

¶The assemble of foules.

¶ Here foloweth the assemble of foules veray
pleasaunt and compendyous to rede or here
compyled by the preclared and famous clerke
Geffray Chaucer.

[Figure: Scribe sitting with a distracted air in
his scriptorium, manuscript in hand]

¶ Roberte Coplande boke prynter to new fanglers.

¶ Newes/newes/newes/ have ye ony newes
Myne eres ake/to here you call and crye
Ben bokes made with whystelynge and whewes
Ben there not yet ynow to your fantasye
In fayth nay I trow and yet haue ye dayly
Of maters sadde/and eke of apes and oules
But yet for your pleasure/thusmoche do wyll I
As to lette you here the parlament of foules.
¶ Chaucer is deed the whiche this pamphlete wrate
So ben his heyres in all suche besynesse
And gone is also the famous clerke Lydgate
And so is yonge Hawes/god theyr soules adresse
Many were the volumes that they made more & lesse
Theyr bokes ye lay vp/tyll that the lether moules
But yet for your myndes this boke I wyll impresse
That is in tytule the parlyament of foules
¶ So many lerned at leest they say they be
Was neuer sene/doynge so fewe good werkes
Where is the tyme that they do spende trowe ye
In prayers? ye/where? in feldes and parkes
Ye but where be bycomen all the clerkes?
In slouthe and ydlenesse theyr tyme defoules
For lacke of wrytynge/conteynyng morall sperkes
I must imprynt the parlament of foules.
¶ Dytees/and letters them can I make my selfe
Of suche ynowe ben dayly to me brought
Olde morall bokes stonde styll vpon the shelfe
I am in fere they wyll neuer be bought
Tryfles and toyes they ben the thynges so sought
Theyr wyttes tryndle lyke these flemysse boules
yet gentyll clerkes folowe hym yeought
That dyd endyte the parlyament of foules.

¶ finis.

THe lyfe so shorte the crafte so longe to lerne
The assay so hard so sharpe ye conquerynge
The slyder ioye that alway slyd so yerne
All this mene I by loue that my felynge
Astonyeth so wt dredefull workyng

So sore ywys that whan I on hym thynke
Not wote I well where that I wake or wynke.

[ii]

For all be that I knowe not loue in dede
Ne wote how he quyeth folke theyr hyre
Yet happeth me in bokes ofte to rede 10
Of his myracles and of his cruell yre
There rede I well he wyll be lorde and syre
Dare I not say his strokes ben so sore
But god saue suche a lorde I can no more.

[iii]

Of vsage what for luste what for lore
On bokes rede I ofte as I you tolde
But why that I spoke not all this yore
Agon/it happed me for to beholde
Vpon a boke was wryte with letters olde
And there vpon a certayne thyng to lerne 20
The longe day I radde full fast and yerne.

[iv]

For out of olde feldes as men sayth
Cometh all this newe corne fro yere to yere
And out of olde bokes in good fayth
Cometh all this newe scyence that men lere
But now to purpose of my fyrst matere
To rede forth gan me to delyte
That all the day thought me but a lyte.

[v]

This boke of whiche I may make mencyon
Entytuled was all there I shall you tell 30
Tullius of the dreame of the Cypyon
Chapytrees is had .vij. of heuen and hell
And erthe and soules that therin dwell
Of whiche as shortly as I can trete
Of his sentence I wyll tell the grete.

[vi]

Fyrst telleth it whan Cypyon was come
Into Aufryke how he mette Messynysse
That hym for ioye in armes hathe ynome
Than telleth he her speche and all the blysse
That was bytwene them tyll the day gan mysse 40
And how his auncestre aufrycan so dere
Gan on his slepe that nyght to hym appere.

[vii]

¶ Than tolde he hym that fro a sterry place
How Aufrycan hathe hym cartage shewed
And warned hym before all his grace
And sayd to hym what man lerned or lewed
That loueth comune profyte well ythewed
He shall vnto a blysfull place wende
There ioye is that lasteth without ende.

