030

This must Venus excuse especially
 When she would use her liberty,
 And all the women who amuse themselves
 However much they want to marry,
 For this is what Nature makes them do,
 Still want to obtain their freedom.
 A thing as strong as Nature
 Surpasses any education.

Who takes, handsome son, a cat
 Who never rat or mouse
 Has seen, then was fed
 Without seeing rat or mouse,
 Long time, by being attentive,
 Of delicious nourishment,
 And then it sees a mouse coming,
 Nothing can hold him
 If one lets him escape,
 Then he will seize it;
 Especially he will leave his food,
 As he will never famished be;
 There is no peace between them
 For the trouble they make each other.

14040

14050

Whoever feeds a foal knows
 That he has never seen a mare
 Until the time he was a great horse
 Suffering saddle and stirrup
 And then sees a mare come
 You will hear such a whinny,
 And he will want to run to her,
 If one cannot stop him;
 Not only black horse to black
 Only, but to fawn-colored,
 To grey, or dapple grey
 If reins or bridle slow him not,
 That he does not look around,
 When he finds them all untied,
 Where he can see them romping;
 He would like to assail them all.
 And who does not hold the black mare,
 Rapidly she goes to the black horse,

14060

14070

Then to fawn-colored or dappled,
According to her will and art.
The first that she finds,
Is the one who will be her husband,
For she has seen no other yet,
As she finds them free.

And what I say of a black mare
And of fawn-horse and of fawn-mare
And of dapple colt and black,
Say I of cow and bull is true

14080

Of ram and sheep;
For of this I doubt not
That they do not all want their wives;
More, handsome son, doubt
That each does not want all;

All at will they acquire each other.
So is it, handsome son, by my soul!
Of all men and all women,

According to natural appetite,
Which law restrains a bit by right.

14090

A bit! too much, it seems to me,
For, when law puts them together,
She must, be it young man or servant,
Know he can have only her,
At least as long as she lives,
Nor she another while he lives.

But everywhere they tried
To use their free will,
For know well such a thing shows,

If they take care for shame
The other for fear of pain,
But Nature also guides them
Like the beasts as here I say.

14100

I know well by me the same,
For I am always pained
To be by all men loved;
And so I doubt not shame only
Restrains and subjects many hearts,
When by these streets I went,
For I always wanted to go

14110

Covered with ornaments,
That there is nothing in comparison,
These men, who pleased me so,
When they gave me sweet looks,
(Sweet gods! what pity took me
When these looks came to me!)

All or several I would have received
If they pleased and I could;
All of them wanted, one after another,
If I could suffice to all;

14120

And it seems to me, if they could,
 Freely they would have received me,
 (I did not exclude prelates or monks,
 Cavaliers, burgesses or canon,
 Nor clerk nor layman, foolish or wise,
 If they were of powerful age,)
 And they religions would have left
 If they did not believe they would fail,
 When I had to requite their love;

But, if my thoughts were so well-known
 And all our conditions,

14130

They would not have had such doubts;
 And believe that, if several dared,
 Their marriages would have broken;
 Their faiths they did not remember,
 If anyone held me aside;

No one cared for his condition,
 Faith or vow or religion,
 If not in any rage,

14140

Who was infatuated by love,
 And loyal to the one he loved;
 He, hope, left calling me,
 And thought to have his own love,
 And would take no other.

But these are few of all lovers,
 So by God and St. Amand
 This I believe certainly.

If he spoke to me at length
 That which he said, lies or truth,
 Especially what made him move;
 What he was, secular or of orders,
 Was belted with girdle red or cord,
 What head covering he wore,
 By me, believe it, consoled himself
 If he believed that I wanted him,
 Or that, even more, I suffered for him.

14150

Then Nature governed us,
 Who our hearts excited to delight,
 For as Venus of Mars enamored
 Is least deserving of blame.

