

**Department of English Language and Literature**

**Engl.330 English Literature I Fall**

**Summer Semester 1: 2020 – 2020**

**Instructor:** Dr. Lloyd Precious

**ONLINE SESSIONS**

T.R: 10:30 – 11:50

S.M.W: 11:00 – 12:50

**Course Description**

This course is designed for students majoring in English. It emphasizes reading and analysing great works of the British literary tradition from the Anglo-Saxon period to the restoration and eighteenth century. It also tests chronological models in various ways by juxtaposing literary works and authors from different periods within the same reading assignments.

**Course Objectives**

The course is designed to help students gain the following objectives:

* Become familiar with the development of English literature from the Old English period to the 18th century in terms of the various literary works, specific themes, literary devices and cultural assumptions.
* Develop skills in placing and framing literary and historical boundaries.
* Become better readers of literature by developing analytical and literary skills.
* Gain an understanding of literary terms used in the study of literature.
* Develop better writing skills, especially in writing about literature.
* Gain richer appreciation of literature in general and develop life-long habits of reading and thinking about literature.

Assignment 30%

Midterm 30%

Final 40%

**Total**: 100

**Class** **attendance** and preparation

You are expected to attend all classes on time, come prepared, and participate in class discussion. Student attendance policy stipulates that any student with absences double the number of weekly class sessions (**meaning 4 sessions**) risks failing the course. Missed lecture notes and handouts are your responsibility to obtain. Please have your course with you for all online sessions. **Zoom will automatically monitor all attendance.**

**Academic plagiarism**

All academic pursuit depends on trust. Signs of plagiarism will be severely penalized and will result in failure of the assignment. Plagiarism is commonly defined as **copying the ideas or words** of another, without the use of a proper form of academic documentation. There are essentially two kinds of plagiarism: *deliberate plagiarism* and *accidental plagiarism.* One may sound more acceptable than the other, but the fact is that both are equally serious academic offenses. In this class, accidental and deliberate plagiarism will be treated the same. You will be given a 0 for the first assignment found to contain plagiarism. A second offense will result in a failing grade for the course.

**Ritaj (Birzeit Academic Portal)**

I will post class updates on Ritaj; therefore, please make sure to check your Ritaj account at least once a week. Students can communicate with the instructor through Ritaj or email directly.

**Moodle**

All graded material must be uploaded to Moodle via the Ritaj system.

**Office hours**

I will arrange face-to-face office hours as necessary.

**CLASS SESSIONS WILL FOLLOW THE SEQUENCE OF MATEIALS IN THIS HAND-OUT**

**OVERVIEW**

This is a historical and critical overview of the development of English literature from Beowulf to the eighteenth century with emphasis on major writers and movements. It is highly unlikely that we will cover all the material in this syllabus but it can stand in for a general anthology of the period.

**Pre-requisite: ENGL238**

**Old English (Anglo-Saxon) Period (450–1066)**

The term Anglo-Saxon comes from two Germanic tribes, the Angles and the Saxons. This period of literature dates back to their invasion (along with the Jutes) of Celtic England circa 450. The era ends in 1066, when Norman France, under William, conquered England. Much of the first half of this period, prior to the seventh century, at least, had oral literature. A lot of the prose during this time was a translation of something else or legal, medical, or religious in nature; however, some works, such as "Beowulf*,*" and those by period poets Caedmon and Cynewulf, are important.

**Middle English Period (1066–1500)**

The Middle English period sees a huge transition in the language, culture, and lifestyle of England and results in what we can recognize today as a form of “modern” (recognizable) English. The era extends to around 1500. As with the [Old English period](https://www.thoughtco.com/old-english-anglo-saxon-1691449), much of the Middle English writings were religious in nature; however, from about 1350 onward, secular literature began to rise. This period is home to the likes of [Chaucer](https://www.thoughtco.com/geoffrey-chaucer-early-feminist-3529684), Thomas Malory, and Robert Henryson. Notable works include "Piers Plowman" and "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight."

**The Renaissance (1500–1660)**

Recently, critics and literary historians have begun to call this the “Early Modern” period, but here we retain the historically familiar term “Renaissance.” This period is often subdivided into four parts, including the Elizabethan Age (1558–1603), the Jacobean Age (1603–1625), the Caroline Age (1625–1649), and the Commonwealth Period (1649–1660).

The Elizabethan Age was the golden age of English drama. Some of its noteworthy figures include Christopher Marlowe, Francis Bacon, Edmund Spenser, Sir Walter Raleigh, and, of course, William Shakespeare. The Jacobean Age is named for the reign of James I. It includes the works of John Donne, Shakespeare, Michael Drayton, John Webster, Elizabeth Cary, Ben Jonson, and Lady Mary Wroth. The King James translation of the Bible also appeared during the Jacobean Age. The Caroline Age covers the reign of Charles I (“Carolus”). John Milton, Robert Burton, and George Herbert are some of the notable figures.

Finally, the Commonwealth Age was so named for the period between the end of the English Civil War and the restoration of the Stuart monarchy. This is the time when Oliver Cromwell, a Puritan, led Parliament, who ruled the nation. At this time, public theaters were closed (for nearly two decades) to prevent public assembly and to combat moral and religious transgressions. John Milton and Thomas Hobbes’ political writings appeared and, while drama suffered, prose writers such as Thomas Fuller, Abraham Cowley, and Andrew Marvell published prolifically.

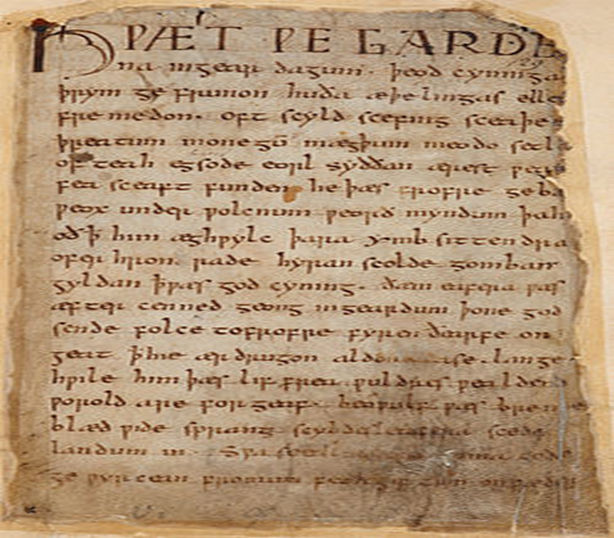
**The Neoclassical Period (1600–1785)**

The Neoclassical period is also subdivided into ages, including The Restoration (1660–1700), The Augustan Age (1700–1745), and The Age of Sensibility (1745–1785).The Restoration period sees some response to the puritanical age, especially in the theater. Restoration comedies (comedies of manner) developed during this time under the talent of playwrights such as William Congreve and John Dryden. Satire, too, became quite popular, as evidenced by the success of Samuel Butler. Other notable writers of the age include Aphra Behn, John Bunyan, and John Locke.

The Augustan Age was the time of Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift, who imitated those first Augustans and even drew parallels between themselves and the first set. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, a poet, was prolific at this time and noted for challenging stereotypically female roles. Daniel Defoe was also popular.

TheAge of Sensibility (sometimes referred to as the Age of Johnson) was the time of Edmund Burke, Edward Gibbon, Hester Lynch Thrale, James Boswell, and, of course, Samuel Johnson. Ideas such as neoclassicism, a critical and literary mode, and the Enlightenment, a particular worldview shared by many intellectuals, were championed during this age. Novelists to explore include Henry Fielding, Samuel Richardson, Tobias Smollett, and Laurence Sterne, as well as the poet William Cowper

**Beowulf**

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**AUDIO**

<http://www.openculture.com/2014/10/hear-beowulf-read-in-the-original-old-english.html>

**Sample of Original Text:**

1Hwæt. We Gardena in geardagum,

LO, praise of the prowess of people-kings

2þeodcyninga, þrym gefrunon,

of spear-armed Danes, in days long sped,

3hu ða æþelingas ellen fremedon.

we have heard, and what honor the athelings won!

4Oft Scyld Scefing sceaþena/ þreatum,

Oft Scyld the Scefing from squadroned foes,

5monegum mægþum, meodosetla ofteah,

from many a tribe, the mead-bench tore,

6egsode eorlas. Syððan ærest wearð/

awing the earls. Since erst he lay

7feasceaft funden, he þæs frofre gebad,

friendless, a foundling, fate repaid him:

**FULL TEXT**

[**https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/50114/beowulf-modern-english-translation**](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/50114/beowulf-modern-english-translation)

**SYNOPSIS**

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* [Prologue](https://www.pitt.edu/~dash/beowulf.html#prologue)
* [Part One: Beowulf and Grendel](https://www.pitt.edu/~dash/beowulf.html#one)
* [Part Two: Beowulf and Grendel's Mother](https://www.pitt.edu/~dash/beowulf.html#two)
* [Part Three: Beowulf and the Dragon](https://www.pitt.edu/~dash/beowulf.html#three)

**Prologue**

Listen! We have heard of the glory of the kings who ruled the Danes in olden times. Scyld Scefing often drove enemy warriors from their mead-hall benches, although he himself had once been a destitute foundling. In spite of this he came to prosper. With time all the neighboring tribes served him and paid him tribute. That was a good king!

Scyld died at the fated time. Following his wishes, his body was placed on a well-outfitted ship, laden with treasures and weapons. Then his kinsmen let the sea bear him away. No one on earth knows who received that ship's cargo.

**Part One: Beowulf and Grendel**

**1**

Following Scyld's death the kingship of the Danes passed to Scyld's son Beowulf [not the hero of this epic], then in turn to his son Healfdene, then to his son Hrothgar. Each of these successors proved to be a venerable leader.

I have heard tell how Hrothgar had a great mead-hall built. It was larger and grander than any such hall that anyone had ever heard of. He named the great hall Heorot. Here, with great ceremony, he dispensed lavish gifts to young and old, thus giving thanks for his own victories and prosperity.

Not long afterward the hall's merriment was brought to an end by a grim foe named Grendel, who haunted marshes and moors, fens and heath. This wretched being, along with monsters, elves, sea-beasts, and giants, was a descendent of Cain, whom the Lord had banished from mankind for the slaying of Abel.

**2**

Grendel attacked during the night. Following an evening of mead drinking, the Danish warriors were fast asleep. Grendel seized thirty of them, then carried them back to his lair. At dawn the survivors discovered their great loss. They saw the monster's tracks leading away from Heorot, but it was too late to save his victims.

These loathsome attacks continued for twelve winters. Night after night Grendel haunted the misty moors, pursuing his victims. Nor was anyone safe in Heorot, where he attacked at will.

Many of the grief-stricken Danes, seeing no other source of help, returned to their old heathen faith. Woe unto him who thus rejects the Lord.

**3**

Tidings of Grendel's attacks reached the country of the Geats. Beowulf, a thane of Hygelac, King of the Geats, heard of Grendel's deeds and resolved to come to the Danes' rescue. No one faulted him for this decision. He was a proven hero.

Beowulf had a ship outfitted for the journey, then chose fifteen warriors to accompany him. A skilled mariner pointed out the landmarks to them.

Driven by the wind, the ship sped across the waves. On the second day the sailors caught sight of gleaming cliffs and broad headlands. They went ashore and secured their ship.

A Danish guard saw them from the cliff as they came ashore with their shields and weapons. This thane of Hrothgar approached them on horseback. Waving his spear he challenged them with these words: "What warriors are you, sailing your great ship along the ocean-paths? I am a member of the coastguard, charged with protecting the Danish land. Never have I seen a band of warriors try to land here more openly than you have done. Who is your brave leader, and what is his lineage?"

**4**

Beowulf answered: "We are of the Geatish kin, Hygelac's hearth-companions. I am the son of a noble prince named Ecgtheow. We have come to serve the mighty lord of the Danes. We have heard that some secret destroyer causes great terror among the Scyldings on dark nights. I intend to help Hrothgar overcome this foe."

The coastguardsman pointed the way to Heorot, then returned to his post. Beowulf and his men hurried onward. The boar-images glistened above the cheek-guards on their helmets.

**5**

The street was paved with stones. The men followed this path to the great hall. Leaning their shields against the wall, they sat down upon the benches [outside the hall].

A warrior asked the heroes about their lineage: "Where have you come from, with your shields, war-shirts, visored helmets, and spears. I am Hrothgar's servant and herald. Never before have I seen such a band of strangers in such a courageous mood."

Beowulf answered: "We are table-companions of Hygelac. Beowulf is my name. I will reveal my errand to the son of Healfdene, your great king, if you will take us to him."

Wulfgar (that was the herald's name) quickly went to Hrothgar, now old and white-haired. Wulfgar spoke: "Geatish warriors have arrived here from across the sea. They call their chieftain Beowulf. They have requested to speak with you."

**6**

Hrothgar spoke: "I knew Beowulf when he was a child. His father was called Ecgtheow, and he has come as a loyal friend. Moreover, seafarers have reported here that Beowulf is strong in battle. The grip of his hand is said to have the strength of thirty men. Bid him and his band of kinsmen welcome among the Danish people.

Wulfgar came to the door of the hall and announced from within: "My victorious lord bids me say that he knows your noble lineage. You are welcome here. You may come inside to Hrothgar, wearing your armor and helmets, but leave your spears outside until after you have spoken." Beowulf approached Hrothgar, then spoke: "Hail to thee, Hrothgar! In my native land I learned of Grendel's deeds. Seafarers report that this great hall is useless for all men after nightfall. Knowing my great strength, my people urged me to come to your aid. They have seen me return from battle stained with the blood of my foes. I have destroyed a race of giants and have slain sea-beasts by night. Now I have come to cleanse Heorot of the evil that has come upon it. Furthermore, I have learned that Grendel, the giant monster, has no fear of weapons, so I will fight him with my bare hands, without sword or shield. If I fail, have no concern about my burial; Grendel will devour my corpse. Do, however, send my chainmail back to Hygelac. It is the best of armor, inherited from Hrethel [Beowulf's grandfather], and the work of Weland [a legendary smith].

**7**

Hrothgar replied: "We thank you for coming to our defense. It is with sorrow that I tell what shame and grief Grendel has caused. Many of my best warriors have fallen victim to his horrid clutch. Often my warriors have boastfully vowed while drinking their ale to take vengeance, but the next morning the mead-hall has been stained with their blood. Join us now in a feast and share with my men how you plan to achieve victory."

In the mead-hall a bench was made ready for the Geats. Mead was served. A bard sang with a clear voice. The assembled warriors rejoiced, Geats and Danes alike.

**8**

However, one of the Danes, Unferth by name, was jealous of the attention given to Beowulf, and seeking to stir up a quarrel he spoke: "Are you the Beowulf who foolishly challenged Breca to a swimming contest, risking your lives in the deep water? No one could turn you away from the foolhardy venture, and the two of you swam out into the ocean. For seven nights the two of you battled the waters, but he had the greater strength, and he outlasted you. The waves drove him ashore on the coast of Norway, and he was proclaimed the winner. I expect even worse results for you with your contest against Grendel."

Beowulf answered: "Unferth, my friend, in your drunkenness you have said much about my adventure with Breca. Now I will tell the truth of what happened. When we were still boys Breca and I had boasted that one day we would test our strength at sea; and we did as we had spoken in our youth. To defend ourselves against whales we swam carrying naked swords in our hands. Neither of us could gain an advantage over the other one, and thus we swam together for five nights, until finally the cold waves drove us apart. The sea-fish grew angry, but my shirt of chainmail protected me. An evil monster dragged me to the bottom, but I was able to stab the creature with the point of my sword, and then dispatched him with my hand."

**9**

Beowulf continued: "Other evil creatures attacked me, but I killed them all with my sword. Never again would they hinder seafarers. With the morning light the waves were stilled. Destiny had not doomed me to die. Instead, I had slain nine sea monsters with my sword. I escaped from all these perils, and the current finally carried me to the land of the Finns. Unferth, I have never heard of such exploits on your part. No, neither you nor Breca has ever performed so goodly. If you were as fierce in battle as you claim to be, the heath monster Grendel would not have been so successful in his attacks against the Danish people. He kills and feasts without fear of the Danes, but I will show him the strength and courage of the Geats. After that whoever will may drink mead in this great hall without fear."

The gray-haired king rejoiced in these words; he trusted in Beowulf for help. Laughter and joyous words rang throughout the hall.

**10**

That night Beowulf and his kinsmen-in-arms kept watch in the great hall. Trusting in his own strength and in the Lord's favor, he took off his chainmail and helmet, and gave his sword to a thane for safekeeping. All the watchmen save one fell asleep. Beowulf waited and watched.

**11**

Grendel drew near from the moorland beneath the misty hillsides. Heorot's door, although secured with fire-hardened bands, opened at his first touch. In the hall he saw many sleeping warriors, and he laughed in his heart. Thinking to kill each one, he hoped for a bountiful feast. The mighty kinsman of Hygelac was watching to see how the foe would attack. Suddenly the monster seized a sleeping thane, tore him to pieces, then drank his blood and devoured his corpse. He stepped nearer to Beowulf, clutching at him with his claw, but the great warrior took hold of Grendel's arm with great strength. Never before had this master of evil encountered such human strength. He tried to flee into the darkness, but he could not break Beowulf's powerful grip. Grendel's fingers finally burst and bled. The two opponents wrestled madly. The hall echoed with the sound of their battle. It was a wonder that the building did not fall to the ground. As I have heard men tell, their struggles tore many a mead-bench from its base.

**12**

Beowulf's warriors drew their swords, hoping to protect the life of their lord, but when they plunged into the fight they soon discovered that their blades were useless against this foul destroyer. By a spell Grendel had protected himself against all weapons. But nonetheless, this day he was doomed to die a wretched death. A gaping wound appeared on his shoulder, and mortally wounded, he fled, full knowing that the appointed number of his days had now come.

The lord of the Geats had made good his earlier boast. The Danes' affliction was now at an end. Rejoicing, the warrior threw down a token of his victory: the whole claw and arm of Grendel.

**13**

As I have heard, warriors from near and far assembled at Heorot to behold the foe's tracks, which lead to the Mere of Water Demons. Its waters were seething with blood, and its waves were mingled with gore. There in the depths he gave up his heathen soul to Hel [Loki's daughter, and the ruler of the realm of the dead].

With rejoicing the warrior returned to Heorot and to a great celebration. One of the king's thanes who knew old tales without number, cleverly composed a new story, a truthful tale, narrating Beowulf's adventure.

He also told everything that he had heard of the mighty Sigemund, the son of Wælsing [Volsung], including exploits of which the son of men knew nothing, save Fitala [Sinfiötli], his nephew and comrade. Sigemund's great fame carried forth beyond his death, for he had slain the dragon who kept guard over the treasure. In his daring exploits he was by far the most famed of adventurers among the nations.

**14**

Hrothgar went to the hall, beheld Grendel's arm, and spoke: "Praise God for this miracle. Through his power a man has achieved that which we ourselves were unable to do. Praise be to the woman who gave birth to this man. Beowulf, henceforth I shall love you like a son."

Then Beowulf, son of Ecgtheow, spoke, recounting the details of his battle with Grendel. Unferth, too, was present, but he made no more boastful speeches, now having seen the monster's dismembered hand with its steel-like claws.

**15**

Strait away Heorot was adorned for a great feast. A large crowd gathered there in celebration. There the son of Healfdene gave to Beowulf many lavish gifts, including a golden ensign, a helmet, a coat of chainmail, a mighty sword, and eight horses with golden bridles.

**16**

Moreover, Hrothgar bestowed precious heirlooms upon each man who had crossed the sea with Beowulf. The celebration continued with singing and music. The harp was struck, and the king's bard presented the oft-sung Lay of King Finn.

**17**

After the gleeman had finished singing Wealhtheow [Hrothgar's wife] came forth. She presented her king with a golden cup, saying: "Be gracious toward the Geats and mindful of gifts. Be generous while you may."

**18**

Thereupon many additional precious gifts were brought to Beowulf, including two armlets, rings, armor, and the greatest collar that I have ever heard tell of since Hama carried away the necklace of the Brisings.

"Receive this collar with joy, and prosper well, dear Beowulf," said Wealhtheow.

The celebration then continued with food and wine. When evening fell Hrothgar returned to his lodgings. The guards, as they had often done before, cleared the benches and covered them with bedding and pillows. Doomed to death, one of the revelers laid himself down to rest with his comrades.

**Part Two: Grendel's Mother**

**19**

They fell asleep, but one paid dearly for his rest. Although the old foe was dead, there lived an avenger: Grendel's mother. This woman-monster brooded over her woes. A descendant of Cain, she too lived in the wilderness removed from the joys of men. She came to Heorot determined to seek revenge for the death of her son. Hastily she clutched one of the heroes in his sleep, a favorite thane of Hrothgar. Then retrieving Grendel's arm she retreated to her lair.

Beowulf was not there, for he had been given another lodging place. Awakened, the warriors in the hall sounded the alarm.

**20**

Hrothgar mourned the murder of Æschere, his thane. He sensed who had done the evil deed, for he had heard from people dwelling in the countryside of two night-stalkers of the marshes and moors, one like unto a woman, the other in the image of a miscreated man. They were said to dwell among the wolf-haunted slopes, savage fen-paths, and wind-swept cliffs where mountain streams fall, shrouded in the mists of the headlands. Not far from there is a mere. Trees hang over its waters, and at night-time can be seen a dreadful wonder: fire on the flood. No man knows its depth.

He addressed Beowulf: "Once again help rests with you alone. Seek out this savage and cheerless spot, if you dare. I will reward you with great treasure, as I did before, if you succeed in getting there alive."

**21**

Beowulf replied: "Sorrow not. It is better for a man to avenge his friend than to mourn exceedingly. Each of us will one day reach the end of worldly life. Therefore let him who may, win glory before he dies. That is a warrior's greatest boon at life's end. Now let us follow the tracks of Grendel's mother. I promise you, she shall not escape."

The old man jumped up, thanking God for Beowulf's words. Accompanied by a troop of warriors they followed the foe's tracks over steep and rocky slopes, over sheer cliffs, and past many a sea-monster's haunt. Suddenly they came upon a mere, overhung with a cheerless wood. And there, to their disgust and dismay, they discovered Æschere's head. Below, the mere's waters seethed with blood and gore.

The troop sat down. They saw serpents and dragons swimming in the water and sea-monsters lying along the headland-slopes. They sounded the battle horn, and the creatures sped away, but not before Beowulf killed one of them with his bow and arrow.