[viii]

Than asked he yf the folke that here be dede 50
Haue lyfe and dwellynge in an other place
And Aufrycan sayd ye withoute drede
And oure present worldes lyues space
Meneth but a maner dethe what may we trace
And ryghtfull folke shall go whan they dye
To heuen/and shewed hym the galerye.

[ix]

¶ Than shewed he hym the lytell erthe that here is
At regarde of heuens quantyte
And shewed hym the nyne sperys
And after that the melodye herde he 60
That cometh of thylke sperys thryes thre
That well is of musyke and melodye
In this worlde and cause of armonye.

[x]

¶ Than bade he hym se the erthe that is so lyte
And was somdell full of harde grace
That he ne shulde hym in the worlde delyte
Than tolde he hym in certayne yeres space
That euery sterre shulde come into his place
There it was fyrste and all shall out of mynde
That in this worlde was done of all mankynde. 70

[xi]

¶ Than prayed he Cypyon to tell hym all
The waye to come to heuens blysse
And he sayd knowe thyselfe fyrst mortall
And loke ay besyly thou worke and wysse
To comune profyte and thou shalte neuer mysse
To come swyftly vnto that place dere
That full of blysse is and soules clere.

[xii]

¶ But brekers of ehe lawe sothe for to sayne
And lecherous folke after that they ben deed
Shall alwaye whyrle aboute the erthe in peyne 80
Tyll many a worlde be passed out of drede
And than forgyuen them all theyr wycked dede
Than shall they come vnto that blyssfull place
To the whiche to come god sende yche louer grace.

[xiii]

The day gan fayle and the derke nyght
That reueth bestes from theyr busynesse
Byrefte me my boke for lacke of lyght
And to my bed/I gan me for to dresse
Fulfylled of thought and busy heuynesse
For bothe I had thynges whiche that I nolde
And eke I ne had thynges that I wolde. 90

[xiv]

But fynally my spyryte at the laste
For wery of my laboure all the daye
Toke rest that made me to slepe faste
And in my slepe I mette as I lay
How Aufrycan ryght in that selfe aray
That Cypyon hym sawe before that tyde
Was comen and stode ryght at my beddes syde.

[xv]

The wery hunter slepyng in his bed
To woode agayne his mynde gothe anone 100
The iudge dremeth how his pleys be sped
The carter dremeth how his cartes gone
The ryche of golde the knyght fyght with his tone
The seke meteth he drynketh of the tonne
The luer meteth he hathe his lady wonne.

[xvi]

Can I not say yf that the cause were
For I red had of Aufrycan before
That me to mete that he stode there
But thus sayd he thou hast the so well borne
In lokyng of myne olde boke all to torne 110
Of whiche Macrobye rought not a lyte
That somdele of thy laboure wolde I the quyte.

[*The Invocation*]

[xvii]

¶ Ytherea thou blyssfull lady swete
That with thy fyry bronde dauntest whome ye leste
And madest me this sweuen for to mete
Be thou my helpe in this for thou mayste beste
As wysshly as I sawe the north north west
Whan I beganne my sweuen for to wryte
So ye gyue me myght to ryme and to endyte.

[*The Dream*]

[1]

This foresayd Aufrycan me hente anone 120
And forth with hym vnto a gate brought
Ryght of a parke walled with great stone
And ouer the gate with letters large ywrought
There were verses wryten as me thought
On eyther halfe of full great dyfference
Of whiche I shall you saye the playne sentence.

[2]

Thrughe me men go into that blysfull place
Of hertes hele and deedly woundes cure
Thrughe me men go vnto the well of grace 130
There grene and lusty Maye shall euer endure
This is the waye to all good auenture
Be glad thou reder and thy sorowe of caste
All open am I passe in and hye the faste.

[3]

Thrughe me men go than spake that other syde
Vnto the mortall stroke of the spere
Of whiche dysdayne and daunger is the gyde
There tree shall neuer leues bere
This streme you ledeth vnto the sorowfull were
There as the fysshe in pryson is all drye
The eschewynge is the remedy. 140

[4]

¶ These verses of golde and blacke ywryten were
Of whiche I gan a stounde to beholde
For with that one encreased ay my fere
And with that other gan myne herte to bolde
That one me hette that other dyd me colde
No wytte had I for erreure for to chese
To entre or fle or me to saue or lese.