14160

Then in such a state were
 Mars and Venus, who loved each other,
 Of the gods there were many wanting,
 While others of them laughed,
 To come to such a state as Mars.
 Many wanted then two thousand marks
 To have lost to Vulcan
 That this work never was;
 There was such shame in what he did,
 When he saw all that knew it,

14170

Made the two an open door
 To do what they did under cover,
 Never could he soothe the shame
 That the gods told the story of them,
 And publicized the tale
 That it was noted in all heaven;
 Then was Vulcan more angry
 Which made him more deteriorate,
 No one would take his counsel then.
 And better to testify to the text,
 Thus he came to suffering,
 That knowing he held the strings too close,
 Better not to have moved at all,
 But to have feigned that he knew naught,
 Would have kept him the beautiful face
 Of Venus, that he held so dear.

14180

If he had taken just the care
 That his wife and her friend took,
 By his foolish spying operations
 He took her in delight of love,
 But know that anger would be in their breasts
 When taken in delight,
 For he was an evil hypocrite
 Who captured her by his art,
 Never to have captured her
 Would have been a better service.
 Much foolish is done from jealousy,
 And the jealous art is fear;
 But to feint jealousy
 Who feinting makes complaints
 And amuses the foolish.

14190

14200

When they are amused, there is more art.
 And, if he does not clear himself,
 Then say, to make him angry,
 That he has another friend,
 Taking care she gets not angry
 Though her outward appearance seems,
 And follow up on his other friend.

I do not care a button
 For the ribalds of a glutton;
 But make sure if he believes
 For that love she does not care
 That she would like to follow another
 And she does not expect to be chased
 By him from whom she would be separated,
 For it is well she go from him,
 And say: 'Too much have you maltreated me,
 I must avenge myself of these misdeeds;
 You have made me wronged,
 And I will serve you another blow.'

14210

14220

Then he will be in a state worse
 Than ever he was, if he loves her any,
 Nor well know how to get rid of her;
 For no one has the power to carry
 Great love ardently in his breast
 If he fears no wrong from his wife.

Then the chambermaid reappears,
 Who makes a fearful face,
 And says: 'Alas, we are dead;
 My sirs, I do not know what men,
 Have entered into our courtyard.'
 Then must the woman run,
 And interrupt all games of love;
 And the young men hide
 In stable, loft or hutch,
 Until the time she calls him,
 When she is beyond his view
 He who desires her return
 Will likely, hope, be beside
 Himself from fear and despair.

14230

14240

Then, if it is one of her other friends
 Who the woman would have put
 At another hour, if she were wise,
 That she not put up with foolishness
 Of how came another there,
 But lead him to another room;
 Do then all that he would like
 But say he cannot stay,
 Which will anger him to fight,
 For the woman must say to him;
 'For you to stay here is denied,
 Because my master is in here
 And four of my German relatives,
 By God and St. Germain,
 When enabled come another time,
 I will do whatever you want;
 But you must suffer now;
 I must return, for he awaits me.'
 But then she must kick him outside,
 That he doubt nothing.

14250

14260

Then must the woman return,
 That she does not stay
 So long to put the other at ill-ease,
 So that she does not him displease,
 That he have not too much discomfort;
 As soon he will have a new comfort.
 And when from his prison he appears,
 And that to couch with him she goes,
 Between his arms lie down on him;
 But watch that without fear they lie.

14270

Make him hear, and say
 She is too bold and foolish
 And swear that, by her father's soul,
 His love too dear compares,
 When she put herself in such adventure,
 But she knows them more secure
 Than those who go to their art
 Dancing through field and vine;
 For delight in safety taken
 Less is pleasing, less of price.

14280

And, when they together go,
 Take care that when they are united,
 How much he holds her in repose,
 He see her not by light of day,
 She does the windows all half-close,
 That they will be shadowed
 That, if she has fault or blemish,
 On her flesh, that he not know it.
 Guard that no filth can be seen
 When she puts herself to view
 Or he would go right away.
 That would be awful and a disgrace.