Then Beowulf, taking no thought for his own life, put on his armor of chainmail and his helmet, fitted with boar figures so that no sword could bite it. He picked up the sword, Hrunting by name, that Unferth had lent him. One of the greatest among ancient treasures, its iron blade was stained with poison and hardened with the blood of battle.

**22**

Taking leave of Hrothgar, Beowulf set forth into the mere. It took the better part of a day before he sighted the bottom.

The blood-thirsty monster who had lived there for a hundred seasons [fifty years] soon discovered his presence, and she seized the warrior with her horrid claws. His ringed armor protected him, and she did him no harm, but she did drag him into her dwelling. The hero saw that he was in a hall where the water could do him no harm. He attacked the mighty mere-woman, the she-wolf of the deep, with his sword, but he found that he could not wound her with it. Throwing the famous sword to the ground, he again trusted in his strength. He seized Grendel's mother by the shoulder and threw her to the floor. She fought back fiercely, causing him to stumble and fall. She sat on him and stabbed at him with her dagger, but again his coat of chainmail protected him. Finally he regained his feet.

**23**

Then he saw hanging on the wall an old sword from the age of giants. It was the choicest of weapons, but it was a sword for giants, too heavy for any man to carry into battle. Still, the great hero seized the hilt and savagely struck out at the monster. The blow caught her at the neck and sliced off her doomed head.

Suddenly light filled the place, and the victorious warrior looked about. He saw Grendel's body. As a final act of vengeance, Beowulf cut off his lifeless head.

On shore Hrothgar and his men were watching the mere. Seeing the troubled waves mingled with blood, they feared that the sea-wolf had torn Beowulf to pieces. At the ninth hour of the day the Danes returned to their homes, but the Geats, Beowulf's comrades-in-arms, remained there sick at heart.

Meanwhile the sword in Beowulf's hand began to waste away. Drenched in blood, it melted away like an icicle at winter's end. Beowulf saw great treasures there in the hall, but all that he took away was Grendel's head and the hilt of the sword, its blade having wasted away.

He swam to the surface, and his valiant thanes rejoiced in seeing him safe and sound. They returned to Heorot, bearing Grendel's head upon a spear.

**24**

Beowulf spoke to King Hrothgar: "Behold this token of victory. I nearly perished, for the great sword Hrunting proved ineffective in my struggle against the fiend, but at last I saw an old and mighty sword hanging on the wall, and with this sword I slew the enemy. Her blood melted the great sword's blade, but the hilt I have carried away as a sign that henceforth your men may sleep peacefully in Heorot."

With these words Beowulf presented to King Hrothgar the hilt, the ancient work of giants, created before the flood destroyed the giant race. Its guard was of shining gold, graven correctly with runic letters and brightly adorned with snakes.

**25**

King Hrothgar spoke: "Dear Beowulf, best of men, keep yourself from arrogance and envy. You are now at the peak of your power, but with age your strength will wane, and with time death will overcome you."

The next morning Beowulf announced his desire to return to his own homeland. With kind thanks he returned the sword Hrunting to Unferth, generously praising the ancient weapon. He was a man of noble spirit!

**26**

Beowulf spoke to King Hrothgar: "We seafarers now return to our King Hygelac. You have been good to us. If, beyond the waters, I learn that you are again in need, I will forthwith return with a thousand warriors to help you."

Hrothgar answered: "Because of you there will always be peace between our people, the Geats and the Danes. Feuds and strife from the past are now behind us."

Then the aged king, unable to contain his grief at Beowulf's parting, gave the hero additional treasures. He was a king blameless in every way until old age robbed him of his strength.

**27**

As the warriors approached the sea they were kindly greeted by the coastguardsman. They loaded their horses, armor, and treasures aboard their ship, and before departing Beowulf gave the guard an heirloom sword bound with gold.

They steered the ship into deep water, then hoisted a cloth sail. The ship groaned, and the wind drove them across the waters, always on course, until at last they saw the familiar headlands and cliffs of their homeland. The harbor guard, who had long looked out to sea for his beloved countrymen, moored their ship with ropes, securing it from the waves.

**28-30**

King Hygelac greeted the returning hero ceremoniously. Burning with curiosity about the latter's adventures, he asked: "How did you fare on your journey to help the Danes?"

"My battle with Grendel is already known to many," replied Beowulf. Then he recounted in detail his entire adventure: his arrival at Heorot, his hand-to-hand fight with Grendel, his slaying of the monster's mother at the bottom of the mere, and his reward of great treasures at the hand of King Hrothgar.

**31**

Beowulf concluded his account by praising the generosity of King Hrothgar. "He followed courtly custom," said the hero. "He withheld nothing that was my due; and I wish now to give to you, my king, the great treasures that he gave me as a reward."

Beowulf then had the arms and treasures brought forth, and he told the story behind each heirloom.

King Hygelac responded by presenting to Beowulf Hrethel's sword, a famous heirloom. Furthermore, he gave him seven thousand hides of land and a hall. Then he named him prince and successor to his own throne.

At Hygelac's death Beowulf became king. He ruled wisely for fifty winters, and then a reign of terror visited the land of the Geats.

**Part Three: Beowulf and the Dragon**

**32**

A great treasure lay hidden in an upland barrow, but all those who had buried it died before bequesting it to their surviving kin. As they are wont to do, a malicious dragon found the hoard and assumed possession of it. For three hundred winters he jealously guarded the treasure.

Then one day a thief broke into the dragon's hoard and stole a golden cup. He was not a willful thief, but rather a runaway slave who had escaped a cruel master. Discovering the treasure by chance, the thief took a golden cup, hoping to pacify his master with it.

Discovering his loss, the flaming dragon emerged from his lair to seek revenge.

**33**

The monster spewed forth flames and destroyed many dwellings by fire, including Beowulf's home, the best of halls.

**34-35**

Once again facing a life-and-death conflict with a superhuman foe, Beowulf reminisced about the contests and victories of his earlier life. Ever mindful of a king's duty toward his people, he vowed: "In the days of my youth I ventured on many battles; and even now will I, aged guardian of my people, challenge this destroyer, if he will come forth from his den to meet me."

Beowulf advanced to the dragon's lair alone, trusting in his single strength. That is no coward's way. With a clear voice he challenged the serpent to appear. The evil beast's breath emerged from the rocks. The earth quaked, and the serpent appeared. The lord of the Geats swung his shield against the awful foe, then struck at him with his ancestral sword, but to no avail. The blade failed to penetrate.

This was to be no pleasant journey for Beowulf: he was now doomed to leave this earth forever against his will, the fate of all men.

Before long the two fighters confronted one another again. The serpent plucked up his courage and renewed his attack. Beowulf's companions had all fled into the woods to save their lives. Only one of them came to his lord's aid.

**36**

The lone brave companion was a beloved warrior named Wiglaf. Seeing his threatened lord, Wiglaf remembered the many benefits that Beowulf had given him in the past. He picked up his sword and shield and advanced through the deadly fumes to help his lord.

"Beloved Beowulf," he said, "in your youth you swore that you would not let your fame decline as long as you lived. You must now defend your life with all your might. I shall help you!"

Hearing these words, the dragon attacked a second time. The serpent's flaming breath burned Wiglaf's shield to ashes, so the young warrior was forced to seek refuge behind his kinsman's shield. Beowulf, intent on glory, drove his sword Naegling into the dragon's head. So fierce was the blow that it shattered the blade. As I have heard, Beowulf's hand was so strong, that no sword could withstand his full strength.

The fiery dragon attacked a third time, seizing Beowulf by the neck with his sharp teeth. The hero's blood flowed forth in streams.

**37**

I have heard how Wiglaf showed unceasing courage and skill in the king's great need. The young hero instead of attacking the dragon's head aimed his sword blows a little lower, wounding the beast such that the fire began to wane.

Beowulf recovered somewhat, and drawing his short sword he cut the serpent in two. Thus they struck down the foe. Together the two noble kinsmen destroyed him, but this was the king's last hour of victory, his final worldly deed.

The wound that the dragon had given Beowulf began to burn and swell. Knowing that his appointed days on earth were now at an end, Beowulf spoke: "Fifty winters have I ruled this people, during which time no neighboring king has dared to attack us. At home I have accepted my fate. I have sought no quarrels and have sworn no false oaths. In all this I can take joy, although I now suffer from fatal wounds."

Beowulf further asked Wiglaf to seek out the dragon's treasure and describe it to him, thus giving him comfort knowing about this part of the legacy he was leaving to his country.

**38**

I have heard how Wiglaf descended into the barrow where he saw the great hoard: jewels, gold, cups, vessels, and arm-rings. Filling his arms with treasures, Wiglaf rushed back to his king. He found him bleeding and near death.

Seeing the treasure, Beowulf spoke: "I give thanks that I was able to gain these precious things for my people before I died. I have paid for this treasure hoard with my aged life. You must now fulfill the needs of the people with it. I can no longer be here. After my body has been burned have the warriors build a memorial mound for me on a coastal promontory. Seafarers will call it *Beowulf's Mound.*"

The generous king then gave the young warrior his golden neck-piece, his helmet, his ring, and his coat of chainmail, then told him to enjoy them well.

"You are now the last of our kin," he said to Wiglaf. Fate has taken away all my kinsmen. I must follow them."

These were the old king's final words. His soul departed to seek the reward of the righteous.

**39**

It greatly grieved the young warrior to see his beloved one lying lifeless on the ground. His slayer lay there too, defeated and dead. No longer would this serpent rule over treasure hoards. No more would he whirl through the air at midnight.

As I have heard, very few men in the world had ever withstood the venomous blasts from such a foe. Beowulf had won the dragon's hoard, but he had paid for his share of this wealth with his life. Not long afterward the cowards who had fled into the woods returned. Ten in number, they shamefully came to where the old man lay. They looked upon Wiglaf who was trying to revive his lord with water, but to no avail.

Wiglaf addressed the traitors: "You stand there wearing chainmail and carrying the finest arms, all given to you by our king, but in his hour of distress, you all abandoned him. Henceforth you shall all be deprived of the landowners' privileges formerly bestowed upon you."

**40-41**

Wiglaf ordered that the battle's outcome be announced in the stronghold. A band of mourners proceeded to the place where their beloved king had fallen. They first came upon the loathsome beast, all scorched with flames. He was fifty feet long. The creature who had at nighttime frolicked through the air now lay lifeless on the sand. Never again would he return to his barrow. Nearby stood golden bowls, cups, dishes, and precious swords, rusty and decayed as if they had lain in the earth's bosom for a thousand winters. A spell had been cast upon that vast hoard, the gold of men of old, that no one could enter the treasure-house unless God himself so willed it.

**42**

Wiglaf summoned together seven of the king's best thanes, himself the eighth, and together they entered the dragon's lair. They loaded gold of every sort and beyond measure upon a wagon and carried it away with them. They pushed the dragon's body over the cliff into the sea and let the waves carry it away.

The Geatish people prepared a magnificent pyre for their great king. Mourning warriors laid their beloved lord in its midst, then kindled the funeral fire. Wood smoke ascended, black above the flames. The roar of the fire mingled with the sound of weeping, until at last the body was consumed. Heaven swallowed the smoke.

A Geatish woman sang a sad lament for Beowulf, expressing fear of evil days ahead.

The Geatish people made a mound upon the cliff. It was high and broad, and could be seen from afar by seafaring men. They built a wall around the fire's ashes, the famous *Warrior's Beacon*. Within the mound they put the rings, jewels, and adornments that the warriors had taken from the hoard. Thus they returned the treasure to the earth, where it still remains, as useless to men now as it was in times of old.

Twelve warriors, sons of princes, rode about the mound, praising their hero's courage and his mighty deeds.

Thus the Geatish people mourned their fallen lord. They said that he was a mighty king, the mildest and kindest of men, most kind to his people, and most desirous of praise.

[D. L. Ashliman](http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/ashliman.html)  
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**The Wanderer**



**(**URL of this page: http://www.hermitary.com/literature/wanderer.html  
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Here is an economical version of "The Wanderer." The English translations of Diamond, Romano, and Thorpe were consulted, as well as the Leslie and the Dunning and Bliss editions of the original. Other sources of reflection included ancient Chinese poems and the cluster of British Post-World War I poems on similar subjects of war and ruin, plus the Anglos-Saxon and Germanic poems of the era, and varied literary sources such as those mentioned above.

Brevity and clarity of feeling were the guiding points for this version. It deviates from the original in everything technical because that was not what I wanted to capture -- not scholarship but emotion. This is made more obvious by the fact that the original and full translations run 115 lines, while my version is less than half the length at 56 lines.

The Anglo-Saxon poem was meant to be sung, hence memorized. The elegy dates from no later than the eleventh century, more likely hundreds of years earlier; it dates more or less from the era of *Beowulf*, the most familiar of the Anglo-Saxon poems. "The Wanderer" conjures the perennial fear of the European Dark Age outposts of modest civilization: violence and the rapacity of unseen and unpredictable forces. It is an uncertainty vaguely reflected in all cultures over time and distance, not exempting today.

The poem presents the despair of a vassal whose lord and retainers were slain in a marauders' attack, and the whole town and its people wiped out. The poet has survived, but the horror of that day haunts him. He takes up a little boat to seek out a new lord and a welcoming village, but everywhere he goes he encounters the same carnage and destruction. And so the poet is a wanderer on the face of the land and sea, suffering a grim and irreconcilable solitude.

Despite its apparent literalness, there is symbolism and irony in "The Wanderer." As with any poem, much can be discovered whether the poem was conscious of it or not. The position of simplicity of mind is very effective in presenting such a heartfelt narrative.

An obvious interpolation was made by a pious editor, who added lines expressing religious optimism at the beginning and at the end of the poem. But these lines do not fit the tone of the poem at all, and so have been omitted.

**THE WANDERER**

The solitary looks for the favor of fortune,  
For serene waters and a welcoming haven.  
But his lot is to plough the wintry seas.  
An exile's fate is decreed for him.

Each dawn stirs old sorrows.  
The slaughter of lord, kin, village, and keep.  
Best to swallow grief, to blot out memories.  
Best to seal up the heart's wretchedness.

There is none with whom to speak,  
No one alive who will understand.  
Best to hide sorrow in one's chest.  
The storms of fate suffice to busy me.

Years ago, I buried my master in the ground.  
Grieving, I crossed winter seas seeking another:  
A generous lord to share hall and treasure,  
And I a friendless man seeking order anew.

But frostbite and hunger are my lot now.  
My sleep is haunted by dreams of the past:  
I kneel acknowledging my master's gift.  
Gladly I accept a boon of gold in service.

Then the seabirds' shriek startles me.  
I shiver in the dark dawn's frost and hail.  
My heart recalls the image of my dream.  
The pangs of sorrow and exile reawaken.

The present is overthrown by the past.  
Rue rash youth's squandering of fortune.  
All things dissipate like sea mist.  
There is nothing to cling to but memories.

Is not the wise man's virtue patience?  
Oaths and intemperance are follies.  
The wise man guards his heart with caution.  
The cheerful hall will be desolate in old age.

Everywhere the wind blows through empty ruins.  
A few walls are left, covered with frost.  
Unburied dead, once proud kin, lie wretched.  
They are the sad prey of crows and wolves.

The lands were made desolate in a stroke.  
Now the halls and remnants are silent.  
Stonework empty, wealth dissipated:  
Everywhere the same thing meets the eye.

Horse, rider, ring-giver, chalice,  
High seats, hall-sounds -- where are they?  
So asks my dark mind, full of grief.  
Gone, as if never having been.

Storms blast the rocky cliffs.  
Blizzards lash earth and sea.  
Winter comes, darkness falls.  
The world lies silent and empty.

No men or women to be found.  
All in this life is suffering.  
No good fortune to be expected.  
No abode but a house of sorrow.

The wise man cloaks his heart:  
Steadfastness and temperance.  
He does well to dissemble his feelings.  
Let his faith rest in that alone.

**GEOFFREY CHAUCER**



Summary of the General Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*

 The Canterbury Tales begin in April, as the narrator (Chaucer) begins a pilgrimage from the Tabard Inn at Southwerk to the famed Canterbury, where Sir Thomas a Becket, a martyr for Christianity, is supposedly buried. The General Prologue is a basic descriptive list of the twenty-nine people who become pilgrims to journey to Canterbury, each telling a story along the way. The narrator describes and lists the pilgrims skillfully, according to their rank and status.

The first pilgrim mentioned in the prologue is properly the Knight, a worthy man who has fought in the crusades. A Squire accompanies the Knight as his son and is a young bachelor of twenty years with an eye for women. The Knight also brings along his Yeoman, or his second servant. A shy, polite Prioress who is well mannered and proper wears a fine broach with inscriptions about love, her secretary, also known as the Second Nun, and a Monk also join the pilgrims to see the martyr. The Monk loves to hunt and is robust and masculine, while the friar, Friar Hubert, is an overtly immoral man who cares more about money and profit than truly helping men stay away from sin.

Next in the prologue is the Merchant from Flanders who is pompous and verbose on economics. He continually talks about increasing his profits in several ways. Although simply concerned about money, the narrator comments that he is truly a good man, nonetheless. The Clerk is an unemployed Oxford student making the pilgrimage perhaps to help him find money and a job. He is dressed in rags, alluding to his impoverished status. The Man of Law is a revered soul who believes he is owed respect, for he is knowledgeable of the law and appears to be much busier than he is in actuality. The Franklin accompanies the Man of Law on the pilgrimage and is simply concerned with the pleasures in life - namely food. His desires lie far from those of academia and worship.

The narrator then gives a list of five guildsmen of little importance on this trip. They are the Weaver, the Dyer, the Carpenter, the Tapestry-Maker, and the Haberdasher. There is also a Cook and a Shipman (or Sailor) from the port of Dartsmouth, and a Physician. The strong-willed Wife of Bath also makes the journey to Canterbury, wears bright, ostentatious clothing for the ride and tells of her five marriages and multiple youthful partners in bed, striking intrigue and curiosity amongst the pilgrims on the journey.

The next pilgrim is the Parson, a man of honor and kindness who remains true to Christ and his congregation. His brother, a Plowman, is also on the journey and is described with equally benevolent words by Chaucer. The last few pilgrims who are mentioned briefly are a physically large Miller, an intellectual and academic Manciple from a lawyer's college, a slender, fiery-tempered Reeve, a Summoner, and a Pardoner. The Summoner is immoral and unfair in his position of summoning people to church for their crimes, for he picks and chooses those whom he likes and dislikes, while the poor Pardoner is simply weak and effeminate.

All of these travelers are in the Tabard Inn prepared to make their way to Canterbury. The host, now described as a merry, bold, strong man, makes the recommendation that each person tell two stories on the way to Canterbury and two stories on the way back. Everyone draws from a bundle to select the first taletellers and the Knight is the fortunate soul who begins these tales on the way to Canterbury.

**CANTERBURY TALES   
GENERAL PROLOGUE**

**by Geoffrey Chaucer**

The Hypertext version at JSU's local site is prepared by Dr. Joanne E. Gates. Lines have been numbered to conform to the *Longman Anthology of British Literature*, Volume 1A (2nd edition at page 302).

**PROLOGUE**   
**Here begins the Book**   
**of the Tales of Canterbury**

1. When April with his showers sweet with fruit
2. The drought of March has pierced unto the root
3. And bathed each vein with liquor that has power
4. To generate therein and sire the flower;
5. When Zephyr also has, with his sweet breath,
6. Quickened again, in every holt and heath,
7. The tender shoots and buds, and the young sun
8. Into the Ram one half his course has run,
9. And many little birds make melody
10. That sleep through all the night with open eye
11. (So Nature pricks them on to ramp and rage)-
12. Then do folk long to go on pilgrimage,
13. And palmers to go seeking out strange strands,
14. To distant shrines well known in sundry lands.
15. And specially from every shire's end
16. Of England they to Canterbury wend,
17. The holy blessed martyr there to seek
18. Who helped them when they lay so ill and weal
19. Befell that, in that season, on a day
20. In Southwark, at the Tabard, as I lay
21. Ready to start upon my pilgrimage
22. To Canterbury, full of devout homage,
23. There came at nightfall to that hostelry
24. Some nine and twenty in a company
25. Of sundry persons who had chanced to fall
26. In fellowship, and pilgrims were they all
27. That toward Canterbury town would ride.
28. The rooms and stables spacious were and wide,
29. And well we there were eased, and of the best.
30. And briefly, when the sun had gone to rest,
31. So had I spoken with them, every one,
32. That I was of their fellowship anon,
33. And made agreement that we'd early rise
34. To take the road, as you I will apprise.
35. But none the less, whilst I have time and space,
36. Before yet farther in this tale I pace,
37. It seems to me accordant with reason
38. To inform you of the state of every one
39. Of all of these, as it appeared to me,
40. And who they were, and what was their degree,
41. And even how arrayed there at the inn;
42. And with a knight thus will I first begin.

THE KNIGHT

1. A knight there was, and he a worthy man,
2. Who, from the moment that he first began
3. To ride about the world, loved chivalry,
4. Truth, honour, freedom and all courtesy.
5. Full worthy was he in his liege-lord's war,
6. And therein had he ridden (none more far)
7. As well in Christendom as heathenesse,
8. And honoured everywhere for worthiness.
9. At Alexandria, he, when it was won;
10. Full oft the table's roster he'd begun
11. Above all nations' knights in Prussia.
12. In Latvia raided he, and Russia,
13. No christened man so oft of his degree.
14. In far Granada at the siege was he
15. Of Algeciras, and in Belmarie.
16. At Ayas was he and at Satalye
17. When they were won; and on the Middle Sea
18. At many a noble meeting chanced to be.
19. Of mortal battles he had fought fifteen,
20. And he'd fought for our faith at Tramissene
21. Three times in lists, and each time slain his foe.
22. This self-same worthy knight had been also
23. At one time with the lord of Palatye
24. Against another heathen in Turkey:
25. And always won he sovereign fame for prize.
26. Though so illustrious, he was very wise
27. And bore himself as meekly as a maid.
28. He never yet had any vileness said,
29. In all his life, to whatsoever wight.
30. He was a truly perfect, gentle knight.
31. But now, to tell you all of his array,
32. His steeds were good, but yet he was not gay.
33. Of simple fustian wore he a jupon
34. Sadly discoloured by his habergeon;
35. For he had lately come from his voyage
36. And now was going on this pilgrimage.