[5]

¶ Ryght as bytwene Adamantes two
Of euen myght a pyece of yron sette
That hathe no myght to meue to ne fro 150
For what that one may hale that other lette
So fared I that I ne wyst where that me was bette
To entre or leue tyll Aufrycan my gyde
Be hente and shofe in at the gates wyde.

[6]

¶ And sayd it standeth wryten in thy face
Thyne erreure thoughe thou tell it not to me
But drede the not to come into this place
For this wrytynge is nothyng ment by the
He by none but he loues seruaunt be
For thou of loue hase lost thy tast I gesse 160
As seke man hathe of swete and bytternesse.

[7]

¶ But nethles all though thou be dull
That thou can not do yet may thou se
For many a man that may not stande a pull
Yet lyketh hym at the wrastlynge for to be
And demeth yet whether he do bette or he
And yf thou haue conyng for to endyte
I shall the shewe matter of to wryte.

[8]

¶ And with that my hande in his he toke anone
Of whiche I conforte caught and went in faste 170
But lorde so I was glad and well by gone
For ouer all where I myne eyes caste
Were trees clad with leues that aye shall laste
Eche in his kynde with coloure fresshe and grene
As emerawde that ioye was to sene.

[9]

¶ The bylder oke and eke the hardy asshe
The pyler elme/the cofer vnto carayne
The boxe pype tree/holme to whyppes lasshe
The sayle yerde fyrr/the cypresse dethe to playne
The shorter ewe/the aspe for shaftes playne 180
The olyue of peas and eke the dronken vyne
The victor palme the laurer to deuyne.

[10]

¶ A garden sawe I full of blosomed bowis
Vpon a ryuer in a grene mede
There as swetenes euermore ynoughe is
With floures whyte blewe yelowe and rede
And colde well stremes nothyng deed
And swymmyng full of small fysshes lyght
With fynnes reed and scales syluer bryght.

[11]

¶ On euery bough the byrdes herde I synge 190
With voyce of angell in theyr armonye
That busyed them theyr byrdes forthe to bryng
The lytell conyes to theyr play gan hye
And further aboute I gan espye
The drefull roo the bucke the herte and hynde
Squyrell and beestes small of gentyll kynde.

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[12]

On instrumentes of stryng in a corde
Herde I so playe and rauyshyng swetenesse
That god that maker is of all and lorde
Ne herde neuer better as I gesse 200
Therwith a wynde vneth it myght be lesse
Made in the leues grene a noyse softe
Acordyng to the foules songe on lofte.

[13]

The ayre of that place so attempred was
That neuer was greuaunce therof hote ne colde
There groweth euery holsome spyce and gras
No man may there wexe seke ne olde
Yet was there more ioye a thousande folde
No man can tell neuer wolde it nyght
But ay clere day to ony mannes syght. 210

[14]

Vnder a tree besyde a well I saye
Copide our lorde his arowes forge and fyle
And at his fete his bowe all redy laye
And Wyll his doughter tempered all the whyle
The hedes in the well and with a harde fyle
She couched them after as they shulde serue
Some to sle and some to wounde and kerue.

[15]

Tho was I ware of pleasaunce anone ryght
And of araye and lust and curtesye
And of the crafte that can and hathe the myght 220
To go before a wyght and to do folye
Dysfygured was she I shall not lye
And by hymselfe vnder an oke I gesse
Sawe I Delyte that stode with Gentylnesse.

[16]

I saw beaute without ony atyre
And youghe full of game and iolyte
Foole hardynesse flatery and desyre
Massagery mede and other thre
Their names shall not be tolde for me
And vpon pylers great of iasper longe 230
I sawe a temple of bras founded stronge.

[17]

Aboute the temple daunced alway
Women ynowe of whiche some were
Fayre of themselfe and some of them gay
In kyrtles all dyssheueled went they there
That was theyr offyce alway fro yere to yere
And on the temple sawe I whyte and fayre
Of douues whyte many an hundreth payre.