14290

And when they are put in action
 Each one of them so wisely works
 And that at each stage they go
 That the delight together comes
 To one and other party
 Until they are separated,
 And must reciprocate
 To direct their desires together.
 The one must not the other leave,
 To navigate or to cease
 Until he takes together port;
 Then they will have complete delight.
 And, if she has little delight,
 Pretend that she has much,
 And feint and make all the signs
 She knows of her delight to show,
 So he believes she takes great pleasure
 That her capture was a mistake, never.

14300

14310

And if, to reassure himself,
 Can then the woman obtain
 At his own house,
 To see her again proposes such,
 The day she must be there,
 She makes him wait a little,
 So he has more great desire
 Until he holds her to his pleasure.
 Games of Love are, when more tardy,
 More agreeable by delay;

14320

So they are less desired by
Those who have them at their will.

And when she has to his lodging come,
Where she will be dearly held,
Then she swears and makes him hear
How a jealous husband made her wait
That she shook and trembled all over
And with a hard fear
Of being ugly or beaten
When she returns again;
But, however she laments and cries
How much that she says true or false
Taken in fear certainly,
In security fearfully
And make in their privacy
All their jollity.

14330

And if she has not leisure to go
To his lodging, to talk to him,
Nor to receive him at hers she dare
So held enclosed by a jealous husband,
Then she must, if she can, get him drunk,
If he will not free her.
And, if wine cannot get him drunk,
Herbs may have a pound
There more or less, given without danger
She can make him eat or drink:
Then he will sleep so much
That he will let her do sleeping
All that she would like
For he cannot deter her.

14340

Of her servants, if she has them,
Send one here, the other there;
Or by unimportant gifts deceive them.
And her friend through them receive;
Or on the other hand, get them all drunk,
So from her secret they be separated.

14350

Or, if she please, to the husband say:
'Sir, I know not what malady,
Or fever or gout or abscess,
All my body fires and embraces
So that I must go to the baths,
All we have here are bathtubs;
It will be worth nothing without a steam bath.
I must go bathe myself.'

14360

When the villain will have thought,
He will give her, hope, a holiday,
However much he makes an ugly face;
But that she lead her chambermaid
Or any of her neighbors,
Who knows all her project,

14370

And her friend, hope, see there,
 And she knows also all
 And goes to the public bath,
 But wants no bath or bath-house,
 She does not desire that,
 But with her friend lies down,
 When it seems not good to them
 That they should bathe together;
 For he can wait for her there,
 If he knows she so directed him.

14380

No one can put a woman in keep
 If she does not guard herself;
 If it were Argus who guarded her,
 And watched her with his hundred eyes,
 Of which one-half vigil keeps
 While the other sleeps,
 When Jupiter cut off
 The head, to avenge Io,
 Whom he had transformed to a cow,
 Denuded of human form;
 (Mercury cut it off
 From Juno avenged)
 His guard worth nothing.
 Foolish is he guarding such a thing.

14390

But take care never to be so foolish,
 For nothing clerks or laymen tell
 That of enchantment never believe
 Nor sorcery or charm,
 Nor Balanus²⁹ and his science,
 Nor magic nor micromancy,
 For by this power she can excite
 That which she loves by force,
 Nor that for him no other way:
 Never could Medea hold
 Jason for any spell;
 Nor Circe hold equally
 Ulysses that he not fly
 For any oracle having him in power.

14400

Let women watch that no lover,
 If he call himself her friend,
 Is given by them gifts of value
 Well give pillow-case or hand-towel,
 Or a scarf or purse,
 If it is not too dear,
 Needle-case, or lace or belt
 Of which the buckle cost little,
 Or a pretty little knife,
 Or a cluster of lace
 As nuns habitually make;
 But foolish is he who frequents them.

14410

14420

It is better to love a woman of the world;
 The one does not make such blame,
 They go much at their will;
 Their husbands and their relatives
 Know words to deceive

And, I know this cannot be
 That one and the other much cost,
 But nuns are of a greater cost.