THE PRIORESS

1. There was also a nun, a prioress,
2. Who, in her smiling, modest was and coy;
3. Her greatest oath was but "By Saint Eloy!"
4. And she was known as Madam Eglantine.
5. Full well she sang the services divine,
6. Intoning through her nose, becomingly;
7. And fair she spoke her French, and fluently,
8. After the school of Stratford-at-the-Bow,
9. For French of Paris was not hers to know.
10. At table she had been well taught withal,
11. And never from her lips let morsels fall,
12. Nor dipped her fingers deep in sauce, but ate
13. With so much care the food upon her plate
14. That never driblet fell upon her breast.
15. In courtesy she had delight and zest.
16. Her upper lip was always wiped so clean
17. That in her cup was no iota seen
18. Of grease, when she had drunk her draught of wine.
19. Becomingly she reached for meat to dine.
20. And certainly delighting in good sport,
21. She was right pleasant, amiable- in short.
22. She was at pains to counterfeit the look
23. Of courtliness, and stately manners took,
24. And would be held worthy of reverence.
25. But, to say something of her moral sense,
26. She was so charitable and piteous
27. That she would weep if she but saw a mouse
28. Caught in a trap, though it were dead or bled.
29. She had some little dogs, too, that she fed
30. On roasted flesh, or milk and fine white bread.
31. But sore she'd weep if one of them were dead,
32. Or if men smote it with a rod to smart:
33. For pity ruled her, and her tender heart.
34. Right decorous her pleated wimple was;
35. Her nose was fine; her eyes were blue as glass;
36. Her mouth was small and therewith soft and red;
37. But certainly she had a fair forehead;
38. It was almost a full span broad, I own,
39. For, truth to tell, she was not undergrown.
40. Neat was her cloak, as I was well aware.
41. Of coral small about her arm she'd bear
42. A string of beads and gauded all with green;
43. And therefrom hung a brooch of golden sheen
44. Whereon there was first written a crowned "A,"
45. And under, Amor vincit omnia.

**The Wife of Bath's [Prologue](https://sites.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/teachslf/wbt-par.htm" \l "PROLOGUE) and** [**Tale**](https://sites.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/teachslf/wbt-par.htm#TALE)

**AUDIO**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AD1\_rPlma8



**Original Text**

|  |
| --- |
|  |
|  | Experience, though noon auctoritee  Were in this world, were right ynogh to me |
|  | To speke of wo that is in mariage; |
|  | For, lordynges, sith I twelf yeer was of age,— |
| 5 | Y-thonked be God, that is eterne on lyve! |
|  | Housbondes at chirchė dore I have had fyve; |
|  | For I so oftė have y-wedded bee; |
|  | And alle were worthy men in hir degree. |

**The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale Summary**

The Wife of Bath’s Prologue is even longer than her tale. She begins by announcing that experience trumps knowledge and summing up her own experience in marriage: she has had a total of five husbands, and she is looking for her sixth. Her first three husbands were old men, to whom she was married young and whom she outlived; they all died in old age, leaving her with considerable property.

Her fourth husband was a man she chose to marry while she was “sowing her wild oats” after the death of her first three husbands. Although they both liked to party, it hurt her that her fourth husband kept a mistress and refused to give her up after they married. Her fourth husband was also frequently away from home on business, and while he was gone, she cultivated a relationship with a potential fifth husband, a clerk named Jankyn. During one such visit, she tells Jankyn that she dreamed he had killed her in her bed and left her covered in blood, but that “blood bitokeneth gold” and that the dream therefore meant that if they married, Jankyn would be rich.

In time, the Wife of Bath’s fourth husband died and she married Jankyn. However, despite the fact that she claims to have married Jankyn for love, their relationship did not go smoothly at first. Jankyn was fond of scolding his wife by reading to her from a book about “wicked wives” and comparing her to them. One night, the Wife of Bath gets so fed up with Jankyn’s scolding that she tears a page from his book. He responds by hitting her so hard that she becomes deaf in one ear. When she comes to, Jankyn apologizes for hitting her and promises to obey her will in their marriage from then on. She makes him burn his book, and they live together happily from that moment on.

With this Prologue over, the Wife of Bath begins her tale, which is about a knight in King Arthur’s court. While out riding one day, the knight finds a young peasant girl and rapes her. Although the penalty for his crime is death, when the knight is brought before King Arthur’s court, the Queen and her ladies beg to have the case turned over to them. They tell the knight that they will spare his life if, within the next year, he discovers the answer to the question “What thing do women most desire in marriage?”

The knight wanders about the kingdom for a year, trying desperately to find the answer. As the year ends, he discovers a “loathly lady” in the forest. She promises to tell him the answer, as long as he gives her whatever she asks. The knight agrees and takes her back to the court, where the loathly lady tells him the answer to the question “what thing do women most desire in marriage?” is “mastery over all things.”

The Queen and the ladies of the court agree that this is the answer to the question and spare the knight’s life, but the loathly lady points out that the knight must now give her whatever she wants – and she wants him to marry her. Although he tries to beg his way out of the deal, the Queen holds him to it, and the marriage is celebrated.

On the wedding night, the knight and the loathly lady are alone in their bedchamber, but the knight can’t bring himself to get into bed with her. The loathly lady gives him a lecture on the true nature of “gentilesse,” or a noble nature, and then offers him a deal: either he can have a wife who is beautiful on the outside but has the “mastery” to do whatever she wants, or a wife who is ugly but leaves the “mastery” to him. The knight agrees to give her the “mastery,” at which point the loathly lady takes on the form of a beautiful young woman. She agrees to obey him in public for the sake of appearances, and they live happily ever after