[18]

Before the temple dore full sobrelye
Dame peas sate a curtayne in her honde 240
And her besyde wonder dyscretlye
Dame Pacyence syttyng there I fonde
With face pale vpon an hyll of sonde
And alder nexte within and withoute
Beheste and arte and of theyr folke a route.

[19]

Within the temple with syghes hote as fyre
I herde a syghe that gan aboute renne
Whiche syghes were engendred with desyre
That made euery auter for to brenne
Of newe flamme and I espyed thenne 250
That all the cause of sorowes that they drye
Come of the bytter goddes Ialosye.

[20]

¶ The god Pyrapus sawe I as I wente
Within the temple in souerayne place stande
In suche aray as whan the asse hym shente
With crye by nyght and with his ceptre in hande
Full besyly men ganne assaye and fonde
Vpon his heed to sette of sondry hewe
Garlandes full of fresshe floures newe.

[21]

¶ And in a preuy corner in dysporte 260
Founde I Venus and her porter rychesse
That was full noble and hauteyne of her porte
Derke was that place and afterwarde lyghtnesse
I sawe a lyte vnneth it myght be lesse
And on a bedde of golde she laye to reste
Tyll that the hote sonne gan to the west.

[22]

¶ Her gylte heers with a golde threed
I bounden were vntressed as she laye
And naked fro the breest vnto the heed
Men myght her se and sothly for to say 270
The remanent couered well to my pay
Ryght with a subtyll keuerchesse of valence
There was no thycker clothe of defence.

[23]

¶ The place gaue a thousande sauoures swote
And Bacchus god of wyne sate her besyde
And Ceres nexte that dothe of hunger bote
And as I sayd amyddes lay Cupyde
To whome on knees the yonge folkes cryde
To be theyr helpe but thus I let her lye
And serther in the temple I gan espye. 280

[24]

That in despyte of Dyane the chaste
Full many a bowe ybroke hanged on the wall
Of maydens suche as gan theyr tymes waste
In her seruyce and peynted ouer all
Of many a story of whiche I touche shall
A fewe as of Calyxte and Athalante
And many a mayde of whiche the name I wante.

[25]

Semiramus Candace and Hercules
Byblys Dido Tesbe and Piramus
Trystram Ysoude Parys and Achylles 290
Heleyne Cleopatre and Troylus
Sylla and eke the mother Romulus
All these were paynted on that other syde
And all theyr loue and in what plyte they dyed.

[26]

Whan I was come agayne into that place
That I of spake that was so swete and greue
Forthe walked I tho my selfe to solace
Tho was I ware where there sate a quene
That as of lyght the somer sonne shene
Passesthe the sterre ryght so ouer mesure 300
She fayrer was than ony creature.

[27]

And in a launde vpon an hyll of flowres
Was set this noble goddes of nature
Of braunches were her halles & her bowres
Ywrought after her crafte and her mesure
Ne there was foule that cometh of engendure
That there ne were preste in her presence
To take her dome and gyue her audyence.

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[28]

For this was on saynt Valentynes day
Whan euery foule cometh there to chose his make 310
Of euery kynde that men thynke maye
And that so huge a noyse gan they make
That erthe see and tree and euery lake
So full was that vnneth was other space
For me to stande so full was euery place.

[29]

And ryght as Alayne in the pleynt of kynde
Deuyseth nature of such araye and face
In suche araye men myght her there fynde
This noble empresse full of grace
Bade euery foule to take her owne place 320
As they were wonte alway fro yere to yere
On saynt Valentynes day to stande there

[30]

That is to saye the foules of rauyne
Were hyghest set and than the foules smale
That eten as nature wolde enclyne
As worme or thyng of whiche I tell no tale
But water foule sate lowest in the dale
And foule that lyueth by sede sate on the grene
And that so many that wonder was to sene.

[31]

There myght men the royall egle fynde 330
That with his sharpe loke perceth the sonne
And other egles of a lower kynde
Of which that clerkes well deuysen konne
There was the tyraunte with his fethers donne
And grene I mene the goshauke that dothe payne
To byrdes for his outragyous rauayne.