But one who well would be wise
 All gifts of women should doubt.
 For the gift of a woman, to tell the truth,
 Is only a snare to deceive;

14430

And against her nature commits a sin
 Who from giving has a fault.

We must leave giving to the men,

For, when women are generous,

It is great mischief and a vice:

The devil made us so simple.

But it matters not, for they are scarce
 Who are habitual givers of gifts.

14440

Of all the gifts I said before,

But that these know deceiving,

Handsome son, you would well to use

The foolish much yourself, to amuse.

And guard when one gives you one,

And you remember the good,

Or especially youth hold,

If each can live so:

It is old age which does not cease,

That each day approaches us,

14450

So when it well has come

Do not be as one foolish held

But to have governed so well

That you will never be mocked;

For just gathering, if one takes no care,

Is not worth a grain of mustard.

Ah! Alas! That I did not so:

I am poor by my unhappy doing.

The great gifts that they gave me

Who to my love abandoned themselves,

14460

To a better love I abandoned.

One gave me and I gave,

So that I nothing of it retained:

Giving has led me to indigence.

Do not remind me of old age,

Which has put me in such distress;

I held poverty as naught;

The time of it then came

Ceasing to go, without remedy

From distributing in measure.

14470

If I had been wise, by my soul!
 I would have been a rich woman;
 For I was friendly with many great men
 When I was gracious and elegant,
 And well held many prisoners;
 But when I had taken some of them
 By faith of God and St. Thibaud,
 I gave all to a rogue,
 That too much shame made me,
 But he pleased me more than all.
 All the others I called friends,
 But him only I loved.
 But know that he did not prize me
 One pea, and oft told me.
 Bad times, that never saw equal,
 He never ceased to despise me:
 Common prostitute he called me,
 The ribald, who no longer loved me.
 Women have too poor a judgment,
 And I a woman entirely.
 I never loved a man who loved me,
 But, if this ribald cut
 My shoulder, or my head was broken,
 Know that I was at his mercy.
 He did not know I was so battered
 They could not approach me,
 But he knew well how to make his peace,
 I did nothing contrary.
 I was so badly treated
 And beaten and dragged,
 My face wounded and black
 That then I cried mercy,
 That from the place he came;
 I said I was shamed,
 Then peace he invited,
 And then made love to me;
 So we again had peace and concord.
 Then he took me in his service,
 For he was a proud lover,
 The false, the traitor, the thief.
 Without him I could not live,
 I always wanted to follow him,
 If he fled, even went
 Up to London in England,
 So he pleased me and made me glad,
 so he put me to shame,
 For he led a great joyous life
 From all the lovely gifts I gave him.
 He put nothing in savings,
 All amusing himself in taverns.

14480

14490

14500

14510

14520

He never learned any trade,
 Nor had he any need,
 For all I gave him to dispense,
 And I had it well to take:
 Everyone was my renter,
 And he freely spent,
 And always in ribaldry,
 Especially in burning lechery;
 By having a very tender mouth
 He did not want to hear any good; 14530
 Never to live or please him
 Except in pride and in delight.
 In the end he saw a bad state,
 When the gifts had ceased:
 We became poor beggars,
 And I was not worth two flaxcombs,
 I never married any man;
 Then came to me, as I have told,
 By these bushes scraping my temples:
 Of my estate you know examples, 14540
 Dear handsome son, retain this;
 So you conduct yourself wisely
 That you will be better from my teaching;
 For when your rose is blighted
 And white hair assails you,
 Certainly this will be necessary for you." 14546

FOOTNOTES

I. General Commentary

¹ Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, Le Roman de la Rose, ed. Ernest Langlois (Paris, 1920), III, 164. All references to this work will be included in the text with volume, page and line numbers.