**THE WIFE OF BATH'S PROLOGUE AND TALE**

1. Experience, though no authority
2. Were in this world, were good enough for me,
3. To speak of woe that is in all marriage;
4. For, masters, since I was twelve years of age,
5. Thanks be to God Who is for aye alive,
6. Of husbands at church door have I had five;
7. For men so many times have wedded me;
8. And all were worthy men in their degree.
9. But someone told me not so long ago
10. That since Our Lord, save once, would never go
11. To wedding (that at Cana in Galilee),
12. Thus, by this same example, showed He me
13. I never should have married more than once.
14. Lo and behold! What sharp words, for the nonce,
15. Beside a well Lord Jesus, God and man,
16. Spoke in reproving the Samaritan:
17. 'For thou hast had five husbands,' thus said He,
18. 'And he whom thou hast now to be with thee
19. Is not thine husband.' Thus He said that day,
20. But what He meant thereby I cannot say;
21. And I would ask now why that same fifth man
22. Was not husband to the Samaritan?
23. How many might she have, then, in marriage?
24. For I have never heard, in all my age,
25. Clear exposition of this number shown,
26. Though men may guess and argue up and down.
27. But well I know and say, and do not lie,
28. God bade us to increase and multiply;
29. That worthy text can I well understand.
30. And well I know He said, too, my husband
31. Should father leave, and mother, and cleave to me;
32. But no specific number mentioned He,
33. Whether of bigamy or octogamy;
34. Why should men speak of it reproachfully?
35. Lo, there's the wise old king Dan Solomon;
36. I understand he had more wives than one;
37. And now would God it were permitted me
38. To be refreshed one half as oft as he!
39. Which gift of God he had for all his wives!
40. No man has such that in this world now lives.
41. God knows, this noble king, it strikes my wit,
42. The first night he had many a merry fit
43. With each of them, so much he was alive!
44. Praise be to God that I have wedded five!
45. Of whom I did pick out and choose the best
46. Both for their nether purse and for their chest
47. Different schools make divers perfect clerks,
48. Different methods learned in sundry works
49. Make the good workman perfect, certainly.
50. Of full five husbands tutoring am I.
51. Welcome the sixth whenever come he shall.
52. Forsooth, I'll not keep chaste for good and all;
53. When my good husband from the world is gone,
54. Some Christian man shall marry me anon;
55. For then, the apostle says that I am free
56. To wed, in God's name, where it pleases me.
57. He says that to be wedded is no sin;
58. Better to marry than to burn within.
59. What care I though folk speak reproachfully
60. Of wicked Lamech and his bigamy?
61. I know well Abraham was holy man,
62. And Jacob, too, as far as know I can;
63. And each of them had spouses more than two;
64. And many another holy man also.
65. Or can you say that you have ever heard
66. That God has ever by His express word
67. Marriage forbidden? Pray you, now, tell me.
68. Or where commanded He virginity?
69. I read as well as you no doubt have read
70. The apostle when he speaks of maidenhead;
71. He said, commandment of the Lord he'd none.
72. Men may advise a woman to be one,
73. But such advice is not commandment, no;
74. He left the thing to our own judgment so.
75. For had Lord God commanded maidenhood,
76. He'd have condemned all marriage as not good;
77. And certainly, if there were no seed sown,
78. Virginity- where then should it be grown?
79. Paul dared not to forbid us, at the least,
80. A thing whereof his Master'd no behest.
81. The dart is set up for virginity;
82. Catch it who can; who runs best let us see.
83. "But this word is not meant for every wight,
84. But where God wills to give it, of His might.
85. I know well that the apostle was a maid;
86. Nevertheless, and though he wrote and said
87. He would that everyone were such as he,
88. All is not counsel to virginity;
89. And so to be a wife he gave me leave
90. Out of permission; there's no shame should grieve
91. In marrying me, if that my mate should die,
92. Without exception, too, of bigamy.
93. And though 'twere good no woman flesh to touch,
94. He meant, in his own bed or on his couch;
95. For peril 'tis fire and tow to assemble;
96. You know what this example may resemble.
97. This is the sum: he held virginity
98. Nearer perfection than marriage for frailty.
99. And frailty's all, I say, save he and she
100. Would lead their lives throughout in chastity.
101. "I grant this well, I have no great envy
102. Though maidenhood's preferred to bigamy;
103. Let those who will be clean, body and ghost,
104. Of my condition I will make no boast.
105. For well you know, a lord in his household,
106. He has not every vessel all of gold;
107. Some are of wood and serve well all their days.
108. God calls folk unto Him in sundry ways,
109. And each one has from God a proper gift,
110. Some this, some that, as pleases Him to shift.
111. "Virginity is great perfection known,
112. And continence e'en with devotion shown.
113. But Christ, Who of perfection is the well,
114. Bade not each separate man he should go sell
115. All that he had and give it to the poor
116. And follow Him in such wise going before.
117. He spoke to those that would live perfectly;
118. And, masters, by your leave, such am not I.
119. I will devote the flower of all my age
120. To all the acts and harvests of marriage.
121. "Tell me also, to what purpose or end
122. The genitals were made, that I defend,
123. And for what benefit was man first wrought?
124. Trust you right well, they were not made for naught.
125. Explain who will and argue up and down
126. That they were made for passing out, as known,
127. Of urine, and our two belongings small
128. Were just to tell a female from a male,
129. And for no other cause- ah, say you no?
130. Experience knows well it is not so;
131. And, so the clerics be not with me wroth,
132. I say now that they have been made for both,
133. That is to say, for duty and for ease
134. In getting, when we do not God displease.
135. Why should men otherwise in their books set
136. That man shall pay unto his wife his debt?
137. Now wherewith should he ever make payment,
138. Except he used his blessed instrument?
139. Then on a creature were devised these things
140. For urination and engenderings.
141. "But I say not that every one is bound,
142. Who's fitted out and furnished as I've found,
143. To go and use it to beget an heir;
144. Then men would have for chastity no care.
145. Christ was a maid, and yet shaped like a man,
146. And many a saint, since this old world began,
147. Yet has lived ever in perfect chastity.
148. I bear no malice to virginity;
149. Let such be bread of purest white wheat-seed,
150. And let us wives be called but barley bread;
151. And yet with barley bread (if Mark you scan)
152. Jesus Our Lord refreshed full many a man.
153. In such condition as God places us
154. I'll persevere, I'm not fastidious.
155. In wifehood I will use my instrument
156. As freely as my Maker has it sent.
157. If I be niggardly, God give me sorrow!
158. My husband he shall have it, eve and morrow,
159. When he's pleased to come forth and pay his debt.
160. I'll not delay, a husband I will get
161. Who shall be both my debtor and my thrall
162. And have his tribulations therewithal
163. Upon his flesh, the while I am his wife.
164. I have the power during all my life
165. Over his own good body, and not he.
166. For thus the apostle told it unto me;
167. And bade our husbands that they love us well.
168. And all this pleases me whereof I tell."
169. Up rose the pardoner, and that anon.
170. "Now dame," said he, "by God and by Saint John,
171. You are a noble preacher in this case!
172. I was about to wed a wife, alas!
173. Why should I buy this on my flesh so dear?
174. No, I would rather wed no wife this year."
175. "But wait," said she, "my tale is not begun;
176. Nay, you shall drink from out another tun
177. Before I cease, and savour worse than ale.
178. And when I shall have told you all my tale
179. Of tribulation that is in marriage,
180. Whereof I've been an expert all my age,
181. That is to say, myself have been the whip,
182. Then may you choose whether you will go sip
183. Out of that very tun which I shall broach.
184. Beware of it ere you too near approach;
185. For I shall give examples more than ten.
186. Whoso will not be warned by other men
187. By him shall other men corrected be,
188. The self-same words has written Ptolemy;
189. Read in his Almagest and find it there."
190. "Lady, I pray you, if your will it were,"
191. Spoke up this pardoner, "as you began,
192. Tell forth your tale, nor spare for any man,
193. And teach us younger men of your technique."
194. "Gladly," said she, "since it may please, not pique.
195. But yet I pray of all this company
196. That if I speak from my own phantasy,
197. They will not take amiss the things I say;
198. For my intention's only but to play.
199. "Now, sirs, now will I tell you forth my tale.
200. And as I may drink ever wine and ale,
201. I will tell truth of husbands that I've had,
202. For three of them were good and two were bad.
203. The three were good men and were rich and old.
204. Not easily could they the promise hold
205. Whereby they had been bound to cherish me.
206. You know well what I mean by that, pardie!
207. So help me God, I laugh now when I think
208. How pitifully by night I made them swink;
209. And by my faith I set by it no store.
210. They'd given me their gold, and treasure more;
211. I needed not do longer diligence
212. To win their love, or show them reverence.
213. They all loved me so well, by God above,
214. I never did set value on their love!
215. A woman wise will strive continually
216. To get herself loved, when she's not, you see.
217. But since I had them wholly in my hand,
218. And since to me they'd given all their land,
219. Why should I take heed, then, that I should please,
220. Save it were for my profit or my ease?
221. I set them so to work, that, by my fay,
222. Full many a night they sighed out 'Welaway!'
223. The bacon was not brought them home, I trow,
224. That some men have in Essex at Dunmowe.
225. I governed them so well, by my own law,
226. That each of them was happy as a daw,
227. And fain to bring me fine things from the fair.
228. And they were right glad when I spoke them fair;
229. For God knows that I nagged them mercilessly.
230. "Now hearken how I bore me properly,
231. All you wise wives that well can understand.
232. "Thus shall you speak and wrongfully demand;
233. For half so brazenfacedly can no man
234. Swear to his lying as a woman can.
235. I say not this to wives who may be wise,
236. Except when they themselves do misadvise.
237. A wise wife, if she knows what's for her good,
238. Will swear the crow is mad, and in this mood
239. Call up for witness to it her own maid;
240. But hear me now, for this is what I said.
241. "'Sir Dotard, is it thus you stand today?
242. Why is my neighbour's wife so fine and gay?
243. She's honoured over all where'er she goes;
244. I sit at home, I have no decent clo'es.
245. What do you do there at my neighbour's house?
246. Is she so fair? Are you so amorous?
247. Why whisper to our maid? Benedicite!
248. Sir Lecher old, let your seductions be!
249. And if I have a gossip or a friend,
250. Innocently, you blame me like a fiend
251. If I but walk, for company, to his house!
252. You come home here as drunken as a mouse,
253. And preach there on your bench, a curse on you!
254. You tell me it's a great misfortune, too,
255. To wed a girl who costs more than she's worth;
256. And if she's rich and of a higher birth,
257. You say it's torment to abide her folly
258. And put up with her pride and melancholy.
259. And if she be right fair, you utter knave,
260. You say that every lecher will her have;
261. She may no while in chastity abide
262. That is assailed by all and on each side.
263. "'You say, some men desire us for our gold,
264. Some for our shape and some for fairness told:
265. And some, that she can either sing or dance,
266. And some, for courtesy and dalliance;
267. Some for her hands and for her arms so small;
268. Thus all goes to the devil in your tale.
269. You say men cannot keep a castle wall
270. That's long assailed on all sides, and by all.
271. "'And if that she be foul, you say that she
272. Hankers for every man that she may see;
273. For like a spaniel will she leap on him
274. Until she finds a man to be victim;
275. And not a grey goose swims there in the lake
276. But finds a gander willing her to take.
277. You say, it is a hard thing to enfold
278. Her whom no man will in his own arms hold.
279. This say you, worthless, when you go to bed;
280. And that no wise man needs thus to be wed,
281. No, nor a man that hearkens unto Heaven.
282. With furious thunder-claps and fiery levin
283. May your thin, withered, wrinkled neck be broke:
284. "'You say that dripping eaves, and also smoke,
285. And wives contentious, will make men to flee
286. Out of their houses; ah, benedicite!
287. What ails such an old fellow so to chide?
288. "'You say that all we wives our vices hide
289. Till we are married, then we show them well;
290. That is a scoundrel's proverb, let me tell!
291. "'You say that oxen, asses, horses, hounds
292. Are tried out variously, and on good grounds;
293. Basins and bowls, before men will them buy,
294. And spoons and stools and all such goods you try.
295. And so with pots and clothes and all array;
296. But of their wives men get no trial, you say,
297. Till they are married, base old dotard you!
298. And then we show what evil we can do.
299. "'You say also that it displeases me
300. Unless you praise and flatter my beauty,
301. And save you gaze always upon my face
302. And call me "lovely lady" every place;
303. And save you make a feast upon that day
304. When I was born, and give me garments gay;
305. And save due honour to my nurse is paid
306. As well as to my faithful chambermaid,
307. And to my father's folk and his allies-
308. Thus you go on, old barrel full of lies!
309. "'And yet of our apprentice, young Jenkin,
310. For his crisp hair, showing like gold so fine,
311. Because he squires me walking up and down,
312. A false suspicion in your mind is sown;
313. I'd give him naught, though you were dead tomorrow.
314. "'But tell me this, why do you hide, with sorrow,
315. The keys to your strong-box away from me?
316. It is my gold as well as yours, pardie.
317. Why would you make an idiot of your dame?
318. Now by Saint James, but you shall miss your aim,
319. You shall not be, although like mad you scold,
320. Master of both my body and my gold;
321. One you'll forgo in spite of both your eyes;
322. Why need you seek me out or set on spies?
323. I think you'd like to lock me in your chest!
324. You should say: "Dear wife, go where you like best,
325. Amuse yourself, I will believe no tales;
326. You're my wife Alis true, and truth prevails."
327. We love no man that guards us or gives charge
328. Of where we go, for we will be at large.
329. "'Of all men the most blessed may he be,
330. That wise astrologer, Dan Ptolemy,
331. Who says this proverb in his Almagest:
332. "Of all men he's in wisdom the highest
333. That nothing cares who has the world in hand."
334. And by this proverb shall you understand:
335. Since you've enough, why do you reck or care
336. How merrily all other folks may fare?
337. For certainly, old dotard, by your leave,
338. You shall have cunt all right enough at eve.
339. He is too much a niggard who's so tight
340. That from his lantern he'll give none a light.
341. For he'll have never the less light, by gad;
342. Since you've enough, you need not be so sad.
343. "'You say, also, that if we make us gay
344. With clothing, all in costliest array,
345. That it's a danger to our chastity;
346. And you must back the saying up, pardie!
347. Repeating these words in the apostle's name:
348. "In habits meet for chastity, not shame,
349. Your women shall be garmented," said he,
350. "And not with broidered hair, or jewellery,
351. Or pearls, or gold, or costly gowns and chic;"
352. After your text and after your rubric
353. I will not follow more than would a gnat.
354. You said this, too, that I was like a cat;
355. For if one care to singe a cat's furred skin,
356. Then would the cat remain the house within;
357. And if the cat's coat be all sleek and gay,
358. She will not keep in house a half a day,
359. But out she'll go, ere dawn of any day,
360. To show her skin and caterwaul and play.
361. This is to say, if I'm a little gay,
362. To show my rags I'll gad about all day.
363. "'Sir Ancient Fool, what ails you with your spies?
364. Though you pray Argus, with his hundred eyes,
365. To be my body-guard and do his best,
366. Faith, he sha'n't hold me, save I am modest;
367. I could delude him easily- trust me!
368. "'You said, also, that there are three things- three-
369. The which things are a trouble on this earth,
370. And that no man may ever endure the fourth:
371. O dear Sir Rogue, may Christ cut short your life!
372. Yet do you preach and say a hateful wife
373. Is to be reckoned one of these mischances.
374. Are there no other kinds of resemblances
375. That you may liken thus your parables to,
376. But must a hapless wife be made to do?
377. "'You liken woman's love to very Hell,
378. To desert land where waters do not well.
379. You liken it, also, unto wildfire;
380. The more it burns, the more it has desire
381. To consume everything that burned may be.
382. You say that just as worms destroy a tree,
383. Just so a wife destroys her own husband;
384. Men know this who are bound in marriage band.'
385. "Masters, like this, as you must understand,
386. Did I my old men charge and censure, and
387. Claim that they said these things in drunkenness;
388. And all was false, but yet I took witness
389. Of Jenkin and of my dear niece also.
390. O Lord, the pain I gave them and the woe,
391. All guiltless, too, by God's grief exquisite!
392. For like a stallion could I neigh and bite.
393. I could complain, though mine was all the guilt,
394. Or else, full many a time, I'd lost the tilt.
395. Whoso comes first to mill first gets meal ground;
396. I whimpered first and so did them confound.
397. They were right glad to hasten to excuse
398. Things they had never done, save in my ruse.
399. "With wenches would I charge him, by this hand,
400. When, for some illness, he could hardly stand.
401. Yet tickled this the heart of him, for he
402. Deemed it was love produced such jealousy.
403. I swore that all my walking out at night
404. Was but to spy on girls he kept outright;
405. And under cover of that I had much mirth.
406. For all such wit is given us at birth;
407. Deceit, weeping, and spinning, does God give
408. To women, naturally, the while they live.
409. And thus of one thing I speak boastfully,
410. I got the best of each one, finally,
411. By trick, or force, or by some kind of thing,
412. As by continual growls or murmuring;
413. Especially in bed had they mischance,
414. There would I chide and give them no pleasance;
415. I would no longer in the bed abide
416. If I but felt his arm across my side,
417. Till he had paid his ransom unto me;
418. Then would I let him do his nicety.
419. And therefore to all men this tale I tell,
420. Let gain who may, for everything's to sell.
421. With empty hand men may no falcons lure;
422. For profit would I all his lust endure,
423. And make for him a well-feigned appetite;
424. Yet I in bacon never had delight;
425. And that is why I used so much to chide.
426. For if the pope were seated there beside
427. I'd not have spared them, no, at their own board.
428. For by my truth, I paid them, word for word.
429. So help me the True God Omnipotent,
430. Though I right now should make my testament,
431. I owe them not a word that was not quit.
432. I brought it so about, and by my wit,
433. That they must give it up, as for the best,
434. Or otherwise we'd never have had rest.
435. For though he glared and scowled like lion mad,
436. Yet failed he of the end he wished he had.
437. "Then would I say: 'Good dearie, see you keep
438. In mind how meek is Wilkin, our old sheep;
439. Come near, my spouse, come let me kiss your cheek!
440. You should be always patient, aye, and meek,
441. And have a sweetly scrupulous tenderness,
442. Since you so preach of old Job's patience, yes.
443. Suffer always, since you so well can preach;
444. And, save you do, be sure that we will teach
445. That it is well to leave a wife in peace.
446. One of us two must bow, to be at ease;
447. And since a man's more reasonable, they say,
448. Than woman is, you must have patience aye.
449. What ails you that you grumble thus and groan?
450. Is it because you'd have my cunt alone?
451. Why take it all, lo, have it every bit;
452. Peter! Beshrew you but you're fond of it!
453. For if I would go peddle my belle chose,
454. I could walk out as fresh as is a rose;
455. But I will keep it for your own sweet tooth.
456. You are to blame, by God I tell the truth.'
457. "Such were the words I had at my command.
458. Now will I tell you of my fourth husband.
459. "My fourth husband, he was a reveller,
460. That is to say, he kept a paramour;
461. And young and full of passion then was I,
462. Stubborn and strong and jolly as a pie.
463. Well could I dance to tune of harp, nor fail
464. To sing as well as any nightingale
465. When I had drunk a good draught of sweet wine.
466. Metellius, the foul churl and the swine,
467. Did with a staff deprive his wife of life
468. Because she drank wine; had I been his wife
469. He never should have frightened me from drink;
470. For after wine, of Venus must I think:
471. For just as surely as cold produces hail,
472. A liquorish mouth must have a lickerish tail.
473. In women wine's no bar of impotence,
474. This know all lechers by experience.
475. "But Lord Christ! When I do remember me
476. Upon my youth and on my jollity,
477. It tickles me about my heart's deep root.
478. To this day does my heart sing in salute
479. That I have had my world in my own time.
480. But age, alas! that poisons every prime,
481. Has taken away my beauty and my pith;
482. Let go, farewell, the devil go therewith!
483. The flour is gone, there is no more to tell,
484. The bran, as best I may, must I now sell;
485. But yet to be right merry I'll try, and
486. Now will I tell you of my fourth husband.
487. "I say that in my heart I'd great despite
488. When he of any other had delight.
489. But he was quit by God and by Saint Joce!
490. I made, of the same wood, a staff most gross;
491. Not with my body and in manner foul,
492. But certainly I showed so gay a soul
493. That in his own thick grease I made him fry
494. For anger and for utter jealousy.
495. By God, on earth I was his purgatory,
496. For which I hope his soul lives now in glory.
497. For God knows, many a time he sat and sung
498. When the shoe bitterly his foot had wrung.
499. There was no one, save God and he, that knew
500. How, in so many ways, I'd twist the screw.
501. He died when I came from Jerusalem,
502. And lies entombed beneath the great rood-beam,
503. Although his tomb is not so glorious
504. As was the sepulchre of Darius,
505. The which Apelles wrought full cleverly;
506. 'Twas waste to bury him expensively.
507. Let him fare well. God give his soul good rest,
508. He now is in the grave and in his chest.
509. "And now of my fifth husband will I tell.
510. God grant his soul may never get to Hell!
511. And yet he was to me most brutal, too;
512. My ribs yet feel as they were black and blue,
513. And ever shall, until my dying day.
514. But in our bed he was so fresh and gay,
515. And therewithal he could so well impose,
516. What time he wanted use of my belle chose,
517. That though he'd beaten me on every bone,
518. He could re-win my love, and that full soon.
519. I guess I loved him best of all, for he
520. Gave of his love most sparingly to me.
521. We women have, if I am not to lie,
522. In this love matter, a quaint fantasy;
523. Look out a thing we may not lightly have,
524. And after that we'll cry all day and crave.
525. Forbid a thing, and that thing covet we;
526. Press hard upon us, then we turn and flee.
527. Sparingly offer we our goods, when fair;
528. Great crowds at market for dearer ware,
529. And what's too common brings but little price;
530. All this knows every woman who is wise.
531. "My fifth husband, may God his spirit bless!
532. Whom I took all for love, and not riches,
533. Had been sometime a student at Oxford,
534. And had left school and had come home to board
535. With my best gossip, dwelling in our town,
536. God save her soul! Her name was Alison.
537. She knew my heart and all my privity
538. Better than did our parish priest, s'help me!
539. To her confided I my secrets all.
540. For had my husband pissed against a wall,
541. Or done a thing that might have cost his life,
542. To her and to another worthy wife,
543. And to my niece whom I loved always well,
544. I would have told it- every bit I'd tell,
545. And did so, many and many a time, God wot,
546. Which made his face full often red and hot
547. For utter shame; he blamed himself that he
548. Had told me of so deep a privity.
549. "So it befell that on a time, in Lent
550. (For oftentimes I to my gossip went,
551. Since I loved always to be glad and gay
552. And to walk out, in March, April, and May,
553. From house to house, to hear the latest malice),
554. Jenkin the clerk, and my gossip Dame Alis,
555. And I myself into the meadows went.
556. My husband was in London all that Lent;
557. I had the greater leisure, then, to play,
558. And to observe, and to be seen, I say,
559. By pleasant folk; what knew I where my face
560. Was destined to be loved, or in what place?
561. Therefore I made my visits round about
562. To vigils and processions of devout,
563. To preaching too, and shrines of pilgrimage,
564. To miracle plays, and always to each marriage,
565. And wore my scarlet skirt before all wights.
566. These worms and all these moths and all these mites,
567. I say it at my peril, never ate;
568. And know you why? I wore it early and late.
569. "Now will I tell you what befell to me.
570. I say that in the meadows walked we three
571. Till, truly, we had come to such dalliance,
572. This clerk and I, that, of my vigilance,
573. I spoke to him and told him how that he,
574. Were I a widow, might well marry me.
575. For certainly I say it not to brag,
576. But I was never quite without a bag
577. Full of the needs of marriage that I seek.
578. I hold a mouse's heart not worth a leek
579. That has but one hole into which to run,
580. And if it fail of that, then all is done.
581. "I made him think he had enchanted me;
582. My mother taught me all that subtlety.
583. And then I said I'd dreamed of him all night,
584. He would have slain me as I lay upright,
585. And all my bed was full of very blood;
586. But yet I hoped that he would do me good,
587. For blood betokens gold, as I was taught.
588. And all was false, I dreamed of him just- naught,
589. Save as I acted on my mother's lore,
590. As well in this thing as in many more.
591. "But now, let's see, what was I going to say?
592. Aha, by God, I know! It goes this way.
593. "When my fourth husband lay upon his bier,
594. I wept enough and made but sorry cheer,
595. As wives must always, for it's custom's grace,
596. And with my kerchief covered up my face;
597. But since I was provided with a mate,
598. I really wept but little, I may state.
599. "To church my man was borne upon the morrow
600. By neighbours, who for him made signs of sorrow;
601. And Jenkin, our good clerk, was one of them.
602. So help me God, when rang the requiem
603. After the bier, I thought he had a pair
604. Of legs and feet so clean-cut and so fair
605. That all my heart I gave to him to hold.
606. He was, I think, but twenty winters old,
607. And I was forty, if I tell the truth;
608. But then I always had a young colt's tooth.
609. Gap-toothed I was, and that became me well;
610. I had the print of holy Venus' seal.
611. So help me God, I was a healthy one,
612. And fair and rich and young and full of fun;
613. And truly, as my husbands all told me,
614. I had the silkiest quoniam that could be.
615. For truly, I am all Venusian
616. In feeling, and my brain is Martian.
617. Venus gave me my lust, my lickerishness,
618. And Mars gave me my sturdy hardiness.
619. Taurus was my ascendant, with Mars therein.
620. Alas, alas, that ever love was sin!
621. I followed always my own inclination
622. By virtue of my natal constellation;
623. Which wrought me so I never could withdraw
624. My Venus-chamber from a good fellow.
625. Yet have I Mars's mark upon my face,
626. And also in another private place.
627. For God so truly my salvation be
628. As I have never loved for policy,
629. But ever followed my own appetite,
630. Though he were short or tall, or black or white;
631. I took no heed, so that he cared for me,
632. How poor he was, nor even of what degree.
633. "What should I say now, save, at the month's end,
634. This jolly, gentle, Jenkin clerk, my friend,
635. Had wedded me full ceremoniously,
636. And to him gave I all the land in fee
637. That ever had been given me before;
638. But, later I repented me full sore.
639. He never suffered me to have my way.
640. By God, he smote me on the ear, one day,
641. Because I tore out of his book a leaf,
642. So that from this my ear is grown quite deaf.
643. Stubborn I was as is a lioness,
644. And with my tongue a very jay, I guess,
645. And walk I would, as I had done before,
646. From house to house, though I should not, he swore.
647. For which he oftentimes would sit and preach
648. And read old Roman tales to me and teach
649. How one Sulpicius Gallus left his wife
650. And her forsook for term of all his life
651. Because he saw her with bared head, I say,
652. Looking out from his door, upon a day.
653. "Another Roman told he of by name
654. Who, since his wife was at a summer-game
655. Without his knowing, he forsook her eke.
656. And then would he within his Bible seek
657. That proverb of the old Ecclesiast
658. Where he commands so freely and so fast
659. That man forbid his wife to gad about;
660. Then would he thus repeat, with never doubt:
661. 'Whoso would build his whole house out of sallows,
662. And spur his blind horse to run over fallows,
663. And let his wife alone go seeking hallows,
664. Is worthy to be hanged upon the gallows.'
665. But all for naught, I didn't care a haw
666. For all his proverbs, nor for his old saw,
667. Nor yet would I by him corrected be.
668. I hate one that my vices tells to me,
669. And so do more of us- God knows!- than I.
670. This made him mad with me, and furiously,
671. That I'd not yield to him in any case.
672. "Now will I tell you truth, by Saint Thomas,
673. Of why I tore from out his book a leaf,
674. For which he struck me so it made me deaf.
675. "He had a book that gladly, night and day,
676. For his amusement he would read alway.
677. He called it 'Theophrastus' and 'Valerius',
678. At which book would he laugh, uproarious.
679. And, too, there sometime was a clerk at Rome,
680. A cardinal, that men called Saint Jerome,
681. Who made a book against Jovinian;
682. In which book, too, there was Tertullian,
683. Chrysippus, Trotula, and Heloise
684. Who was abbess near Paris' diocese;
685. And too, the Proverbs of King Solomon,
686. And Ovid's Art, and books full many a one.
687. And all of these were bound in one volume.
688. And every night and day 'twas his custom,
689. When he had leisure and took some vacation
690. From all his other worldly occupation,
691. To read, within this book, of wicked wives.
692. He knew of them more legends and more lives
693. Than are of good wives written in the Bible.
694. For trust me, it's impossible, no libel,
695. That any cleric shall speak well of wives,
696. Unless it be of saints and holy lives,
697. But naught for other women will they do.
698. Who painted first the lion, tell me who?
699. By God, if women had but written stories,
700. As have these clerks within their oratories,
701. They would have written of men more wickedness
702. Than all the race of Adam could redress.
703. The children of Mercury and of Venus
704. Are in their lives antagonistic thus;
705. For Mercury loves wisdom and science,
706. And Venus loves but pleasure and expense.
707. Because they different dispositions own,
708. Each falls when other's in ascendant shown.
709. And God knows Mercury is desolate
710. In Pisces, wherein Venus rules in state;
711. And Venus falls when Mercury is raised;
712. Therefore no woman by a clerk is praised.
713. A clerk, when he is old and can naught do
714. Of Venus' labours worth his worn-out shoe,
715. Then sits he down and writes, in his dotage,
716. That women cannot keep vow of marriage!
717. "But now to tell you, as I started to,
718. Why I was beaten for a book, pardieu.
719. Upon a night Jenkin, who was our sire,
720. Read in his book, as he sat by the fire,
721. Of Mother Eve who, by her wickedness,
722. First brought mankind to all his wretchedness,
723. For which Lord Jesus Christ Himself was slain,
724. Who, with His heart's blood, saved us thus again.
725. Lo here, expressly of woman, may you find
726. That woman was the ruin of mankind.
727. "Then read he out how Samson lost his hairs,
728. Sleeping, his leman cut them with her shears;
729. And through this treason lost he either eye.
730. "Then read he out, if I am not to lie,
731. Of Hercules, and Deianira's desire
732. That caused him to go set himself on fire.
733. "Nothing escaped him of the pain and woe
734. That Socrates had with his spouses two;
735. How Xantippe threw piss upon his head;
736. This hapless man sat still, as he were dead;
737. He wiped his head, no more durst he complain
738. Than 'Ere the thunder ceases comes the rain.'
739. "Then of Pasiphae, the queen of Crete,
740. For cursedness he thought the story sweet;
741. Fie! Say no more- it is an awful thing-
742. Of her so horrible lust and love-liking.
743. "Of Clytemnestra, for her lechery,
744. Who caused her husband's death by treachery,
745. He read all this with greatest zest, I vow.
746. "He told me, too, just when it was and how
747. Amphiaraus at Thebes lost his life;
748. My husband had a legend of his wife
749. Eriphyle who, for a brooch of gold,
750. In secrecy to hostile Greeks had told
751. Whereat her husband had his hiding place,
752. For which he found at Thebes but sorry grace.
753. "Of Livia and Lucia told he me,
754. For both of them their husbands killed, you see,
755. The one for love, the other killed for hate;
756. Livia her husband, on an evening late,
757. Made drink some poison, for she was his foe.
758. Lucia, lecherous, loved her husband so
759. That, to the end he'd always of her think,
760. She gave him such a, philtre, for love-drink,
761. That he was dead or ever it was morrow;
762. And husbands thus, by same means, came to sorrow.
763. "Then did he tell how one Latumius
764. Complained unto his comrade Arrius
765. That in his garden grew a baleful tree
766. Whereon, he said, his wives, and they were three,
767. Had hanged themselves for wretchedness and woe.
768. 'O brother,' Arrius said, 'and did they so?
769. Give me a graft of that same blessed tree
770. And in my garden planted it shall be!'
771. "Of wives of later date he also read,
772. How some had slain their husbands in their bed
773. And let their lovers shag them all the night
774. While corpses lay upon the floor upright.
775. And some had driven nails into the brain
776. While husbands slept and in such wise were slain.
777. And some had given them poison in their drink.
778. He told more evil than the mind can think.
779. And therewithal he knew of more proverbs
780. Than in this world there grows of grass or herbs.
781. 'Better,' he said, 'your habitation be
782. With lion wild or dragon foul,' said he,
783. 'Than with a woman who will nag and chide.'
784. 'Better,' he said, 'on the housetop abide
785. Than with a brawling wife down in the house;
786. Such are so wicked and contrarious
787. They hate the thing their husband loves, for aye.'
788. He said, 'a woman throws her shame away
789. When she throws off her smock,' and further, too:
790. 'A woman fair, save she be chaste also,
791. Is like a ring of gold in a sow's nose.'
792. Who would imagine or who would suppose
793. What grief and pain were in this heart of mine?
794. "And when I saw he'd never cease, in fine,
795. His reading in this cursed book at night,
796. Three leaves of it I snatched and tore outright
797. Out of his book, as he read on; and eke
798. I with my fist so took him on the cheek
799. That in our fire he reeled and fell right down.
800. Then he got up as does a wild lion,
801. And with his fist he struck me on the head,
802. And on the floor I lay as I were dead.
803. And when he saw how limp and still I lay,
804. He was afraid and would have run away,
805. Until at last, out of my swoon I made:
806. 'Oh, have you slain me, you false thief?' I said,
807. 'And for my land have you thus murdered me?
808. Kiss me before I die, and let me be.'
809. "He came to me and near me he knelt down,
810. And said: 'O my dear sister Alison,
811. So help me God, I'll never strike you more;
812. What I have done, you are to blame therefor.
813. But all the same forgiveness now I seek!'
814. And thereupon I hit him on the cheek,
815. And said: 'Thief, so much vengeance do I wreak!
816. Now will I die; I can no longer speak!'
817. But at the last, and with much care and woe,
818. We made it up between ourselves. And so
819. He put the bridle reins within my hand
820. To have the governing of house and land;
821. And of his tongue and of his hand, also;
822. And made him burn his book, right then, oho!
823. And when I had thus gathered unto me
824. Masterfully, the entire sovereignty,
825. And he had said: 'My own true wedded wife,
826. Do as you please the term of all your life,
827. Guard your own honour and keep fair my state'-
828. After that day we never had debate.
829. God help me now, I was to him as kind
830. As any wife from Denmark unto Ind,
831. And also true, and so was he to me.
832. I pray to God, Who sits in majesty,
833. To bless his soul, out of His mercy dear!
834. Now will I tell my tale, if you will hear."

BEHOLD THE WORDS   
BETWEEN THE SUMMONER,   
AND THE FRIAR

*(Editor's bracket reads "ANOTHER INTERRUPTION," p. 348]*

1. The friar laughed when he had heard all this.
2. "Now dame," said he, "so have I joy or bliss
3. This is a long preamble to a tale!"
4. And when the summoner heard this friar's hail,
5. "Lo," said the summoner, "by God's arms two!
6. A friar will always interfere, mark you.
7. Behold, good men, a housefly and a friar
8. Will fall in every dish and matters higher.
9. Why speak of preambling; you in your gown?
10. What! Amble, trot, hold peace, or go sit down;
11. You hinder our diversion thus to inquire."
12. "Aye, say you so, sir summoner?" said the friar,
13. "Now by my faith I will, before I go,
14. Tell of a summoner such a tale, or so,
15. That all the folk shall laugh who're in this place'
16. "Otherwise, friar, I beshrew your face,"
17. Replied this summoner, "and beshrew me
18. If I do not tell tales here, two or three,
19. Of friars ere I come to Sittingbourne,
20. That certainly will give you cause to mourn,
21. For well I know your patience will be gone."
22. Our host cried out, "Now peace, and that anon!"
23. And said he: "Let the woman tell her tale.
24. You act like people who are drunk with ale.
25. Do, lady, tell your tale, and that is best."
26. "All ready, sir," said she, "as you request,
27. If I have license of this worthy friar."
28. "Yes, dame," said he, "to hear you's my desire."