[32]

The gentyll faucon that with his fote dystreyneth
The kynges hande/the sperhauke eke
The quayles fo the merlyon that peyneth
Hymselfe full ofte the larke for to seke 340
There was the douue with her eyes meke
The ielouse swanne ayenst his dethe that syngeth
The oule eke that of dethe the bode bryngeth.

[33]

¶ The crane the geaunte with his trompes sewne
The thefe the choughe and eke ye ianglynge pye
The scoruynge iaye the egles fo herowne
The fals lap wynges full of trechery
The stare that the counseyle gan bewrye
The tame ruddoke and the cowarde kytte
The cocke that orologe is of thorpes lyte. 350

[34]

The sparowe Venus sone/the nyghtyngale
That clepyth forth the fresshe leues newe
The swalowe mordrer of the foules smale
That maken hony of floures fresshe of hewe
The wedded turtle with his herte trewe
The pecocke with his angels fethers bryght
The fesaunte scorne of the cocke by nyght.

[35]

The waker goes the cukkowe euer vnkynde
The popyniay full of delycasye
The drake scorne of his owne kynde 360
The storke wreker of auowtrye
The hote corneraunte of glotenye
The rauens and the crowe with her voyce of care
The throstle olde and the frosty feldfare.

[36]

What shulde I say of foules euery kynde
That in this worlde haue fethers and stature
Men myght in that place assembled fynde
Before that noble goddess of nature
And yche of them dyd his besy cure
Benyngly to chose or for to take 370
By her acorde his formell or his make.

[37]

But to the poynt nature helde on her honde
A formall egle of shape the gentylllest
That euer she ymonge her workes fonde
The most benynge and goodlyest
In her was euery vertue at his rest
So ferforthe that nature her selfe had blysse
To loke on her and ofte her beke to kysse.

[38]

Nature the vyker of the almyghty lorde
That hote colde heuy lyght moyste and drye 380
Hathe knytte by euen nombre of a corde
In esy voyce began to speke and saye
Foules take hede of my sentence I praye
And for your ease in furtherynge of your nede
As fast as I may speke I wyll me spede.

[39]

Ye knowe well how on saynt Valentynes day
By my statute and thurgh my gouernaunce
Ye come for to chose and fle your way
With your makes as I prycke you with plesaunce
But nethles my ryghtfull gouernaunce 390
May I not let for all this worlde to wynne
That he that most is worthy shall begynne.

[40]

The tercell egle as that ye knowen well
The foule royall aboue you all in degre
The wyse and worthy the secrete true as stele
The whiche I haue fourmed as ye may se
In euery parte as it best lyketh me
It nedeth not his shappe you to deuise
He shall fyrst chose and speke in his gyse.

[41]

And after hym by ordre shall ye chese 400
After your kynde eueryche as you lyketh
And as your happe is shall ye wynne or lese
But whiche of you that loue moste entryketh
God sende hym her that sorest for hym syketh
And therwithall the tercell gan she calle
And sayd my sone the choys is to you yfalle.

[42]

But netheles in this condycyon
Must be the choys of eueryche that is here
That she agre to his eleccyon
Who so he be that shulde be her fere 410
This is oure vsage alway fro yere to yere
And who so maye at this tyme haue his grace
In blysfull tyme he came into this place.

[43]

With heed enclyned and with full humble chere
This royall tercell spake and taryed nought
Vnto my souereygne lady and not my fere
I chese and chesse with wyll and herte and thought
The formell on your hande so well I wrought
Whose I am all and euer wyll her serue
Do what her lust to do me lyue or sterue. 420

[44]

Besechyng her of mercy and of grace
As she that is my lady souerayne
Or let me dye present in this place
For certes longe may I not lyue in payne
For in myne herte is koruen euery veyne
Hauyng rewarde onely to my truthe
My dere herte haue on my wo some ruthe.