² For a more complete account of the dating of the work, see Urban Tigner Holmes, Jr., A History of Old French Literature from the Origins to 1300 (New York, 1962) and Gaston Paris, La Littérature Française au Moyen Âge (Paris, n. d.).

³ In his editorial commentary to the Roman Ernest Langlois gives more complete biographical information about both Jean and Guillaume, in the first volume of the edition.

⁴ Ibid., I, 8.

⁵ Wolfgang Clemen, Chaucer's Early Poetry (London, 1963), 38.

⁶ Holmes, History, 302.

⁷ Ernest Langlois, Origines et sources du Roman de la Rose (Paris, 1891), 53. The reader should consult Langlois for a complete study of the subject.

⁸ Holmes, History, 302.

⁹ Ibid., 301.

¹⁰ Langlois, Origines, 21.

¹¹ Ibid., 21-22.

¹² Holmes, History, 307.

¹³ C. S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love (London, 1951), 151.

¹⁴ See Charles Muscatine, Chaucer and the French Tradition (Los Angeles, 1966) for a full discussion of Chaucer's adaptation of the French styles.

¹⁵ Lewis, Allegory, 141.

¹⁶ Ibid., 148.

¹⁷ Holmes, History, 306.

18 J. Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages (Garden City, New York, 1954), 114.

19 Ibid., 117.

20 Ibid., 117.

21 Ibid., 117.

22 Albert Pauphilet, ed., Poètes et Romanciers du Moyen Âge (Paris, 1952), 953.

23 John Livingston Lowes, Geoffrey Chaucer and the Development of His Genius (New York, 1934), 84-85.

24 Pauphilet, Poètes, 968-69.

25 All quotes from Chaucer's work are taken from F. N. Robinson, ed., The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer (Boston, 1957) and will be indicated by page and line numbers only.

26 Lounsbury's argument and a summary of Skeat's can be found in Thomas Lounsbury, Studies in Chaucer (New York, 1892), II.

27 See Robinson's Works and Robert K. Root, The Poetry of Chaucer (Boston, 1906) for a full account of this.

28 Clemen, Poetry, 24.

III. Translation of La Vieille's Sermon

1 The line "Fors a baston ou a potence" literally translates "Outside of using a baton (baston) or a T-shaped baton [potence]."

2 L'estuve---a public bath.

3 "Sage"---usually "wise" or "sage" but also "learned" or "instructed" as is more appropriate here.

4 At line 16171 Jean refers to Albus as a "Bon escrivain" along with Aristotle, Ptolemy and Plato.

5 "ses dis figures"---here Arab numerals.

6 An old French coin, small in size, made of silver.

7 "avez trop le bec jaune"---literally "because you have too much the yellow beak."

8 The Wife of Bath was also born too soon for many of her ideas to find acceptance, particularly those concerning democracy.

9 "plumasse" is "gruger"---to render in granules.

10 "D'aquerre a faire sa despense"---to amass or acquire goods in her pantry that she may use them to do what she would, or to serve her needs or to be compatible with her pleasures.

11 "pourpoise," meaning, of course, her present job guarding Bel Accueil in the tower.

12 There is more than a touch of irony here, as it is La Vieille who allows the lover to visit Bel Accueil, and her suggestion which later frees him before the "attack" she speaks of; a hint of the Wife of Bath, perhaps, who cannot see what she reveals about herself in her tale and in the Prologue.

13 "en amour metre"---to put [oneself] in love.

14 "senz beste vendre"---without being sold, or selling, stupidly.

15 "abandon" but also to permit or concede.

16 La Vieille means at the end of her sermon to Bel Accueil.

17 In the sense of liberal or promiscuous.

18 "enchièrement"---to make more dear.

19 This switch to speaking of millers and grain suggests La Vieille may be quoting a parable.

20 An abbé who had charge of one of the churches on the Meun river.

21 These lines appear in reverse order in the original.

22 "toutes refaire"---made completely new again, or remade or redid all of them.