HERE THE WIFE OF BATH ENDS HER PROLOGUE

*(Editor's bracket reads "The Wife of Bath's Tale," p. 348]*

1. Now in the olden days of King Arthur,
2. Of whom the Britons speak with great honour,
3. All this wide land was land of faery.
4. The elf-queen, with her jolly company,
5. Danced oftentimes on many a green mead;
6. This was the old opinion, as I read.
7. I speak of many hundred years ago;
8. But now no man can see the elves, you know.
9. For now the so-great charity and prayers
10. Of limiters and other holy friars
11. That do infest each land and every stream
12. As thick as motes are in a bright sunbeam,
13. Blessing halls, chambers, kitchens, ladies' bowers,
14. Cities and towns and castles and high towers,
15. Manors and barns and stables, aye and dairies-
16. This causes it that there are now no fairies.
17. For where was wont to walk full many an elf,
18. Right there walks now the limiter himself
19. In noons and afternoons and in mornings,
20. Saying his matins and such holy things,
21. As he goes round his district in his gown.
22. Women may now go safely up and down,
23. In every copse or under every tree;
24. There is no other incubus, than he,
25. And would do them nothing but dishonour.
26. And so befell it that this King Arthur
27. Had at his court a lusty bachelor
28. Who, on a day, came riding from river;
29. And happened that, alone as she was born,
30. He saw a maiden walking through the corn,
31. From whom, in spite of all she did and said,
32. Straightway by force he took her maidenhead;
33. For which violation was there such clamour,
34. And such appealing unto King Arthur,
35. That soon condemned was this knight to be dead
36. By course of law, and should have lost his head,
37. Peradventure, such being the statute then;
38. But that the other ladies and the queen
39. So long prayed of the king to show him grace,
40. He granted life, at last, in the law's place,
41. And gave him to the queen, as she should will,
42. Whether she'd save him, or his blood should spill.
43. The queen she thanked the king with all her might,
44. And after this, thus spoke she to the knight,
45. When she'd an opportunity, one day:
46. "You stand yet," said she, "in such poor a way
47. That for your life you've no security.
48. I'll grant you life if you can tell to me
49. What thing it is that women most desire.
50. Be wise, and keep your neck from iron dire!
51. And if you cannot tell it me anon,
52. Then will I give you license to be gone
53. A twelvemonth and a day, to search and learn
54. Sufficient answer in this grave concern.
55. And your knight's word I'll have, ere forth you pace,
56. To yield your body to me in this place."
57. Grieved was this knight, and sorrowfully he sighed;
58. But there! he could not do as pleased his pride.
59. And at the last he chose that he would wend
60. And come again upon the twelvemonth's end,
61. With such an answer as God might purvey;
62. And so he took his leave and went his way.
63. He sought out every house and every place
64. Wherein he hoped to find that he had grace
65. To learn what women love the most of all;
66. But nowhere ever did it him befall
67. To find, upon the question stated here,
68. Two, persons who agreed with statement clear.
69. Some said that women all loved best riches,
70. Some said, fair fame, and some said, prettiness;
71. Some, rich array, some said 'twas lust abed
72. And often to be widowed and re-wed.
73. Some said that our poor hearts are aye most eased
74. When we have been most flattered and thus pleased
75. And he went near the truth, I will not lie;
76. A man may win us best with flattery;
77. And with attentions and with busyness
78. We're often limed, the greater and the less.
79. And some say, too, that we do love the best
80. To be quite free to do our own behest,
81. And that no man reprove us for our vice,
82. But saying we are wise, take our advice.
83. For truly there is no one of us all,
84. If anyone shall rub us on a gall,
85. That will not kick because he tells the truth.
86. Try, and he'll find, who does so, I say sooth.
87. No matter how much vice we have within,
88. We would be held for wise and clean of sin.
89. And some folk say that great delight have we
90. To be held constant, also trustworthy,
91. And on one purpose steadfastly to dwell,
92. And not betray a thing that men may tell.
93. But that tale is not worth a rake's handle;
94. By God, we women can no thing conceal,
95. As witness Midas. Would you hear the tale?
96. Ovid, among some other matters small,
97. Said Midas had beneath his long curled hair,
98. Two ass's ears that grew in secret there,
99. The which defect he hid, as best he might,
100. Full cunningly from every person's sight,
101. And, save his wife, no one knew of it, no.
102. He loved her most, and trusted her also;
103. And he prayed of her that to no creature
104. She'd tell of his disfigurement impure.
105. She swore him: Nay, for all this world to win
106. She would do no such villainy or sin
107. And cause her husband have so foul a name;
108. Nor would she tell it for her own deep shame.
109. Nevertheless, she thought she would have died
110. Because so long the secret must she hide;
111. It seemed to swell so big about her heart
112. That some word from her mouth must surely start;
113. And since she dared to tell it to no man,
114. Down to a marsh, that lay hard by, she ran;
115. Till she came there her heart was all afire,
116. And as a bittern booms in the quagmire,
117. She laid her mouth low to the water down:
118. "Betray me not, you sounding water blown,"
119. Said she, "I tell it to none else but you:
120. Long ears like asses' has my husband two!
121. Now is my heart at ease, since that is out;
122. I could no longer keep it, there's no doubt."
123. Here may you see, though for a while we bide,
124. Yet out it must; no secret can we hide.
125. The rest of all this tale, if you would hear,
126. Read Ovid: in his book does it appear.
127. This knight my tale is chiefly told about
128. When what he went for he could not find out,
129. That is, the thing that women love the best,
130. Most saddened was the spirit in his breast;
131. But home he goes, he could no more delay.
132. The day was come when home he turned his way;
133. And on his way it chanced that he should ride
134. In all his care, beneath a forest's side,
135. And there he saw, a-dancing him before,
136. Full four and twenty ladies, maybe more;
137. Toward which dance eagerly did he turn
138. In hope that there some wisdom he should learn.
139. But truly, ere he came upon them there,
140. The dancers vanished all, he knew not where.
141. No creature saw he that gave sign of life,
142. Save, on the greensward sitting, an old wife;
143. A fouler person could no man devise.
144. Before the knight this old wife did arise,
145. And said: "Sir knight, hence lies no travelled way.
146. Tell me what thing you seek, and by your fay.
147. Perchance you'll find it may the better be;
148. These ancient folk know many things," said she.
149. "Dear mother," said this knight assuredly,
150. "I am but dead, save I can tell, truly,
151. What thing it is that women most desire;
152. Could you inform me, I'd pay well your hire."
153. "Plight me your troth here, hand in hand," said she,
154. "That you will do, whatever it may be,
155. The thing I ask if it lie in your might;
156. And I'll give you your answer ere the night."
157. "Have here my word," said he. "That thing I grant."
158. "Then," said the crone, "of this I make my vaunt,
159. Your life is safe; and I will stand thereby,
160. Upon my life, the queen will say as I.
161. Let's see which is the proudest of them all
162. That wears upon her hair kerchief or caul,
163. Shall dare say no to that which I shall teach;
164. Let us go now and without longer speech."
165. Then whispered she a sentence in his ear,
166. And bade him to be glad and have no fear.
167. When they were come unto the court, this knight
168. Said he had kept his promise as was right,
169. And ready was his answer, as he said.
170. Full many a noble wife, and many a maid,
171. And many a widow, since they are so wise,
172. The queen herself sitting as high justice,
173. Assembled were, his answer there to hear;
174. And then the knight was bidden to appear.
175. Command was given for silence in the hall,
176. And that the knight should tell before them all
177. What thing all worldly women love the best.
178. This knight did not stand dumb, as does a beast,
179. But to this question presently answered
180. With manly voice, so that the whole court heard:
181. "My liege lady, generally," said he,
182. "Women desire to have the sovereignty
183. As well upon their husband as their love,
184. And to have mastery their man above;
185. This thing you most desire, though me you kill
186. Do as you please, I am here at your will."
187. In all the court there was no wife or maid
188. Or widow that denied the thing he said,
189. But all held, he was worthy to have life.
190. And with that word up started the old wife
191. Whom he had seen a-sitting on the green.
192. "Mercy," cried she, "my sovereign lady queen!
193. Before the court's dismissed, give me my right.
194. 'Twas I who taught the answer to this knight;
195. For which he did plight troth to me, out there,
196. That the first thing I should of him require
197. He would do that, if it lay in his might.
198. Before the court, now, pray I you, sir knight,"
199. Said she, "that you will take me for your wife;
200. For well you know that I have saved your life.
201. If this be false, say nay, upon your fay!"
202. This knight replied: "Alas and welaway!
203. That I so promised I will not protest.
204. But for God's love pray make a new request.
205. Take all my wealth and let my body go."
206. "Nay then," said she, "beshrew us if I do!
207. For though I may be foul and old and poor,
208. I will not, for all metal and all ore
209. That from the earth is dug or lies above,
210. Be aught except your wife and your true love."
211. "My love?" cried he, "nay, rather my damnation!
212. Alas! that any of my race and station
213. Should ever so dishonoured foully be!"
214. But all for naught; the end was this, that he
215. Was so constrained he needs must go and wed,
216. And take his ancient wife and go to bed.
217. Now, peradventure, would some men say here,
218. That, of my negligence, I take no care
219. To tell you of the joy and all the array
220. That at the wedding feast were seen that day.
221. Make a brief answer to this thing I shall;
222. I say, there was no joy or feast at all;
223. There was but heaviness and grievous sorrow;
224. For privately he wedded on the morrow,
225. And all day, then, he hid him like an owl;
226. So sad he was, his old wife looked so foul.
227. Great was the woe the knight had in his thought
228. When he, with her, to marriage bed was brought;
229. He rolled about and turned him to and fro.
230. His old wife lay there, always smiling so,
231. And said: "O my dear husband, ben'cite!
232. Fares every knight with wife as you with me?
233. Is this the custom in King Arthur's house?
234. Are knights of his all so fastidious?
235. I am your own true love and, more, your wife;
236. And I am she who saved your very life;
237. And truly, since I've never done you wrong,
238. Why do you treat me so, this first night long?
239. You act as does a man who's lost his wit;
240. What is my fault? For God's love tell me it,
241. And it shall be amended, if I may."
242. "Amended!" cried this knight, "Alas, nay, nay!
243. It will not be amended ever, no!
244. You are so loathsome, and so old also,
245. And therewith of so low a race were born,
246. It's little wonder that I toss and turn.
247. Would God my heart would break within my breast!"
248. "Is this," asked she, "the cause of your unrest?"
249. "Yes, truly," said he, "and no wonder 'tis."
250. "Now, sir," said she, "I could amend all this,
251. If I but would, and that within days three,
252. If you would bear yourself well towards me.
253. "But since you speak of such gentility
254. As is descended from old wealth, till ye
255. Claim that for that you should be gentlemen,
256. I hold such arrogance not worth a hen.
257. Find him who is most virtuous alway,
258. Alone or publicly, and most tries aye
259. To do whatever noble deeds he can,
260. And take him for the greatest gentleman.
261. Christ wills we claim from Him gentility,
262. Not from ancestors of landocracy.
263. For though they give us all their heritage,
264. For which we claim to be of high lineage,
265. Yet can they not bequeath, in anything,
266. To any of us, their virtuous living,
267. That made men say they had gentility,
268. And bade us follow them in like degree.
269. "Well does that poet wise of great Florence,
270. Called Dante, speak his mind in this sentence;
271. Somewhat like this may it translated be:
272. 'Rarely unto the branches of the tree
273. Doth human worth mount up: and so ordains
274. He Who bestows it; to Him it pertains.'
275. For of our fathers may we nothing claim
276. But temporal things, that man may hurt and maim
277. "And everyone knows this as well as I,
278. If nobleness were implanted naturally
279. Within a certain lineage, down the line,
280. In private and in public, I opine,
281. The ways of gentleness they'd alway show
282. And never fall to vice and conduct low.
283. "Take fire and carry it in the darkest house
284. Between here and the Mount of Caucasus,
285. And let men shut the doors and from them turn;
286. Yet will the fire as fairly blaze and burn
287. As twenty thousand men did it behold;
288. Its nature and its office it will hold,
289. On peril of my life, until it die.
290. "From this you see that true gentility
291. Is not allied to wealth a man may own,
292. Since folk do not their deeds, as may be shown,
293. As does the fire, according to its kind.
294. For God knows that men may full often find
295. A lord's son doing shame and villainy;
296. And he that prizes his gentility
297. In being born of some old noble house,
298. With ancestors both noble and virtuous,
299. But will himself do naught of noble deeds
300. Nor follow him to whose name he succeeds,
301. He is not gentle, be he duke or earl;
302. For acting churlish makes a man a churl.
303. Gentility is not just the renown
304. Of ancestors who have some greatness shown,
305. In which you have no portion of your own.
306. Your own gentility comes from God alone;
307. Thence comes our true nobility by grace,
308. It was not willed us with our rank and place
309. "Think how noble, as says Valerius,
310. Was that same Tullius Hostilius,
311. Who out of poverty rose to high estate.
312. Seneca and Boethius inculcate,
313. Expressly (and no doubt it thus proceeds),
314. That he is noble who does noble deeds;
315. And therefore, husband dear, I thus conclude:
316. Although my ancestors mayhap were rude,
317. Yet may the High Lord God, and so hope I,
318. Grant me the grace to live right virtuously.
319. Then I'll be gentle when I do begin
320. To live in virtue and to do no sin.
321. "And when you me reproach for poverty,
322. The High God, in Whom we believe, say I,
323. In voluntary poverty lived His life.
324. And surely every man, or maid, or wife
325. May understand that Jesus, Heaven's King,
326. Would not have chosen vileness of living.
327. Glad poverty's an honest thing, that's plain,
328. Which Seneca and other clerks maintain.
329. Whoso will be content with poverty,
330. I hold him rich, though not a shirt has he.
331. And he that covets much is a poor wight,
332. For he would gain what's all beyond his might,
333. But he that has not, nor desires to have,
334. Is rich, although you hold him but a knave.
335. "True poverty, it sings right naturally;
336. Juvenal gaily says of poverty:
337. 'The poor man, when he walks along the way,
338. Before the robbers he may sing and play.'
339. Poverty's odious good, and, as I guess,
340. It is a stimulant to busyness;
341. A great improver, too, of sapience
342. In him that takes it all with due patience.
343. Poverty's this, though it seem misery-
344. Its quality may none dispute, say I.
345. Poverty often, when a man is low,
346. Makes him his God and even himself to know.
347. And poverty's an eye-glass, seems to me,
348. Through which a man his loyal friends may see.
349. Since you've received no injury from me,
350. Then why reproach me for my poverty.
351. "Now, sir, with age you have upbraided me;
352. And truly, sir, though no authority
353. Were in a book, you gentles of honour
354. Say that men should the aged show favour,
355. And call him father, of your gentleness;
356. And authors could I find for this, I guess.
357. "Now since you say that I am foul and old,
358. Then fear you not to be made a cuckold;
359. For dirt and age, as prosperous I may be,
360. Are mighty wardens over chastity.
361. Nevertheless, since I know your delight,
362. I'll satisfy your worldly appetite.
363. "Choose, now," said she, "one of these two things, aye,
364. To have me foul and old until I die,
365. And be to you a true and humble wife,
366. And never anger you in all my life;
367. Or else to have me young and very fair
368. And take your chance with those who will repair
369. Unto your house, and all because of me,
370. Or in some other place, as well may be.
371. Now choose which you like better and reply."
372. This knight considered, and did sorely sigh,
373. But at the last replied as you shall hear:
374. "My lady and my love, and wife so dear,
375. I put myself in your wise governing;
376. Do you choose which may be the more pleasing,
377. And bring most honour to you, and me also.
378. I care not which it be of these things two;
379. For if you like it, that suffices me."
380. "Then have I got of you the mastery,
381. Since I may choose and govern, in earnest?"
382. "Yes, truly, wife," said he, "I hold that best."
383. "Kiss me," said she, "we'll be no longer wroth,
384. For by my truth, to you I will be both;
385. That is to say, I'll be both good and fair.
386. I pray God I go mad, and so declare,
387. If I be not to you as good and true
388. As ever wife was since the world was new.
389. And, save I be, at dawn, as fairly seen
390. As any lady, empress, or great queen
391. That is between the east and the far west,
392. Do with my life and death as you like best.
393. Throw back the curtain and see how it is."
394. And when the knight saw verily all this,
395. That she so very fair was, and young too,
396. For joy he clasped her in his strong arms two,
397. His heart bathed in a bath of utter bliss;
398. A thousand times, all in a row, he'd kiss.
399. And she obeyed his wish in everything
400. That might give pleasure to his love-liking.
401. And thus they lived unto their lives' fair end,
402. In perfect joy; and Jesus to us send
403. Meek husbands, and young ones, and fresh in bed,
404. And good luck to outlive them that we wed.
405. And I pray Jesus to cut short the lives
406. Of those who'll not be governed by their wives;
407. And old and querulous niggards with their pence,
408. And send them soon a mortal pestilence!

HERE ENDS THE WIFE OF BATH'S TALE

**Sir Thomas More**



**From Utopia Book II**

SECOND BOOK  
OF THE DISCUSSION WHICH  
RAPHAEL HYTHLODAY HELD  
CONCERNING THE BEST STATE OF A COMMONWEALTH,  
BY WAY OF THOMAS MORE,  
CITIZEN AND  
UNDERSHERIFF OF LONDON

The island of Utopia is in the middle two hundred miles broad, and holds almost at the same breadth over a great part of it, but it grows narrower towards both ends. Its figure is not unlike a crescent.The topography and form of the new island of Utopia. Between its horns the sea comes in eleven miles broad, and spreads itself into a great bay, which is environed with land to the compass of about five hundred miles, and is well secured from winds. In this bay there is no great current; the whole coast is, as it were, one continued harbor, which gives all that live in the island great convenience for mutual commerce. But the entry into the bay, occasioned by rocks on the one hand and shallows on the other, is very dangerous. In the middle of it there is one single rock which appears above water,A place protected by nature needs only a single garrison. and may, therefore, easily be avoided; and on the top of it there is a tower, in which a garrison is kept; the other rocks lie under water, and are very dangerous. The channel is known only to the natives; so that if any stranger should enter into the bay without one of their pilots he would run great danger of shipwreck.A stratagem based on the movement of landmarks.  
For even they themselves could not pass it safe if some marks that are on the coast did not direct their way; and if these should be but a little shifted, any fleet that might come against them, how great soever it were, would be certainly lost.

On the other side of the island there are likewise many harbors; and the coast is so fortified, both by nature and art, that a small number of men can hinder the descent of a great army. But they report (and there remains good marks of it to make it credible) that this was no island at first, but a part of the continent.The island, after the general Utopus, was called Utopia. Utopus, that conquered it (whose name it still carries, for Abraxa was its first name),[1](http://theopenutopia.org/full-text/book-ii-of-utopia/" \l "footnote1" \o "More info below) brought the rude and uncivilised inhabitants into such a good government, and to that measure of politeness, that they now far excel all the rest of mankind. Having soon subdued them, he designed to separate them from the continent, and to bring the sea quite round them.This deed was greater than channeling the Isthmus. To accomplish this he ordered a deep channel to be dug, fifteen miles long; and that the natives might not think he treated them like slaves, he not only forced the inhabitants, but also his own soldiers, to labor in carrying it on.That which is common to all is easily borne. As he set a vast number of men to work, he, beyond all men’s expectations, brought it to a speedy conclusion. And his neighbors, who at first laughed at the folly of the undertaking, no sooner saw it brought to perfection than they were struck with admiration and terror.

There are fifty-four cities[2](http://theopenutopia.org/full-text/book-ii-of-utopia/" \l "footnote2" \o "More info below) in the island,The cities of the island of Utopia. all large and well built, the manners, customs, and laws of which are the same, and they are all contrived as nearUniformity creates harmony. in the same manner as the ground on which they stand will allow. The nearest lie at least twenty-four miles’ distance from one another, and the most remote are not so far distantA moderate distance between cities. but that a man can go on foot in one day from it to that which lies next it.

Every city sends three of their wisest senators once a year to Amaurot,[3](http://theopenutopia.org/full-text/book-ii-of-utopia/" \l "footnote3" \o "More info below) to consult about their common concerns; The distribution of lands.for that is the chief town of the island, being situated near the center of it, so that it is the most convenient place for their assemblies. The jurisdiction of every city extends at least twenty miles[4](http://theopenutopia.org/full-text/book-ii-of-utopia/" \l "footnote4" \o "More info below), and, where the towns lie wider, they have much more ground. Yet today, it is this desire to expand that plagues all commonwealths.No town desires to enlarge its bounds, for the people consider themselves rather as tenants than landlords. They have built, over all the country, farmhouses for husbandmen, which are well contrived, and furnished with all things necessary for country labor. Inhabitants are sent, by turns, from the cities to dwell in them; no country family has fewer than forty men and women in it, besides two slaves.Agriculture is the primary concern. There is a master and a mistress set over every family, and over thirty families there is a magistrate. Every year twenty of this family come back to the town after they have stayed two years in the country, and in their stead there are another twenty sent from the town, that they may learn country work from those that have been already one year in the country, as they must teach those that come to them the next from the town. By this means such as dwell in those country farms are never ignorant of agriculture, and so commit no errors which might otherwise be fatal and bring them under a scarcity of corn. But though there is every year such a shifting of the husbandmen to prevent any man being forced against his will to follow that hard course of life too long, yet many among them take such pleasure in it that they desire leave to continue in it many years.

These husbandmen till the ground, breed cattle,The duties of farmers. hew wood, and convey it to the towns either by land or water, as is most convenient. They breed an infinite multitude of chickens in a very curious manner; for the hens do not sit and hatch them, but a vast number of eggs are laid in a gentle and equal heat in order to be hatched,An extraordinary method of hatching eggs. and they are no sooner out of the shell, and able to stir about, but they seem to consider those that feed them as their mothers, and follow them as other chickens do the hen that hatched them.[5](http://theopenutopia.org/full-text/book-ii-of-utopia/" \l "footnote5" \o "More info below)

They breed very few horses, but those they have are full of mettle, and are kept only for exercising their youth in the art of sitting and riding them; The use of horses. for they do not put them to any work, either of plowing or carriage, in which they employ oxen. For though their horses are stronger, yet they find oxen can hold out longer; and as they are not subject to so many diseases,The use of oxen. so they are kept upon a less charge and with less trouble. And even when they are so worn out that they are no more fit for labor, they are good meat at last.

They sow no corn but that which is to be their bread; for they drink either wine, cider or perry,[6](http://theopenutopia.org/full-text/book-ii-of-utopia/" \l "footnote6" \o "More info below)Food and drink. and often water, sometimes boiled with honey or liquorice, with which they abound; and though they know exactly how much corn will serve every town and all that tract of country which belongs to it, yet they sow The method of sowing.much more and breed more cattle than are necessary for their consumption, and they give that surplus of which they make no use to their neighbors. When they want anything in the country which it does not produce, they fetch that from the town, without carrying anything in exchange for it. And the magistrates of the town take care to see it given them; for they meet generally in the town once a month, upon a festival day. When the time of harvest comes, the magistrates in the country send to those in the townsThe strength of cooperative labor. and let them know how many hands they will need for reaping the harvest; and the number they call for being sent to them, they commonly dispatch it all in one day.

 THEIR SOCIAL RELATIONS

 But it is now time to explain to you the mutual intercourse of this people, their commerce, and the rules by which all things are distributed among them.

As their cities are composed of families, so their families are made up of those that are nearly related to one another. Their women, when they grow up, are married out, but all the males, both children and grand-children, live still in the same house, in great obedience to their common parent, unless age has weakened his understanding, and in that case he that is next to him in age comes in his room;The number of citizens. but lest any city should become either too great, or by any accident be dispeopled, provision is made that none of their cities may contain above six thousand families, besides those of the country around it. No family may have less than ten and more than sixteen persons in it, but there can be no determined number for the children under age; this rule is easily observed by removing some of the children of a more fruitful couple to any other family that does not abound so much in them.

By the same rule they supply cities that do not increase so fast from others that breed faster; and if there is any increase over the whole island, then they draw out a number of their citizens out of the several towns and send them over to the neighboring continent, where, if they find that the inhabitants have more soil than they can well cultivate, they fix a colony, taking the inhabitants into their society if they are willing to live with them; and where they do that of their own accord, they quickly enter into their method of life and conform to their rules, and this proves a happiness to both nations; for, according to their constitution, such care is taken of the soil that it becomes fruitful enough for both, though it might be otherwise too narrow and barren for any one of them.

But if the natives refuse to conform themselves to their laws they drive them out of those bounds which they mark out for themselves, and use force if they resist, for they account it a very just cause of war for a nation to hinder others from possessing a part of that soil of which they make no use, but which is suffered to lie idle and uncultivated, since every man has, by the law of nature, a right to such a waste portion of the earth as is necessary for his subsistence. If an accident has so lessened the number of the inhabitants of any of their towns that it cannot be made up from the other towns of the island without diminishing them too much (which is said to have fallen out but twice since they were first a people, when great numbers were carried off by the plague), the loss is then supplied by recalling as many as are wanted from their colonies, for they will abandon these rather than suffer the towns in the island to sink too low.

But to return to their manner of living in society:Thus, the idle mob of servants could be removed. the oldest man of every family, as has been already said, is its governor; wives serve their husbands, and children their parents, and always the younger serves the elder.

Every city is divided into four equal parts, and in the middle of each there is a market-place. What is brought thither, and manufactured by the several families, is carried from thence to houses appointed for that purpose, in which all things of a sort are laid by themselves; and thither every father goes, and takes whatsoever he or his family stand in need of, without either paying for it or leaving anything in exchange. There is no reason for giving a denial to any person, since there is such plenty of everything among them; and there is no danger of a man’s asking for more than he needs; they have no inducements to do this, since they are sure they shall always be supplied: it is the fear of want that makes any of the whole race of animals either greedy or ravenous; but, besides fear, there is in man a prideThe origin of Greed. that makes him fancy it a particular glory to excel others in pomp and excess; but by the laws of the Utopians, there is no room for this.