[45]

And yf I be founde to her vntrewe
Dysobeysaunte or wylfull neclygent
Auauntour or in processe loue a newe 430
I pray to you this be my iudgment
That with these foules I be all to rent
That ylke day that euer she me fynde
To her vntrewe or in my gylte vnkynde.

[46]

And syth that none loueth her so well as I
All thoughe she neuer of loue behette
Than ought she be myne through her mercy
For other bonde can I none on her knette
For neuer for no wo ne shall I lette
To serue her how ferre so that she wende 440
Say what thou lest my tale is an ende.

[47]

Ryght as the fresshe reed rose newe
Ayenst the somer some coloured is
Ryght so for shame all wexen gan the hewe
Of this formell whan she herde all this
Neyther she answered well ne sayd amys
So sore abasshed was she tyll that Nature
Sayd doughter drede you not I you assure.

[48]

Another tercell egle spake anone
Of lower kynde and sayd that shulde not be 450
I loue her better than ye do by saynt Iohan
Or at lest I loue her as well as ye
And lenger haue serued her in my degre
And yf she shulde haue loued for longe louynge.
To me alone had be the guardonynge.

[49]

I dare eke say yf she me fynde fals
Vnkynde iangler or rebell ony wyse
Or ialouse do me hange by the hals
And but I bere me in her seruyse
As well as my wytte can me suffyse 460
Fro poynt to poynt her honoure for to saue
Take she my lyfe and all the good I haue.

[50]

The thyrde tercell egle answered tho
Now syrs ye se the lytell layser here
For euery foule cryeth out to be ago
Forthe with his make or with his lady dere
And eke herselfe wyll nought here
For taryenge her not halfe that I wolde say
And but I speke I must for sorowe dey.

[51]

Of longe seruyce auaunte I me nothyng 470
But as possyble is me to dye to day
For wo as he that hathe be languysshynge
These twenty wynter and well happen may
A man may serue better and more to pay
In halfe a yere though it were no more
Than some man dothe that hathe serued full yore.

[52]

I ne say not this by me for I ne can
Do no seruyce that may my lady plese
But I dare say I am her truest man
As to my dome and faynest wolde her plese 480
At shorte wordes tyll that dethe me sese
I wyll be hers wheder I walke or wynke
And true in all that herte may bethynke.

[53]

Of all my lyfe syth that day I was borne
So gentyll ple in loue or other thyng
Ne herde I neuer no man me before
Who that had leyser and connyng
For to rehers her chere and her spekyng
And from the morowe gan this speche laste
Tyll downwarde wente the sonne wonder faste 490

[54]

The noyse of fowles for to be delyuered
So loude range/haue doone and let vs wende
That well wende I the wood all to shyuered
Come of they cryed alas ye wyll vs shende
Whan shall your cursed pledyng haue an ende
How shulde a iudge eyther party leue
For ye or nay without ony preue.

[55]

The goos the ducke and the cukkowe also
So cryed keke keke cukko we queke queke hye
That thugh myn eeres the noyse wente tho 500
The goos sayd tho all this nys worthe a flye
But I can shape hereof a remedye
And wyll say my verdyte fayre and swythe
For water foule who so be sad or blythe.

[56]

And I for worme soule sayd the foule cuckow
For I wyll of myne owne auctoryte
For comune spede take on me the charge now
For to delyuer vs is great charyte
Ye may abyde a whyle yet parde
Quod the turtle yf be your wyll 510
A whyght may speke hym were as good be styll.

[57]

I am a sede foule one the vnworthyest
That wote I well and lytell of connyng
But better is that a wyghtes tongue rest
Then entremete hym of suche doynge
Of whiche he neyther rede can nor synge
And who so dothe full foule hymselfe acloyeth
For offyce vncommytted ofte anoyeth.

[58]

Nature whiche that alway had an ere
To murmure of the lewdnesse behynde 520
With faconde voyce sayd/holde your tongues there
And I shall soone I hope a counsell fynde
You for to delyuer and from this noyse vnbynde
I iudge of euery folke men shall one call
To say the verdyte of you foules all.