23 Jason's father.

24 Although Chaucer says he wrote the Legend of Good Women to atone for translating the Roman, here in the Roman itself is a miniature account of women faithful, or at least all betrayed, in love.

25 "sirons"---bumps that are caused by insects underneath the skin surface.

26 This, probably, is Chaucer's direct source for his description of the Prioress at the table in the General Prologue.

27 The Prioress never dipped too deeply or sloppily in her sauce, although the Monk's sleeves were "purfiled at the hond/With grys" (19, 193-94), which might easily indicate the Monk's love of food, and contrasts nicely with the picture of the Prioress.

28 The following sections are those Chaucer adapted for the Wife of Bath's ideas on democracy.

29 Apparently signifying any magician.

30 It is ironic that despite all her advice La Vieille has never married, never come into any estate. Perhaps Chaucer used this for the Wife, who, despite her beliefs, was not fruitful, did not multiply.

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THE ROMAN DE LA ROSE AND CHAUCER

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

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The Roman de la Rose is a work both typical and unique in the history of French and English literature. It was written by two men, Jean de Meun and Guillaume de Lorris, the former continuing the work of the latter about forty years after Guillaume's death. The dating of the entire work is uncertain, but Guillaume's portion was probably written 1225-1227 and Jean's shortly after 1267.

Guillaume's sources included the traditional use of dreams, although his use of them is unusual in that he does not question their source or purpose. He adhered completely to the courtly tradition in writing and used the courtly style as he himself was an aristocrat and a learned man. He relied on the Anticlaudianus of Alain de Lille, Andreas Capellanus's De arte honeste amandi, and an anonymous twelfth century poem, Pamphile. Guillaume also drew heavily on the Ovidian tradition and apparently intended to bring Ovid's Art of Love up to date.

Jean's sources included all the known ancients of his day and all the main topics of conversation at that time. His main literary sources were the de Planctu Naturae of Alain de Lille, Boethius's de Consolatione Philosophiae, Ovid and Guillaume de Saint-Amour. Jean was a member of the bourgeois class and adapted a style that included humor, a little didacticism and much satire. It is Jean's style which Chaucer later used in his own way and for his own purposes.

Guillaume's portion is made up of 4058 lines of rhymed, eight-syllable line couplets, with a caesura in the middle of

each line. The allegory revolves around the troubles of a young, courtly lover in wooing a young girl. The youth enters the garden of love and encounters what have since become the standard adornments of the typical May morning. The garden is reserved for courtly lovers only. He sees a rose tree and one particular rose, the young girl's love, that he desires to pluck. He is immediately assaulted by the god of love and driven outside the garden. Finally the young girl is given a nurse and Bel Acqueil a guard. Here Guillaume's portion ends.

Jean uses the same verse form as Guillaume, adding 17722 lines, but has no interest in allegory and the story becomes one of realistic battles and events. Jean's interest in the story itself is also superficial and he uses every opportunity to depart from Guillaume's tale. There are nine digressions within Jean's part: the fourth is the Sermonizing of La Vieille, The Old Woman, Bel Acqueil's guard. Jean does give the story a happy conclusion, however, and the lover is finally satisfied and Bel Acqueil freed.

The Roman was a success immediately. It provoked a great deal of controversy and influenced not only Chaucer in England, but Machaut, Deschamps and Froissart in France. Chaucer translated a part of the Roman, probably during his apprenticeship. On the whole, Chaucer's translation, which derives from Guillaume's portion, is more vigorous, emphatic, vivid and without the delicacy that characterized the original. The May morning, the songs of the birds and the flowers in bloom all appear in

the House of Fame with the May morning, which we also find in the Parliament of Fowles.

Chaucer also drew upon the Roman for the Canterbury Tales. The most outstanding example of adaptation and transformation is in La Vieille, who becomes Chaucer's Wife of Bath. Then follows the introduction to the translation and the translation of La Vieille's digression from the Roman de la Rose.