Near these markets there are others for all sorts of provisions, where there are not only herbs, fruits, and bread, but also fish, fowl, and cattle.Decay and filth bring pestilence upon the citizen body. There are also, outside their towns, places appointed near some running water for killing their beasts and for washing away their filth, which is done by their slaves; for they suffer none of their citizens to kill their cattle, because they think that pity and good-nature,From the butchery of livestock, we learn to cut the throats even of men. which are among the best of those affections that are born with us, are much impaired by the butchering of animals; nor do they suffer anything that is foul or unclean to be brought within their towns, lest the air should be infected by ill-smells, which might prejudice their health.

In every street there are great halls, that lie at an equal distance from each other, distinguished by particular names. The Syphogrants dwell in those that are set over thirty families, fifteen lying on one side of it, and as many on the other. In these halls they all meet and have their repasts; the stewards of every one of them come to the market-place at an appointed hour, and according to the number of those that belong to the hall they carry home provisions.

But they take more care of their sick than of any others;The care of the sick. these are lodged and provided for in public hospitals. They have belonging to every town four hospitals, that are built outside their walls, and are so large that they may pass for little towns; by this means, if they had ever such a number of sick persons, they could lodge them conveniently, and at such a distance that such of them as are sick of infectious diseases may be kept so far from the rest that there can be no danger of contagion. The hospitals are furnished and stored with all things that are convenient for the ease and recovery of the sick; and those that are put in them are looked after with such tender and watchful care, and are so constantly attended by their skillful physicians, that as none is sent to them against their will, so there is scarce one in a whole town that, if he should fall ill, would not choose rather to go thither than lie sick at home.

After the steward of the hospitals has taken for the sick whatsoever the physician prescribes, then the best things that are left in the market are distributed equallyThe banquets common, and enjoyed by all equally. among the halls in proportion to their numbers; only, in the first place, they serve the Prince, the Chief Priest, the Tranibors, the Ambassadors, and strangers, if there are any, which, indeed, falls out but seldom, and for whom there are houses, well furnished, particularly appointed for their reception when they come among them. At the hours of dinner and supper the whole Syphogranty being called together by sound of trumpet, they meet and eat together, except only such as are in the hospitals or lie sick at home. O how the principle of liberty is held in every quarter, so that nothing is done by compulsion! Yet, after the halls are served, no man is hindered to carry provisions home from the market-place, for they know that none does that but for some good reason; for though any that will may eat at home, yet none does it willingly, since it is both ridiculous and foolish for any to give themselves the trouble to make ready an ill dinner at home when there is a much more plentiful one made ready for him so near hand. All the uneasy and sordid services about these halls are performed by their slaves;Women are the servants at banquets. but the dressing and cooking their meat, and the ordering their tables, belong only to the women, all those of every family taking it by turns.

They sit at three or more tables, according to their number; the men sit towards the wall, and the women sit on the other side, that if any of them should be taken suddenly ill, which is no uncommon case amongst women with child, she may, without disturbing the rest, rise and go to the nurses’ room (who are there with the suckling children), where there is always clean water at hand and cradles, in which they may lay the young children if there is occasion for it, and a fire, that they may shift and dress them before it.Through praise and moral duty, citizens are most fittingly invited to act rightly. Every child is nursed by its own mother if death or sickness does not intervene; and in that case the Syphogrants’ wives find out a nurse quickly, which is no hard matter, for any one that can do it offers herself cheerfully; for as they are much inclined to that piece of mercy, so the child whom they nurse considers the nurse as its mother.The education of offspring. All the children under five years old sit among the nurses; the rest of the younger sort of both sexes, till they are fit for marriage, either serve those that sit at table, or, if they are not strong enough for that, stand by them in great silence and eat what is given them; nor have they any other formality of dining.

In the middle of the first table, which stands across the upper end of the hall, sit the Syphogrant and his wife, for that is the chief and most conspicuous place; next to him sit two of the most ancient, for there go always four to a mess.The priest is placed above the prince, but nowadays even bishops serve royalty! If there is a temple within the Syphogranty, the Priest and his wife sit with the Syphogrant above all the rest; next to them there is a mixture of old and young, who are so placed that as the young are set near others, so they are mixed with the more ancient; which, they say, was appointed on this account:The younger are mixed with the older. that the gravity of the old people, and the reverence that is due to them, might restrain the younger from all indecent words and gestures. Dishes are not served up to the whole table at first, but the best are first set before the old,Special consideration of the old. whose seats are distinguished from the young, and, after them, all the rest are served alike. The old men distribute to the younger any curious meats that happen to be set before them, if there is not such an abundance of them that the whole company may be served alike. Thus old men are honored with a particular respect, yet all the rest fare as well as they.

Both dinner and supper are begun with some lecture of morality that is read to them;Nowadays the monks scarcely observe this. but it is so short that it is not tedious nor uneasy to them to hear it. From hence the old men take occasion to entertain those about them with some useful and pleasant enlargements; but they do not engross the whole discourse so to themselves during their meals that the younger may not put in for a share; on the contrary, they engage them to talk,Discussions at the table. that so they may, in that free way of conversation, find out the force of every one’s spirit and observe his temper.

They dispatch their dinners quickly, but sit long at supper,Now doctors condemn this. because they go to work after the one, and are to sleep after the other, during which they think the stomach carries on the concoction more vigorously. They never sup without music,Music at banquets. and there is always fruit served up after meat; while they are at table some burn perfumes and sprinkle about fragrant ointments and sweet waters–in short, they want nothing that may cheer up their spirits;Harmless pleasure must not be spurned. they give themselves a large allowance that way, and indulge themselves in all such pleasures as are attended with no inconvenience.[13](http://theopenutopia.org/full-text/book-ii-of-utopia/" \l "footnote13" \o "More info below)

Thus do those that are in the towns live together; but in the country, where they live at a great distance, every one eats at home, and no family wants any necessary sort of provision, for it is from them that provisions are sent unto those that live in the towns.

  [THEIR MARRIAGE]

 Concerning marriages. Their women are not married before eighteen nor their men before two-and-twenty, and if any of them run into forbidden embraces before marriage they are severely punished, and the privilege of marriage is denied them unless they can obtain a special warrant from the Prince. Such disorders cast a great reproach upon the master and mistress of the family in which they happen, for it is supposed that they have failed in their duty. The reason of punishing this so severely is, because they think that if they were not strictly restrained from all vagrant appetites, very few would engage in a state in which they venture the quiet of their whole lives, by being confined to one person, and are obliged to endure all the inconveniences with which it is accompanied.

In choosing their wives they use a method that would appear to us very absurd and ridiculous, but it is constantly observed among them, and is accounted perfectly consistent with wisdom. And if it seems not modest, nevertheless it is most cautious. Before marriage some grave matron presents the bride, naked, whether she is a virgin or a widow, to the bridegroom, and after that some grave man presents the bridegroom, naked, to the bride. We, indeed, both laughed at this, and condemned it as very indecent. But they, on the other hand, wondered at the folly of the men of all other nations, who, if they are but to buy a horse of a small value, are so cautious that they will see every part of him, and take off both his saddle and all his other tackle, that there may be no secret ulcer hid under any of them, and that yet in the choice of a wife, on which depends the happiness or unhappiness of the rest of his life, a man should venture upon trust, and only see about a handsbreadth of the face, all the rest of the body being covered, under which may lie hid what may be contagious as well as loathsome. All men are not so wise as to choose a woman only for her good qualities, and even wise men consider the body as that which adds not a little to the mind, and it is certain there may be some such deformity covered with clothes as may totally alienate a man from his wife, when it is too late to part with her; if such a thing is discovered after marriage a man has no remedy but patience; they, therefore, think it is reasonable that there should be good provision made against such mischievous frauds.

There was so much the more reason for them to make a regulation in this matter, because they are the only people of those parts that neither allow of polygamy nor of divorces, except in the case of adultery or insufferable perverseness, Divorce. for in these cases the Senate dissolves the marriage and grants the injured person leave to marry again; but the guilty are made infamous and are never allowed the privilege of a second marriage. None are suffered to put away their wives against their wills, from any great calamity that may have fallen on their persons, for they look on it as the height of cruelty and treachery to abandon either of the married persons when they need most the tender care of their consort, and that chiefly in the case of old age, which, as it carries many diseases along with it, so it is a disease of itself.

But it frequently falls out that when a married couple do not well agree, they, by mutual consent, separate, and find out other persons with whom they hope they may live more happily; yet this is not done without obtaining leave of the Senate, which never admits of a divorce but upon a strict inquiry made, both by the senators and their wives, into the grounds upon which it is desired, and even when they are satisfied concerning the reasons of it they go on but slowly, for they imagine that too great easiness in granting leave for new marriages would very much shake the kindness of married people.

They punish severely those that defile the marriage bed; if both parties are married they are divorced, and the injured persons may marry one another, or whom they please, but the adulterer and the adulteress are condemned to slavery, yet if either of the injured persons cannot shake off the love of the married person they may live with them still in that state, but they must follow them to that labor to which the slaves are condemned, and sometimes the repentance of the condemned, together with the unshaken kindness of the innocent and injured person, has prevailed so far with the Prince that he has taken off the sentence; but those that relapse after they are once pardoned are punished with death.

 [THEIR LAWS AND PUNISHMENTS]

 The determination of the punishment rests with the magistrates. Their law does not determine the punishment for other crimes, but that is left to the Senate, to temper it according to the circumstances of the fact. Husbands have power to correct their wives and parents to chastise their children, unless the fault is so great that a public punishment is thought necessary for striking terror into others. For the most part slavery is the punishment even of the greatest crimes, for as that is no less terrible to the criminals themselves than death, so they think the preserving them in a state of servitude is more for the interest of the commonwealth than killing them, since, as their labor is a greater benefit to the public than their death could be, so the sight of their misery is a more lasting terror to other men than that which would be given by their death. If their slaves rebel, and will not bear their yoke and submit to the labor that is enjoined them, they are treated as wild beasts that cannot be kept in order, neither by a prison nor by their chains, and are at last put to death. But those who bear their punishment patiently, and are so much wrought on by that pressure that lies so hard on them, that it appears they are really more troubled for the crimes they have committed than for the miseries they suffer, are not out of hope, but that, at last, either the Prince will, by his prerogative, or the people, by their intercession, restore them again to their liberty, or, at least, very much mitigate their slavery.

The punishment of one who induces another to disgrace.  
He that tempts a married woman to adultery is no less severely punished than he that commits it, for they believe that a deliberate design to commit a crime is equal to the fact itself, since its not taking effect does not make the person that miscarried in his attempt at all the less guilty.

Pleasure derived from fools.They take great pleasure in fools, and as it is thought a base and unbecoming thing to use them ill, so they do not think it amiss for people to divert themselves with their folly; and, in their opinion, this is a great advantage to the fools themselves; for if men were so sullen and severe as not at all to please themselves with their ridiculous behavior and foolish sayings, which is all that they can do to recommend themselves to others, it could not be expected that they would be so well provided for nor so tenderly used as they must otherwise be.

If any man should reproach another for his being misshaped or imperfect in any part of his body, it would not at all be thought a reflection on the person so treated, but it would be accounted scandalous in him that had upbraided another with what he could not help. Painted beauty.It is thought a sign of a sluggish and sordid mind not to preserve carefully one’s natural beauty; but it is likewise infamous among them to use paint. They all see that no beauty recommends a wife so much to her husband as the probity of her life and her obedience; for as some few are caught and held only by beauty, so all are attracted by the other excellences which charm all the world.

Citizens ought to be summoned to duty by rewards.As they fright men from committing crimes by punishments, so they invite them to the love of virtue by public honors; therefore they erect statues to the memories of such worthy men as have deserved well of their country, and set these in their market-places, both to perpetuate the remembrance of their actions and to be an incitement to their posterity to follow their example.

Canvassing for office is condemned. If any man aspires to any office he is sure never to compass it. They all live easily together, for none of the magistrates are either insolent or cruel to the people; they affect rather to be called fathers, and, by being really so, they well deserve the name; The honour of magistrates. and the people pay them all the marks of honour the more freely because none are exacted from them. The Prince himself has no distinction, either of garments or of a crown; The dignity of the Prince. but is only distinguished by a sheaf of corn carried before him; as the High Priest is also known by his being preceded by a person carrying a wax light.

Few laws. They have but few laws, and such is their constitution that they need not many. They very much condemn other nations whose laws, together with the commentaries on them, swell up to so many volumes; for they think it an unreasonable thing to oblige men to obey a body of laws that are both of such a bulk, and so dark as not to be read and understood by every one of the subjects.

The useless mob of lawyers. They have no lawyers among them, for they consider them as a sort of people whose profession it is to disguise matters and to wrest the laws, and, therefore, they think it is much better that every man should plead his own cause, and trust it to the judge, as in other places the client trusts it to a counselor; by this means they both cut off many delays and find out truth more certainly; for after the parties have laid open the merits of the cause, without those artifices which lawyers are apt to suggest, the judge examines the whole matter, and supports the simplicity of such well-meaning persons, whom otherwise crafty men would be sure to run down; and thus they avoid those evils which appear very remarkably among all those nations that labor under a vast load of laws.

Every one of them is skilled in their law; for, as it is a very short study, so the plainest meaning of which words are capable is always the sense of their laws; and they argue thus: all laws are promulgated for this end, that every man may know his duty; and, therefore, the plainest and most obvious sense of the words is that which ought to be put upon them, since a more refined exposition cannot be easily comprehended, and would only serve to make the laws become useless to the greater part of mankind, and especially to those who need most the direction of them; for it is all one not to make a law at all or to couch it in such terms that, without a quick apprehension and much study, a man cannot find out the true meaning of it, since the generality of mankind are both so dull, and so much employed in their several trades, that they have neither the leisure nor the capacity requisite for such an inquiry

[**Sir Thomas Wyatt**](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/thomas-wyatt)



**Whoso List to Hunt, I Know where is an Hind**

Whoso list to hunt, I know where is an hind,

But as for me, *hélas*, I may no more.

The vain travail hath wearied me so sore,

I am of them that farthest cometh behind.

Yet may I by no means my wearied mind

Draw from the deer, but as she fleeth afore

Fainting I follow. I leave off therefore,

Sithens in a net I seek to hold the wind.

Who list her hunt, I put him out of doubt,

As well as I may spend his time in vain.

And graven with diamonds in letters plain

There is written, her fair neck round about:

*Noli me tangere*, for Caesar's I am,

And wild for to hold, though I seem tame.

**They Flee From Me**

They flee from me that sometime did me seek

With naked foot, stalking in my chamber.

I have seen them gentle, tame, and meek,

That now are wild and do not remember

That sometime they put themself in danger

To take bread at my hand; and now they range,

Busily seeking with a continual change.

Thanked be fortune it hath been otherwise

Twenty times better; but once in special,

In thin array after a pleasant guise,

When her loose gown from her shoulders did fall,

And she me caught in her arms long and small;

Therewithall sweetly did me kiss

And softly said, “Dear heart, how like you this?”

It was no dream: I lay broad waking.

But all is turned thorough my gentleness

Into a strange fashion of forsaking;

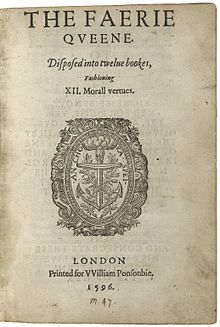
And I have leave to go of her goodness,

And she also, to use newfangleness.

But since that I so kindly am served

I would fain know what she hath deserved.

**Edmund Spenser**



**From The Faerie Queene: Book I, Canto I**

Lo I the man, whose Muse whilome did maske,

As time her taught in lowly Shepheards weeds,

Am now enforst a far unfitter taske,

For trumpets sterne to chaunge mine Oaten reeds,

And sing of Knights and Ladies gentle deeds;

Whose prayses having slept in silence long,

Me, all too meane, the sacred Muse areeds

To blazon broad emongst her learned throng:

Fierce warres and faithful loves shall moralize my song.

Helpe then, O holy Virgin chiefe of nine,

Thy weaker Novice to performe thy will,

Lay forth out of thine everlasting scryne

The antique rolles, which there lye hidden still,

Of Faerie knights and fairest Tanaquill,

Whom that most noble Briton Prince so long

Sought through the world, and suffered so much ill,

That I must rue his undeserved wrong:

O helpe thou my weake wit, and sharpen my dull tong.

And thou most dreaded impe of highest Jove,

Faire Venus sonne, that with thy cruell dart

At that good knight so cunningly didst rove,

That glorious fire it kindled in his hart,

Lay now thy deadly Heben bow apart,

And with thy mother milde come to mine ayde:

Come both, and with you bring triumphant Mart,

In loves and gentle jollities arrayd,

After his murdrous spoiles and bloudy rage allayd.

And with them eke, O Goddesse heavenly bright,

Mirrour of grace and Majestie divine,

Great Lady of the greatest Isle, whose light

Like Phoebus lampe throughout the world doth shine,

Shed thy faire beames into my feeble eyne,

And raise my thoughts too humble and too vile,

To thinke of that true glorious type of thine,

The argument of mine afflicted stile:

The which to heare, vouchsafe, O dearest dred a-while.

**FromThe Shepheardes Calender**



**January**

Januarie. Ægloga prima. ARGVMENT.

    IN this fyrst Æglogue Colin clout a shepheardes boy complaineth him of his vnfortunate loue, being but newly (as semeth) enamoured of a countrie lasse called Rosalinde: with which strong affection being very sore traueled, he compareth his carefull case to the sadde season of the yeare, to the frostie ground, to the frosen trees, and to his owne winterbeaten flocke. And lastlye, fynding himselfe robbed of all former pleasaunce and delights, hee breaketh his Pipe in peeces, and casteth him selfe to the ground.

COLIN CLOUTE.

A Shepeheards boye (no better doe him call)

when Winters wastful spight was almost spent,

All in a sunneshine day, as did befall,

Led forth his flock, that had been long ypent.

So faynt they woxe, and feeble in the folde,

That now vnnethes their feete could them vphold.

All as the Sheepe, such was the shepeheards looke,

For pale and wanne he was, (alas the while,)

May seeme he lovd, or els some care he tooke:

Well couth he tune his pipe, and frame his stile.

Tho to a hill his faynting flocke he ledde,

And thus him playnd, the while his shepe there fedde.

Ye gods of loue, that pitie louers payne,

(if any gods the paine of louers pitie:)

Looke from aboue, where you in ioyes remaine,

And bowe your eares vnto my doleful dittie.

And Pan thou shepheards God, that once didst loue,

Pitie the paines, that thou thy selfe didst proue.

Thou barrein ground, whome winters wrath hath wasted,

Art made a myrrhour, to behold my plight:

Whilome thy fresh spring flowrd, and after hasted

Thy sommer prowde with Daffadillies dight.

And now is come thy wynters stormy state,

Thy mantle mard, wherein thou mas-kedst late.

Such rage as winters, reigneth in my heart,

My life bloud friesing wtih vnkindly cold:

Such stormy stoures do breede my balefull smarte,

As if my yeare were wast, and woxen old.

And yet alas, but now my spring begonne,

And yet alas, yt is already donne.

You naked trees, whose shady leaves are lost,

Wherein the byrds were wont to build their bowre:

And now are clothd with mosse and hoary frost,

Instede of bloosmes, wherwith your buds did flowre:

I see your teares, that from your boughes doe raine,

Whose drops in drery ysicles remaine.

All so my lustfull leafe is drye and sere,

My timely buds with wayling all are wasted:

The blossome, which my braunch of youth did beare,

With breathed sighes is blowne away, & blasted,

And from mine eyes the drizling teares descend,

As on your boughes the ysicles depend.

[**Christopher Marlowe**](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/christopher-marlowe)



**The Passionate Shepherd to His Love**

Come live with me and be my love,

And we will all the pleasures prove,

That Valleys, groves, hills, and fields,

Woods, or steepy mountain yields.

And we will sit upon the Rocks,

Seeing the Shepherds feed their flocks,

By shallow Rivers to whose falls

Melodious birds sing Madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of Roses

And a thousand fragrant posies,

A cap of flowers, and a kirtle

Embroidered all with leaves of Myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool

Which from our pretty Lambs we pull;

Fair lined slippers for the cold,

With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and Ivy buds,

With Coral clasps and Amber studs:

And if these pleasures may thee move,

Come live with me, and be my love.

The Shepherds’ Swains shall dance and sing

For thy delight each May-morning:

If these delights thy mind may move,

Then live with me, and be my love.

[**Sir Walter Ralegh**](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/sir-walter-ralegh)



**The Nymph’s Reply to the Shepherd**

If all the world and love were young,

And truth in every Shepherd’s tongue,

These pretty pleasures might me move,

To live with thee, and be thy love.

Time drives the flocks from field to fold,

When Rivers rage and Rocks grow cold,

And *Philomel* becometh dumb,

The rest complains of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields,

To wayward winter reckoning yields,

A honey tongue, a heart of gall,

Is fancy’s spring, but sorrow’s fall.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of Roses,

Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies

Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten:

In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw and Ivy buds,

The Coral clasps and amber studs,

All these in me no means can move

To come to thee and be thy love.

But could youth last, and love still breed,

Had joys no date, nor age no need,

Then these delights my mind might move

To live with thee, and be thy love.