[59]

Assented were to this conclusyon
The byrdes all/and foules of rauyne
Haue chosen fyrst by playne eleccyon
The tercelet of the faucon to dyffyne
All her sentence and as hym lust to termyne 530
And to nature hym they dyd present
And she accepteth hym with glad entent.

[60]

The tercelet sayd then in manere
Full harde were it to preue it by reason
Who loueth beste this gentyll formell here
For eueryche hath suche replycacyon
That by skylles may none be brought adoune
I can not se that argumentes auayle
Then semeth it there must be batayle.

[61]

All redy quod this egles tercelles tho 540
Nay syrs quod he yf that I durst it say
Ye do me wronge my tale is not ydo
For syrs taketh not a grefe I pray
It may not as ye wolde in this way
Ours is the voyce that haue the charge in honde
And to the iudges dome ye must stonde.

[62]

And therefore I say as to my wyt
Me wolde thynke how that the worthyest
Of knyghthode/and lengest had vsed it
Most of estate of blode the gentylllest 550
Were syttyng to her yf that her lest
And of these thre she wote her selfe I trowe
Whiche that he be/for it is lyght to knowe.

[63]

The water foules haue theyr hedes layde
Togyder/and of shorte auyusement
Whan eueryche had his large golde sayde
They sayd sothely all by one assent
How that the goos with her faconde gent
That so desyreth to pronounce our nede
Shall tell our tale and prayed to god her spede. 560

[64]

And for these water foules tho began
The goos to speke and in her cakelynge
She sayd pes now/take kepe euery man
And herken whiche a reason I shall forth brynge
My wytte is sharpe I loue no taryenge
I say I rede hym thoughe he were my brother
But she wyll loue hym let hym loue another.

[65]

Lo here a perfyte reson of a goos
Quod the sperhauke neuer mote she the
Lo suche it is to haue a tongue loos 570
Now parde fole it were better for the
Haue holde thy peas then shewed thy nycete
It lyeth not in his wytte nor in his wyll
But sothe is sayd a foole cannot be styl.

[66]

The laughter arose of gentyll foules all
And ryght anone the sede foules chosen had
The turtle true/and dyd her to them call
And prayed her to saye the sothe sad
Of this mater/and asked what she rad
And she answered that playnly her intent 580
She wolde shewe/and sothly what she ment.

[67]

Now god forbede a louer shulde chaunge
The turtle sayd and wexe for shame all reed
Though that his lady euermore be straunge
Yet lete hym serue her alway tyll he be deed
For so the I prayse nought the goses reed
For though she dyed I wolde not other make
I wyll be hers tyll that the dethe me take.

[68]

Well bourded quod the ducke by my hat
That men shulde loue alway causelesse 590
Who can a reason fynde or wytte in that
Daunceth he mery that is myrthlesse
Who shulde recke of that is rechelesse
Ye queke quod the ducke full well and fayre
There be mo sterres god wote than a payre.

[69]

Now fy chorle quod the gentyll tercelette
Out of the donghyll came that worde full ryght
Thou rauste not se whiche thyng is well bysette
Thou farest by loue as owles do by lyght
The day them blyndeth full well they se by nyght 600
Thy kynde is of so lowe a wretchednesse
That what loue is thou canst not se nor gesse

[70]

Tho gan the cuckow put hymselfe in preas
For foule that eteth worme/and sayd as blyue
So I quod he may haue my make in peas
I recke not how longe that ye stryue
Let yche of them be soleyne all theyr lyue
This is my reed syth they may not acorde
This shorte lesson nedeth not recorde.

[71]

Ye haue the gloton fylled ynoughe his paunche 610
Than are we well sayd the emerlyon
Thou murderer of haysoge on the braunche
That brought the forth thou rufull gloton
Lyue thou soleyne wormes corrupcyon
For no force is for lacke of thy nature
Go lewde be thou whyle thy lyfe may dure.

[72]

Now peas quod nature I commaunde here
For I haue herde all your opynyon
And in effecte yet be we neuer the nere
But fynally this is my conclusyon 620
That she herselfe shall haue her eleccyon
Of whome her lust who so be wrothe or blythe
Hym that she cheseth he shall haue her as swythe.