[**William Shakespeare**](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/william-shakespeare)



**Romeo and Juliet**



**1: Full Text:** <http://shakespeare.mit.edu/romeo_juliet/index.html>

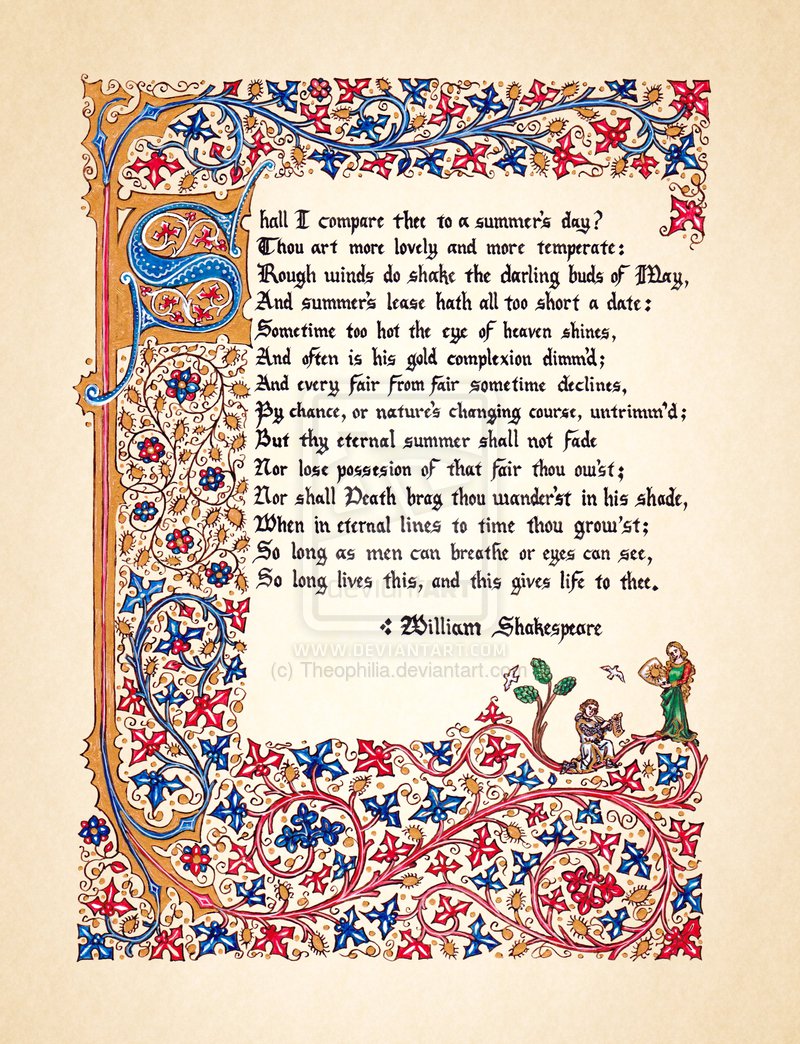
**2: Movie Link (Arabic Sub-titles)** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SZ4k7CEZTH4>

**3: Movie Link (English only)** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2o5b5_aa5X0>

**Romeo and Juliet Synopsis**

An ongoing feud between the Capulets and the Montagues breaks out again on the streets of Verona. Both sides are warned by Prince Escalus that they must not disturb the peace again, on pain of death.  
  
Romeo, love-sick for Rosaline, is comforted by his friend Benvolio. Capulet tells Paris that he may not marry his daughter Juliet until she is older. Romeo and his friends learn of a party being held by the Capulets, and decide to go to it as masquers. At the party, Tybalt sees Romeo, but is prevented from fighting him by Capulet. Romeo meets Juliet, and they instantly fall in love. After leaving the party, Romeo eludes his friends, returns to meet Juliet, and they exchange vows of love. Romeo tells Friar Laurence what has happened and he consents to marry them.  
Benvolio tells Mercutio that Tybalt has sent Romeo a challenge. Romeo joins them, and is visited by the Nurse, who is told the marriage plan. She tells Juliet, who then goes to Friar Laurence’s cell, and the lovers are married. Tybalt, looking for Romeo, finds Benvolio and Mercutio. Romeo returns, and is challenged by Tybalt, but refuses to fight. Mercutio draws on Tybalt and is fatally wounded. Tybalt then fights with Romeo, and is killed. Romeo flies, and Benvolio reports what has happened to the Prince, who banishes Romeo. The Nurse tells Juliet of Romeo’s banishment and promises to bring him to her. The Friar tells a distraught Romeo he is banished, but advises him to visit Juliet secretly, then to leave for Mantua.  
Capulet tells Paris he may marry Juliet in three days, and Lady Capulet brings the news to Juliet, who has just bid Romeo a hasty farewell. Juliet refuses to marry Paris, persisting in the face of her father’s anger. She goes to the Friar for help, and finds Paris there arranging the marriage. After he leaves, the Friar devises a plan: he will give her a drink that will make her appear dead and thus avoid the marriage, and will write to Romeo to tell him; they can then elope to Mantua.  
Juliet tells her father she will now marry Paris, and Capulet brings the wedding forward to the next day. Juliet retires, and drinks the liquid. When her ‘body’ is discovered, all mourn, and she is taken to the family crypt. In Mantua, Balthasar tells Romeo that Juliet is dead. He vows to lie dead next to her that night, and obtains a poison from an apothecary. Friar John tells Friar Laurence that he was unable to deliver Laurence’s letter to Romeo. Realizing the danger, Laurence leaves to tell Juliet what has happened.  
Paris goes to Juliet’s tomb to mourn her, and encounters Romeo. They fight, and Romeo kills Paris. Romeo then drinks the poison and dies by Juliet. The Friar arrives to see Romeo dead and Juliet waking. She refuses to leave, and kills herself with Romeo’s dagger. Officers arrive, and rouse the families and the Prince. The Friar explains what has happened. Montague and Capulet agree to make peace with each other.  
  
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**The Sonnets**



**Sonnet 18:** Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?

Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?

Thou art more lovely and more temperate:

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,

And summer’s lease hath all too short a date;

Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,

And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;

And every fair from fair sometime declines,

By chance or nature’s changing course untrimm'd;

But thy eternal summer shall not fade,

Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow’st;

Nor shall death brag thou wander’st in his shade,

When in eternal lines to time thou grow’st:

   So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,

   So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

**Sonnet 29:** When, in disgrace with fortune and men’s eyes

When, in disgrace with fortune and men’s eyes,

I all alone beweep my outcast state,

And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,

And look upon myself and curse my fate,

Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,

Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,

Desiring this man’s art and that man’s scope,

With what I most enjoy contented least;

Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,

Haply I think on thee, and then my state,

(Like to the lark at break of day arising

From sullen earth) sings hymns at heaven’s gate;

       For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings

       That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

**Sonnet 130:** My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;

Coral is far more red than her lips' red;

If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;

If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.

I have seen roses damasked, red and white,

But no such roses see I in her cheeks;

And in some perfumes is there more delight

Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.

I love to hear her speak, yet well I know

That music hath a far more pleasing sound;

I grant I never saw a goddess go;

My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground.

   And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare

   As any she belied with false compare.

**Sonnet 144:** Two loves I have of comfort and despair

Two loves I have of comfort and despair,

Which like two spirits do suggest me still

The better angel is a man right fair,

The worser spirit a woman coloured ill.

To win me soon to hell, my female evil

Tempteth my better angel from my side,

And would corrupt my saint to be a devil,

Wooing his purity with her foul pride.

And, whether that my angel be turn’d fiend,

Suspect I may, yet not directly tell,

But being both from me both to each friend,

I guess one angel in another’s hell.

   Yet this shall I ne’er know, but live in doubt,

   Till my bad angel fire my good one out.

[**John Donne**](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/john-donne)



**The Flea**

Mark but this flea, and mark in this,

How little that which thou deniest me is;

It sucked me first, and now sucks thee,

And in this flea our two bloods mingled be;

Thou know’st that this cannot be said

A sin, nor shame, nor loss of maidenhead,

    Yet this enjoys before it woo,

    And pampered swells with one blood made of two,

    And this, alas, is more than we would do.

Oh stay, three lives in one flea spare,

Where we almost, nay more than married are.

This flea is you and I, and this

Our marriage bed, and marriage temple is;

Though parents grudge, and you, w'are met,

And cloistered in these living walls of jet.

    Though use make you apt to kill me,

    Let not to that, self-murder added be,

    And sacrilege, three sins in killing three.

Cruel and sudden, hast thou since

Purpled thy nail, in blood of innocence?

Wherein could this flea guilty be,

Except in that drop which it sucked from thee?

Yet thou triumph’st, and say'st that thou

Find’st not thy self, nor me the weaker now;

    ’Tis true; then learn how false, fears be:

    Just so much honor, when thou yield’st to me,

    Will waste, as this flea’s death took life from thee.

**The Sun Rising**

               Busy old fool, unruly sun,

               Why dost thou thus,

Through windows, and through curtains call on us?

Must to thy motions lovers' seasons run?

               Saucy pedantic wretch, go chide

               Late school boys and sour prentices,

         Go tell court huntsmen that the king will ride,

         Call country ants to harvest offices,

Love, all alike, no season knows nor clime,

Nor hours, days, months, which are the rags of time.

               Thy beams, so reverend and strong

               Why shouldst thou think?

I could eclipse and cloud them with a wink,

But that I would not lose her sight so long;

               If her eyes have not blinded thine,

               Look, and tomorrow late, tell me,

         Whether both th' Indias of spice and mine

         Be where thou leftst them, or lie here with me.

Ask for those kings whom thou saw'st yesterday,

And thou shalt hear, All here in one bed lay.

               She's all states, and all princes, I,

               Nothing else is.

Princes do but play us; compared to this,

All honor's mimic, all wealth alchemy.

               Thou, sun, art half as happy as we,

               In that the world's contracted thus.

         Thine age asks ease, and since thy duties be

         To warm the world, that's done in warming us.

Shine here to us, and thou art everywhere;

This bed thy center is, these walls, thy sphere.

Our two souls therefore, which are one,

   Though I must go, endure not yet

A breach, but an expansion,

   Like gold to airy thinness beat.

If they be two, they are two so

   As stiff twin compasses are two;

Thy soul, the fixed foot, makes no show

   To move, but doth, if the other do.

And though it in the center sit,

   Yet when the other far doth roam,

It leans and hearkens after it,

   And grows erect, as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to me, who must,

   Like th' other foot, obliquely run;

Thy firmness makes my circle just,

   And makes me end where I begun.

**Holy Sonnets:** Death, be not proud

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee

Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;

For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow

Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.

From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,

Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,

And soonest our best men with thee do go,

Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.

Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,

And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,

And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well

And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?

One short sleep past, we wake eternally

And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

**Francis Bacon.**



Essays, Civil and Moral.

Of Truth

WHAT is truth? said jesting Pilate, and would not stay for an answer. Certainly there be that delight in giddiness, and count it a bondage to fix a belief; affecting 1 free-will in thinking, as well as in acting. And though the sects of philosophers, of that kind 2 be gone, yet there remain certain discoursing 3 wits which are of the same veins, though there be not so much blood in them as was in those of the ancients. But it is not only the difficulty and labor which men take in finding out of truth, nor again that when it is found it imposeth upon 4 men’s thoughts, that doth bring lies in favor; but a natural though corrupt love of the lie itself. One of the later school 5 of the Grecians examineth the matter and is at a stand to think what should be in it, that men should love lies, where neither they make for pleasure, as with poets, nor for advantage, as with the merchant; but for the lie’s sake. But I cannot tell; this same truth is a naked and open day-light, that doth not show the masks and mummeries and triumphs of the world, half so stately and daintily as candle-lights. Truth may perhaps come to the price of a pearl, that showeth best by day; but it will not rise to the price of a diamond or carbuncle, that showeth best in varied lights. A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure. Doth any man doubt, that if there were taken out of men’s minds vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations as one would, and the like, but it would leave the minds of a number of men poor shrunken things, full of melancholy and indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves? 1

One of the fathers, in great severity, called poesy vinum dæmonum [devils’-wine], because it filleth the imagination; and yet it is but with the shadow of a lie. But it is not the lie that passeth through the mind, but the lie that sinketh in and settleth in it, that doth the hurt; such as we spake of before. But howsoever these things are thus in men’s depraved judgments and affections, yet truth, which only doth judge itself, teacheth that the inquiry of truth, which is the love-making or wooing of it, the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it, and the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it, is the sovereign good of human nature. The first creature of God, in the works of the days, was the light of the sense; the last was the light of reason; and his sabbath work ever since is the illumination of his Spirit. First he breathed light upon the face of the matter or chaos; then he breathed light into the face of man; and still he breatheth and inspireth light into the face of his chosen. The poet 6 that beautified the sect 7 that was otherwise inferior to the rest, saith yet excellently well: It is a pleasure to stand upon the shore and to see ships tossed upon the sea; a pleasure to stand in the window of a castle and to see a battle and the adventures thereof below: but no pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the vantage ground of truth (a hill not to be commanded, and where the air is always clear and serene), and to see the errors and wanderings and mists and tempests in the vale below; so always that this prospect be with pity, and not with swelling or pride. Certainly, it is heaven upon earth, to have a man’s mind move in charity, rest in providence, and turn upon the poles of truth. 2

To pass from theological and philosophical truth to the truth of civil business; it will be acknowledged even by those that practise it not, that clear and round dealing is the honor of man’s nature; and that mixture of falsehood is like alloy in coin of gold and silver, which may make the metal work the better, but it embaseth it. For these winding and crooked courses are the goings of the serpent; which goeth basely upon the belly, and not upon the feet. There is no vice that doth so cover a man with shame as to be found false and perfidious. And therefore Montaigne saith prettily, when he inquired the reason why the word of the lie should be such a disgrace and such an odious charge. Saith he, If it be well weighed, to say that a man lieth, is as much to say, as that he is brave towards God and a coward towards men. For a lie faces God, and shrinks from man. Surely the wickedness of falsehood and breach of faith cannot possibly be so highly expressed, as in that it shall be the last peal to call the judgments of God upon the generations of men; it being foretold that when Christ cometh, he shall not find faith upon the earth.

**Thomas Hobbes**



**Leviathan**

**From : Chapter 13. The natural condition of mankind as concerning their happiness and misery**

Nature has made men so equal in their physical and mental capacities that, although sometimes we may find one man who is obviously stronger in body or quicker of mind than another, yet taking all in all the difference between one and another is not so great that one man can claim to have any advantage ·of strength or skill or the like· that can’t just as well be claimed by some others.

As for strength of body: the weakest man is strong enough to kill the strongest, either by a secret plot or by an alliance with others who are in the same danger that he is in.

 As for the faculties of the mind: I find that men are even more equal in these than they are in bodily strength. (In this discussion I set aside skills based on words, and especially the skill - known as ‘science’ - of being guided by general and infallible rules. Very few people have this, and even they don’t have it with respect to many things. I am setting it aside because it isn’t a natural faculty that we are born with, nor is it something that we acquire - as we acquire prudence - while looking for something else.) Prudence is simply experience; and men will get an equal amount of *that* in an equal period of time spent on things that they equally apply themselves to.

 What may make such equality incredible is really just one’s vain sense of one’s own wisdom, which most men think they have more of than the common herd - that is, more than anyone else except for a few others whom they value because of their fame or because their agreement with them. It’s just a fact about human nature that however much a man may acknowledge many others to be more witty, or more eloquent, or more learned than he is, he won’t easily believe that many men are as wise as he is; for he sees his own wisdom close up, and other men’s at a distance. This, however, shows the equality of men rather than their inequality. For ordinarily there is no greater sign that something is equally distributed than that every man is contented with his share!

*Competition*·: This equality of ability produces equality of hope for the attaining of our goals. So if any two men want a single thing which they can’t both enjoy, they become enemies; and each of them on the way to his goal (which is principally his own survival, though sometimes merely his delight) tries to destroy or subdue the other. And so it comes about that when someone has through farming and building come to possess a pleasant estate, if an invader would have nothing to fear but that one man’s individual power, there will probably *be* an invader – someone who comes with united forces to deprive him not only of the fruit of his labor but also of his life or liberty. And the ·successful· invader will then be in similar danger from someone else.

*Distrust*·: Because of this distrust amongst men, the most reasonable way for any man to make himself safe is to *strike first*, that is, by force or cunning subdue other men - as many of them as he can, until he sees no other power great enough to endanger him. This is no more than what he needs for his own survival, and is generally allowed. ·And it goes further than you might think·. Some people take pleasure in contemplating their own power in the acts of conquest, pursuing them further than their security requires, ·and this increases the security needs of others·. People who would otherwise be glad to be at ease within modest bounds have to increase their power by further invasions, because without that, in a purely defensive posture, they wouldn’t be able to survive for long. This increase in a man’s power over others ought to be allowed to him, as it is necessary to his survival.

*Glory*·: Every man wants his associates to value him as highly as he values himself; and any sign that he is disregarded or undervalued naturally leads a man to try, as far as he dares, to raise his value in the eyes of others. For those who have disregarded him, he does this by violence; for others, by example. I say ‘as far as he dares’; but when there is no common power to keep them at peace, ‘as far as he dares’ is far enough to make them destroy each other. That is why men don’t get pleasure (and indeed do get much grief) from being in the company of other men without there being a power that can over-awe them all.

So that in the nature of man, we find three principal causes of discord. First competition, secondly distrust, thirdly glory.

The first makes men invade for gain; the second for safety; and the third for reputation. The first use violence to make themselves masters of other men’s persons, wives, children, and cattle; the second use it to defend themselves and their families and property; the third use it for trifles - a word, a smile, a different opinion, and any other sign of a low regard for them personally, if not directly then obliquely through a disrespectful attitude to their family, their friends, their nation, their profession, or their name.

This makes it obvious that for as long as men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in the condition known as ‘war’; and it is a war of every man against every man. For WAR doesn’t consist just in battle or the act of fighting, but in a period of time during which it is well enough known that people are willing to join in battle. So the temporal element in the notion of ‘when there is war’ is like the temporal element in ‘when there is bad weather’. What constitutes bad weather is not a rain-shower or two but an inclination to rain through many days together; similarly, what constitutes war is not actual fighting but a known disposition to fight during a time when there is no assurance to the contrary. All other time is PEACE.

Therefore, whatever results from a time of war, when every man is enemy to every man, also results from a time when men live with no other security but what their own strength and ingenuity provides them with. In such conditions there is no place for hard work, because there is no assurance that it will yield results; and consequently no cultivation of the earth, no navigation or use of materials that can be imported by sea, no construction of large buildings, no machines for moving things that require much force, no knowledge of the face of the earth, no account of time, no practical skills, no literature or scholarship, no society; and - worst of all - **continual fear and danger of violent death, and the life of man solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.**

[**George Herbert**](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/george-herbert)



**Jordan (I)**

Who says that fictions only and false hair

Become a verse? Is there in truth no beauty?

Is all good structure in a winding stair?

May no lines pass, except they do their duty

Not to a true, but painted chair?

Is it no verse, except enchanted groves

And sudden arbours shadow coarse-spun lines?

Must purling streams refresh a lover's loves?

Must all be veil'd, while he that reads, divines,

Catching the sense at two removes?

Shepherds are honest people; let them sing;

Riddle who list, for me, and pull for prime;

I envy no man's nightingale or spring;

Nor let them punish me with loss of rhyme,

Who plainly say, *my God, my King*

**Easter Wings**

Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store,

      Though foolishly he lost the same,

            Decaying more and more,

                  Till he became

                        Most poore:

                        With thee

                  O let me rise

            As larks, harmoniously,

      And sing this day thy victories:

Then shall the fall further the flight in me.

My tender age in sorrow did beginne

      And still with sicknesses and shame.

            Thou didst so punish sinne,

                  That I became

                        Most thinne.

                        With thee

                  Let me combine,

            And feel thy victorie:

         For, if I imp my wing on thine,

Affliction shall advance the flight in me.

[**Robert Herrick**](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/robert-herrick)



**To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time**

Gather ye rose-buds while ye may,

Old Time is still a-flying;

And this same flower that smiles today

Tomorrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,

The higher he’s a-getting,

The sooner will his race be run,

And nearer he’s to setting.

That age is best which is the first,

When youth and blood are warmer;

But being spent, the worse, and worst

Times still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time,

And while ye may, go marry;

For having lost but once your prime,

You may forever tarry.

[**Andrew Marvell**](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/andrew-marvell)



**To His Coy Mistress**

Had we but world enough and time,

This coyness, lady, were no crime.

We would sit down, and think which way

To walk, and pass our long love’s day.

Thou by the Indian Ganges’ side

Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide

Of Humber would complain. I would

Love you ten years before the flood,

And you should, if you please, refuse

Till the conversion of the Jews.

My vegetable love should grow

Vaster than empires and more slow;

An hundred years should go to praise

Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;

Two hundred to adore each breast,

But thirty thousand to the rest;

An age at least to every part,

And the last age should show your heart.

For, lady, you deserve this state,

Nor would I love at lower rate.

       But at my back I always hear

Time’s wingèd chariot hurrying near;

And yonder all before us lie

Deserts of vast eternity.

Thy beauty shall no more be found;

Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound

My echoing song; then worms shall try

That long-preserved virginity,

And your quaint honour turn to dust,

And into ashes all my lust;

The grave’s a fine and private place,

But none, I think, do there embrace.

       Now therefore, while the youthful hue

Sits on thy skin like morning dew,

And while thy willing soul transpires

At every pore with instant fires,

Now let us sport us while we may,

And now, like amorous birds of prey,

Rather at once our time devour

Than languish in his slow-chapped power.

Let us roll all our strength and all

Our sweetness up into one ball,

And tear our pleasures with rough strife

Through the iron gates of life:

Thus, though we cannot make our sun

Stand still, yet we will make him run.

[**John Milton**](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/john-milton)



**Full Text**

**http://www.paradiselost.org/8-Search-All.htm**

***From: Paradise Lost*: Book 1 (1674 version)**

OF Mans First Disobedience, and the Fruit

Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal tast

Brought Death into the World, and all our woe,

With loss of *Eden*, till one greater Man

Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat,

Sing Heav'nly Muse, that on the secret top

Of *Oreb*, or of *Sinai*, didst inspire

That Shepherd, who first taught the chosen Seed,

In the Beginning how the Heav'ns and Earth

Rose out of *Chaos*: or if *Sion* Hill

Delight thee more, and *Siloa'*s brook that flow'd

Fast by the Oracle of God; I thence

Invoke thy aid to my adventrous Song,

That with no middle flight intends to soar

Above th' *Aonian* Mount, while it pursues

Things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhime.

And chiefly Thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer

Before all Temples th' upright heart and pure,

Instruct me, for Thou know'st; Thou from the first

Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread

Dove-like satst brooding on the vast Abyss

And mad'st it pregnant: What in me is dark

Illumin, what is low raise and support;

That to the highth of this great Argument

I may assert Eternal Providence,

And justifie the wayes of God to men.

Say first, for Heav'n hides nothing from thy view

Nor the deep Tract of Hell, say first what cause

Mov'd our Grand Parents in that happy State,

Favour'd of Heav'n so highly, to fall off

From thir Creator, and transgress his Will

For one restraint, Lords of the World besides?

Who first seduc'd them to that foul revolt?

Th' infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile

Stird up with Envy and Revenge, deceiv'd

The Mother of Mankind, what time his Pride

Had cast him out from Heav'n, with all his Host

Of Rebel Angels, by whose aid aspiring

To set himself in Glory above his Peers,

He trusted to have equal'd the most High,

If he oppos'd; and with ambitious aim

Against the Throne and Monarchy of God

Rais'd impious War in Heav'n and Battel proud

With vain attempt.   Him the Almighty Power

Hurld headlong flaming from th' Ethereal Skie

With hideous ruine and combustion down

To bottomless perdition, there to dwell

In Adamantine Chains and penal Fire,

Who durst defie th' Omnipotent to Arms.

Nine times the Space that measures Day and Night

To mortal men, he with his horrid crew

Lay vanquisht, rowling in the fiery Gulfe

Confounded though immortal: But his doom

Reserv'd him to more wrath; for now the thought

Both of lost happiness and lasting pain

Torments him; round he throws his baleful eyes

That witness'd huge affliction and dismay

Mixt with obdurate pride and stedfast hate:

At once as far as Angels kenn he views

The dismal Situation waste and wilde,

A Dungeon horrible, on all sides round

As one great Furnace flam'd, yet from those flames

No light, but rather darkness visible

Serv'd onely to discover sights of woe,

Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace

And rest can never dwell, hope never comes

That comes to all; but torture without end

Still urges, and a fiery Deluge, fed

With ever-burning Sulphur unconsum'd:

Such place Eternal Justice had prepar'd

For those rebellious, here thir prison ordained

In utter darkness, and thir portion set

As far remov'd from God and light of Heav'n

As from the Center thrice to th' utmost Pole.

O how unlike the place from whence they fell!

There the companions of his fall, o'rewhelm'd

With Floods and Whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,

He soon discerns, and weltring by his side

One next himself in power, and next in crime,

Long after known in *Palestine*, and nam'd

*Beelzebub*.   To whom th' Arch-Enemy,

And thence in Heav'n call'd Satan, with bold words

Breaking the horrid silence thus began.

**Sonnet 19:**When I consider how my light is spent

When I consider how my light is spent,

   Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,

   And that one Talent which is death to hide

   Lodged with me useless, though my Soul more bent

To serve therewith my Maker, and present

   My true account, lest he returning chide;

   “Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?”

   I fondly ask. But patience, to prevent

That murmur, soon replies, “God doth not need

   Either man’s work or his own gifts; who best

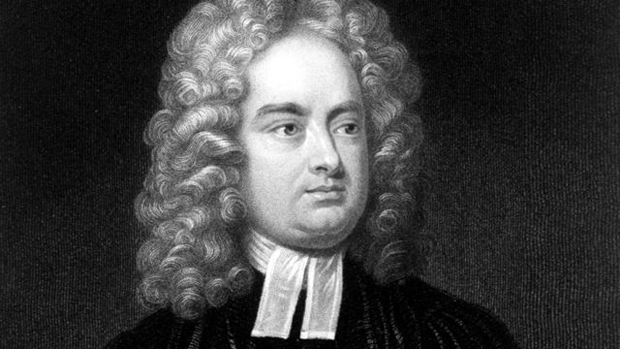
   Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state

Is Kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed

   And post o’er Land and Ocean without rest:

   They also serve who only stand and wait.”

**Jonathan Swift**



**A Modest Proposal**

**For Preventing the Children of Poor People  
in Ireland, from Being a Burden on Their Parents  
or Country, and for Making Them  
Beneficial to the Publick**

[1] It is a melancholly Object to those, who walk through this great Town,[1](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#1) or travel in the Country, when they see the *Streets*, the *Roads*, and *Cabbin-Doors*, crowded with *Beggars* of the female Sex, followed by three, four, or six Children, *all in Rags*, and importuning every Passenger for an Alms. These *Mothers* instead of being able to work for their honest livelyhood, are forced to employ all their time in Stroling, to beg Sustenance for their *helpless Infants*, who, as they grow up either turn *Thieves* for want of work, or leave their *dear native Country to fight for the Pretender in Spain*,[2](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#2) or sell themselves to the *Barbadoes*.[3](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#3)

[2] I think it is agreed by all Parties, that this prodigious number of Children, in the Arms, or on the Backs, or at the *heels* of their *Mothers*, and frequently of their Fathers, is *in the present deplorable state of the Kingdom*, a very great additional grievance; and therefore whoever could find out a fair, cheap and easy method of making these Children sound and useful Members of the common-wealth would deserve so well of the publick, as to have his Statue set up for a preserver of the Nation.

[3] But my Intention is very far from being confined to provide only for the Children of *professed beggars*, it is of a much greater extent, and shall take in the whole number of Infants at a certain Age, who are born of Parents in effect as little able to support them, as those who demand our Charity in the Streets.

[4] As to my own part, having turned my thoughts for many Years, upon this important Subject, and maturely weighed the several *Schemes of other Projectors*,[4](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#4) I have always found them grossly mistaken in their computation. It is true a Child, *just dropt from it's Dam*,[5](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#5) may be supported by her Milk, for a Solar year with little other Nourishment, at most not above the Value of two Shillings, which the Mother may certainly get, or the Value in *Scraps*, by her lawful Occupation of begging, and it is exactly at one year Old that I propose to provide for them, in such a manner, as, instead of being a Charge upon their *Parents*, or the *Parish*,[6](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#6) or *wanting*[*7*](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#7) *Food and Raiment* for the rest of their Lives, they shall, on the Contrary, contribute to the Feeding and partly to the Cloathing of many Thousands.

[5] There is likewise another great Advantage in my Scheme, that it will prevent those *voluntary Abortions*, and that horrid practice of *Women murdering their Bastard Children*, alas! too frequent among us, Sacrificing the *poor innocent Babes*, I doubt,[8](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#8) more to avoid the Expence, than the Shame, which would move Tears and Pity in the most Savage and inhuman breast.

[6] The number of Souls in this Kingdom being usually reckoned one Million and a half, Of these I calculate there may be about two hundred thousand Couple whose Wives are breeders, from which number I Substract thirty Thousand Couples, who are able to maintain their own Children, although I apprehend[9](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#9) there cannot be so many, under *the present distresses of the Kingdom*, but this being granted, there will remain an hundred and seventy thousand Breeders. I again Subtract fifty Thousand for those Women who miscarry, or whose Children dye by accident, or disease within the Year. There only remain an hundred and twenty thousand Children of poor Parents annually born: The question therefore is, How this number shall be reared, and provided for, which, as I have already said, under the present Situation of Affairs, is utterly impossible by all the methods hitherto proposed, for we can *neither employ them in Handicraft*, or *Agriculture*; we neither build Houses, (I mean in the Country) nor cultivate Land:[10](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#10) they can very seldom pick up a Livelyhood *by Stealing* until they arrive at six years Old, except where they are of towardly parts,[11](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#11) although, I confess they learn the Rudiments much earlier; during which time they can however be properly looked upon only as *Probationers*, as I have been informed by a principal Gentleman in the County of *Cavan*, who protested to me, that he never knew above one or two Instances under the Age of six, even in a part of the Kingdom *so renowned for the quickest proficiency in that Art*.

[7] I am assured by our Merchants, that a Boy or Girl, before twelve years Old, is no saleable Commodity, and even when they come to this Age, they will not yield above three Pounds, or three Pounds and half a Crown at most on the Exchange, which cannot turn to Account either to the Parents or the Kingdom, the Charge of Nutriments and Rags having been at least four times that Value.

[8] I shall now therefore humbly propose my own thoughts, which I hope will not be lyable to the least Objection.

[9] I have been assured by a very knowing *American* of my acquaintance in *London*, that a young healthy Child well Nursed is at a year Old, a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome Food, whether *Stewed*, *Roasted*, *Baked*, or *Boyled*, and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a *Fricasie*, or *Ragoust*.[12](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#12)

[10] I do therefore humbly offer it to *publick consideration*, that of the hundred and twenty thousand Children, already computed, twenty thousand may be reserved for Breed, whereof only one fourth part to be Males, which is more than we allow to *Sheep*, *black Cattle*, or *Swine*, and my reason is, that these Children are seldom the Fruits of Marriage, *a Circumstance not much regarded by our Savages*, therefore, *one Male* will be sufficient to serve *four Females*. That the remaining hundred thousand may at a year Old be offered in Sale to the *persons of Quality*,[13](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#13) and *Fortune*, through the Kingdom, always advising the Mother to let them Suck plentifully in the last Month, so as to render them Plump, and Fat for a good Table. A Child will make two Dishes at an Entertainment for Friends, and when the Family dines alone, the fore or hind Quarter will make a reasonable Dish, and seasoned with a little Pepper or Salt will be very good Boiled on the fourth Day, especially in *Winter*.

[11] I have reckoned upon a Medium, that a Child just born will weigh 12 pounds, and in a solar Year if tollerably nursed encreaseth to 28 Pounds.

[12] I grant this food will be somewhat dear,[14](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#14) and therefore very *proper for Landlords*,[15](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#15) who, as they have already devoured most of the Parents, seem to have the best Title to the Children.

[13] Infant's flesh will be in Season throughout the Year, but more plentiful in *March*, and a little before and after; for we are told by a grave Author[16](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#16) an eminent *French* physitian, that *Fish being a prolifick Dyet*, there are more Children born in *Roman Catholick Countries* about nine Months after *Lent*, than at any other Season, therefore reckoning a Year after *Lent*, the Markets will be more glutted than usual, because the Number of *Popish Infants*, is at least three to one in this Kingdom, and therefore it will have one other Collateral advantage by lessening the Number of *Papists* among us.

[14] I have already computed the Charge of nursing a Beggars Child (in which list I reckon all *Cottagers*, *Labourers*, and four fifths of the *Farmers*) to be about two Shillings *per Annum*, Rags included; and I believe no Gentleman would repine to give Ten Shillings for the *Carcass of a good fat Child*, which, as I have said will make four Dishes of excellent Nutritive Meat, when he hath only some particular friend, or his own Family to Dine with him. Thus the Squire will learn to be a good Landlord, and grow popular among his Tenants, the Mother will have Eight Shillings neat profit, and be fit for Work till she produceth another Child.

[15] Those who are more thrifty (*as I must confess the Times require*) may flay the Carcass; the Skin of which, Artificially[17](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#17) dressed, will make admirable *Gloves for Ladies*, and *Summer Boots for fine Gentlemen*.

[16] As to our City of *Dublin*, Shambles[18](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#18) may be appointed for this purpose, in the most convenient parts of it, and Butchers we may be assured will not be wanting, although I rather recommend buying the Children alive, and dressing them hot from the Knife, as we do *roasting Pigs*.

[17] A very worthy Person, a *true Lover of his Country*, and whose Virtues I highly esteem, was lately pleased, in discoursing on this matter, to offer a refinement upon my Scheme. He said, that many Gentlemen of this Kingdom, having of late destroyed their Deer, he conceived that the want of Venison might be well supplyed by the Bodies of young Lads and Maidens, not exceeding fourteen Years of Age, nor under twelve; so great a Number of both Sexes in every County being now ready to Starve, for want of Work and Service: And these to be disposed of by their Parents if alive, or otherwise by their nearest Relations. But with due deference to so excellent a friend, and so deserving a Patriot, I cannot be altogether in his Sentiments, for as to the Males, my *American* acquaintance assured me from frequent Experience, that their flesh was generally Tough and Lean, like that of our School-boys, by continual exercise, and their Taste disagreeable, and to Fatten them would not answer the Charge. Then as to the Females, it would, I think, with humble Submission, *be a loss to the Publick*, because they soon would become Breeders themselves: And besides it is not improbable that some scrupulous People might be apt to Censure such a Practice, (although indeed very unjustly) as a little bordering upon Cruelty, which, I confess, hath always been with me the strongest objection against any Project, how well soever intended.

[18] But in order to justify my friend, he confessed, that this expedient was put into his head by the famous *Sallmanaazor*,[19](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#19) a Native of the Island *Formosa*, who came from thence to *London*, above twenty Years ago, and in Conversation told my friend, that in his Country when any young Person happened to be put to Death, the Executioner sold the Carcass to *Persons of Quality*, as a prime Dainty, and that, in his Time, the Body of a plump Girl of fifteen, who was crucifyed for an attempt to Poison the Emperor, was sold to his Imperial *Majesty's prime Minister of State*, and other great *Mandarins*[20](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#20) of the Court, *in Joints from the Gibbet*,[21](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#21) at four hundred Crowns. Neither indeed can I deny, that if the same use were made of several plump young Girls in this Town, who, without one single Groat[22](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#22) to their Fortunes, cannot stir abroad without a Chair,[23](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#23) and appear at a *Play-House*, and *Assemblies* in Foreign fineries, which they never will Pay for; the Kingdom would not be the worse.

[19] Some Persons of a desponding Spirit are in great concern about that vast Number of poor People, who are aged, diseased, or maimed, and I have been desired to imploy my thoughts what Course may be taken, to ease the Nation of so grievous an Incumbrance. But I am not in the least pain upon that matter, because it is very well known, that they are every Day *dying*, and *rotting*, by *cold*, and *famine*, and *filth*, and *vermin*, as fast as can be reasonably expected. And as to the younger Labourers they are now in almost as hopeful a Condition. They cannot get Work, and consequently pine away from want of Nourishment, to a degree, that if at any time they are accidentally hired to common Labour, they have not strength to perform it, and thus the Country and themselves are happily delivered from the Evils to come.

[20] I have too long digressed, and therefore shall return to my subject. I think the advantages by the Proposal which I have made are obvious and many, as well as of the highest importance.

[21] For first, as I have already observed, it would greatly lessen *the Number of Papists*, with whom we are Yearly over-run, being the principal Breeders of the Nation, as well as our most dangerous Enemies, and who stay at home on purpose with a design *to deliver the Kingdom to the Pretender*, hoping to take their Advantage by the absence *of so many good Protestants*,[24](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#24) who have chosen rather to leave their Country, than stay at home, and pay Tythes against their *Conscience*, to an idolatrous *Episcopal Curate*.

[22] *Secondly*, the poorer Tenants will have something valuable of their own, which by Law may be made lyable to Distress,[25](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#25) and help to pay their Landlord's Rent, their Corn and Cattle being already seazed, and *Money a thing unknown*.

[23] *Thirdly*, Whereas the Maintainance of an hundred thousand Children, from two Years old, and upwards, cannot be computed at less than Ten Shillings a piece *per Annum*, the Nation's Stock will be thereby encreased fifty thousand pounds *per Annum*, besides the profit of a new Dish, introduced to the Tables of all *Gentlemen of Fortune* in the Kingdom, who have any refinement in Taste, and the Money will circulate among our selves, the Goods being entirely of our own Growth and Manufacture.

[24] *Fourthly*, The constant Breeders, besides the gain of Eight Shillings *Sterling per Annum*, by the Sale of their Children, will be rid of the Charge of maintaining them after the first Year.

[25] *Fifthly*, this food would likewise bring great *Custom to Taverns*, where the Vintners will certainly be so prudent as to procure the best receipts[26](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#26) for dressing it to perfection, and consequently have their Houses frequented by all the *fine Gentlemen*, who justly value themselves upon their knowledge in good Eating, and a skillful Cook, who understands how to oblige his Guests will contrive to make it as expensive as they please.

[26] *Sixthly*, This would be a great Inducement to Marriage, which all wise Nations have either encouraged by Rewards, or enforced by Laws and Penalties. It would encrease the care and tenderness of Mothers towards their Children, when they were sure of a Settlement for Life, to the poor Babes, provided in some sort by the Publick to their Annual profit instead of Expence, we should soon see an honest Emulation among the married women, *which of them could bring the fattest Child to the Market*, Men would become as fond of their *Wives*, during the Time of their Pregnancy, as they are now of their *Mares* in Foal, their *Cows* in Calf, or *Sows* when they are ready to Farrow, nor offer to Beat or Kick them (as is too frequent a practice) for fear of a Miscarriage.

[27] Many other advantages might be enumerated: For Instance, the addition of some thousand Carcases in our exportation of Barreled Beef. The Propagation of *Swines Flesh*, and Improvement in the Art of making good *Bacon*, so much wanted among us by the great destruction of *Pigs*, too frequent at our Tables, which are no way comparable in Taste, or Magnificence to a well grown, fat Yearling Child, which Roasted whole will make a considerable Figure at a *Lord Mayor's Feast*, or any other Publick Entertainment. But this, and many others I omit being studious of Brevity.

[28] Supposing that one thousand Families in this City, would be constant Customers for Infants Flesh, besides others who might have it at *Merry-meetings*, particularly at *Weddings* and *Christenings*, I compute that *Dublin* would take off Annually about twenty thousand Carcases, and the rest of the Kingdom (where probably they will be Sold somewhat Cheaper) the remaining eighty thousand.

[29] I can think of no one Objection, that will possibly be raised against this Proposal, unless it should be urged, that the Number of People will be thereby much lessened in the Kingdom. This I freely own,[27](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#27) and it was indeed one Principal design in offering it to the World. I desire the Reader will observe, that I Calculate my Remedy *for this one individual Kingdom of IRELAND, and for no other that ever was, is, or, I think, ever can be upon Earth*. Therefore let no man talk to me of other expedients:[28](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#28) *Of taxing our Absentees at five Shillings a pound:*[*29*](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#29) *Of using neither Cloaths, nor household Furniture, except what is of our own Growth and Manufacture: Of utterly rejecting the Materials and Instruments that promote Foreign Luxury: Of curing the Expenciveness of Pride, Vanity, Idleness, and Gaming in our Women: Of introducing a Vein of Parcimony, Prudence and Temperance: Of learning to Love our Country, wherein we differ even from LAPLANDERS, and the Inhabitants of TOPINAMBOO:*[*30*](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#30) *Of quitting our Animosities, and Factions, nor Act any longer like the Jews, who were Murdering one another at the very moment their City was taken:*[*31*](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#31) *Of being a little Cautious not to Sell our Country and Consciences for nothing: Of teaching Landlords to have at least one degree of Mercy towards their Tenants. Lastly of putting a Spirit of Honesty, Industry and Skill into our Shop-keepers, who, if a Resolution could now be taken to Buy only our Native Goods, would immediately unite to Cheat and Exact*[*32*](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#32) *upon us in the Price, the Measure, and the Goodness, nor could ever yet be brought to make one fair Proposal of just dealing, though often and earnestly invited to it.*

[30] Therefore I repeat, let no Man talk to me of these and the like Expedients, till he hath at least a Glimpse of Hope, that there will ever be some hearty and sincere attempt to put them into Practice.

[31] But as to my self, having been wearied out for many Years with offering vain, idle, visionary thoughts, and at length utterly despairing of Success, I fortunately fell upon this Proposal, which as it is wholly new, so it hath something Solid and Real, of no Expence and little Trouble, full in our own Power, and whereby we can incur no Danger in *disobliging England*. For this kind of Commodity will not bear Exportation, the Flesh being of too tender a Consistance, to admit a long continuance in Salt, *although perhaps I could name a Country, which would be glad to Eat up our whole Nation without it.*[*33*](https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/modest.html#33)

[32] After all I am not so violently bent upon my own Opinion, as to reject any Offer, proposed by wise Men, which shall be found equally Innocent, Cheap, Easy and Effectual. But before something of that kind shall be advanced in Contradiction to my Scheme, and offering a better, I desire the Author, or Authors will be pleased maturely to consider two points. *First*, As things now stand, how they will be able to find Food and Raiment for a hundred thousand useless Mouths and Backs. And *Secondly*, there being a round Million of Creatures in humane Figure, throughout this Kingdom, whose whole Subsistence put into a common Stock, would leave them in Debt two Millions of Pounds *Sterling* adding those, who are Beggars by Profession, to the Bulk of Farmers, Cottagers and Labourers with their Wives and Children, who are Beggars in Effect; I desire those *Politicians*, who dislike my Overture, and may perhaps be so bold to attempt an Answer, that they will first ask the Parents of these Mortals, whether they would not at this Day think it a great Happiness to have been sold for Food at a year Old, in the manner I prescribe, and thereby have avoided such a perpetual Scene of Misfortunes, as they have since gone through, by the *oppression of Landlords*, the Impossibility of paying Rent without Money or Trade, the want of common Sustenance, with neither House nor Cloaths to cover them from Inclemencies of Weather, and the most inevitable Prospect of intailing the like, or greater Miseries upon their Breed for ever.

[33] I Profess in the sincerity of my Heart that I have not the least personal Interest in endeavouring to promote this necessary Work having no other Motive than the *publick Good of my Country*, by *advancing our Trade, providing for Infants, relieving the Poor, and giving some Pleasure to the Rich*. I have no Children, by which I can propose to get a single Penny; the youngest being nine Years old, and my Wife past Child-bearing.

[**Thomas Gray**](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/thomas-gray)



**Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard**

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,

         The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,

The plowman homeward plods his weary way,

         And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimm'ring landscape on the sight,

         And all the air a solemn stillness holds,

Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,

         And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tow'r

         The moping owl does to the moon complain

Of such, as wand'ring near her secret bow'r,

         Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,

         Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,

Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,

         The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,

         The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,

The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,

         No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,

         Or busy housewife ply her evening care:

No children run to lisp their sire's return,

         Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,

         Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;

How jocund did they drive their team afield!

         How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,

         Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;

Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile

         The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,

         And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,

Awaits alike th' inevitable hour.

         The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,

         If Mem'ry o'er their tomb no trophies raise,

Where thro' the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault

         The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust

         Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?

Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,

         Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of Death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid

         Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;

Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,

         Or wak'd to ecstasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page

         Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;

Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,

         And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,

         The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear:

Full many a flow'r is born to blush unseen,

         And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village-Hampden, that with dauntless breast

         The little tyrant of his fields withstood;

Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,

         Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,

         The threats of pain and ruin to despise,

To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,

         And read their hist'ry in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbade: nor circumscrib'd alone

         Their growing virtues, but their crimes confin'd;

Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,

         And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,

         To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,

Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride

         With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,

         Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;

Along the cool sequester'd vale of life

         They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect,

         Some frail memorial still erected nigh,

With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,

         Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd muse,

         The place of fame and elegy supply:

And many a holy text around she strews,

         That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,

         This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,

Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,

         Nor cast one longing, ling'ring look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,

         Some pious drops the closing eye requires;

Ev'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,

         Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who mindful of th' unhonour'd Dead

         Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;

If chance, by lonely contemplation led,

         Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,

         "Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn

Brushing with hasty steps the dews away

         To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech

         That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,

His listless length at noontide would he stretch,

         And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,

         Mutt'ring his wayward fancies he would rove,

Now drooping, woeful wan, like one forlorn,

         Or craz'd with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.

"One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill,

         Along the heath and near his fav'rite tree;

Another came; nor yet beside the rill,

         Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

"The next with dirges due in sad array

         Slow thro' the church-way path we saw him borne.

Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay,

         Grav'd on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."

THE EPITAPH

*Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth*

*A youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown.*

*Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth,*

*And Melancholy mark'd him for her own.*

*Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,*

*Heav'n did a recompense as largely send:*

*He gave to Mis'ry all he had, a tear,*

*He gain'd from Heav'n ('twas all he wish'd) a friend.*

*No farther seek his merits to disclose,*

*Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,*

*(There they alike in trembling hope repose)*

*The bosom of his Father and his God.*