[73]

For syth it may not here dycussed be
Who loueth her best as sayd the tercelet
Than wyll I do this fauoure to her that she
Shall haue ryght hym on whom her herte is set
And he her that his herte hath on her knet
This iudge I nature for I may not lye
To none estate I haue none other eye. 630

[74]

But as for counseyle to chese a make
Yf I were reason than wolde I
Counseyle you the royall tercell take
As sayd the tercelet full skylfully
As for the gentylllest and most worthy
Whiche I haue wrought so well to my pleasaunce
That it ought to be to you a suffysaunce.

[75]

With dredefull voyce the formell her answerde
My ryght full lady goddes of nature
Sothe is that I am euer vnder your yerde 640
As is euery other creature
And must be youres whyle my lyfe may endure
And therefore graunte me my fyrst boone
And myne entent I shall you say ryght soone

[76]

I graunte it you quod she and ryght anone
This formell egle spake in this degre
Almyghty quene vnto this yere be done
I aske respyte for to aduyse me
And after that to haue my choys all fre
This is all and some that I wolde speke and sey 650
Ye gete no more all though ye do me dey.

[77]

I wyll not serue Venus ne Cupyde
For soche as yet by no maner way
Now syth it may none other wayes betyde
Quod nature here is no more to say
Than wolke I that these foules were away
Yche with his make for taryenge longer here
And sayd them thus as ye shall after here.

[78]

To you speke I ye tercelettes sayd nature
Be of good herte and serue ye all thre 660
A yere is not so longe to endure
And yche of you peyne hym in his degre
For to do well for god wote quyte is she
Fro you this yere what after so befall
This entremesse is dressed fro you all.

[79]

And whan this werke all wrought was to an ende
To euery foule nature gaue his make
By euen acorde and on theyr way they wende
A lorde the blysse and ioye that they make
For yche of them gan other in wynges take 670
And with theyr neckes yche gan other wynde
Thankynge alway the noble goddes of kynde

[80]

But fyrst were there chosen foules for to synge
As yere by yere was alway theyr vsaunce
To synge a roundell at theyr departynge
To do Nature honoure and plesaunce
The note I trowe ymaked was in Fraunce
The wordes were suche as ye may here fynde
The nexte verse as I now haue in mynde.

¶ Que bien ayme atard oblye.

[81]

And with theyr shoutynge whan theyr songe was do 680
That foules made at theyr flyght away
I woke and other bokes toke me to
To rede vpon/and yet I rede alway
I hope y wys to rede so some day
That I shall mete some thyng for to fare
The better / and thus to rede I wyll not spare.

¶ Explicit tractatus de congregatione
volucrum die sancte Valentini.

¶ Thus endeth the congregacyon of foules on
saynt Valentynes day.

¶ Lenuoy of R. Coplande boke prynter.

L Ayde vpon shelve/in leues all to torne
With letters dymme/almost defaced clene
Thy hyllynge rotte/with wormes all to worne
Thou lay/that pyte it was to sene
Bounde with olde quayres/for aege all hoore & grene
Thy mater endormed/for lacke of thy presence
But nowe thou arte losed/go shewe forth thy sentence.

[ii]

And where thou become so ordre thy language
That in excuse thy prynter loke thou haue
Whiche hathe the kepte frome ruynous damage
In snowe swyte paper/thy mater for to saue
With thylke same langage that Chaucer to the gaue
In termes olde/of sentence clered newe
Than methe moche sweter/who can his mynde aewe?

[iii]

And yf a louer happen on the to rede
Let be the goos with his lewde sentence
Vnto the turtle and not to her to take hede
For who so chaungeth/true loue dothe offence
Loue as I rede is floure of excellence
And loue also is rote of wretchednesse
Thus be two lues/scryture bereth wytnesse.

¶ Finis.

¶ Imprynted in london in flete strete at the sygne of
the Sonne agaynste the condyte/by me Wynkyn de
Worde. The .xxiiij. day of Ianuary/in the yere of our
lorde. M.CCCCC. & .xxx.

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