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# THE FABLES

OF AESOP





The fables of Aesop.

II.

Ballantyne Press  
BALLANTYNE, HANSON AND CO.  
EDINBURGH AND LONDON











# The Fables of Æsop

*as first printed by WILLIAM CAXTON in 1484*

*with those of Avian, Alfonso and Poggio,*

*now again edited and induced*

*by Joseph Jacobs.*

II.

TEXT AND GLOSSARY.

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18 108.

LONDON. PUBLISHED BY DAVID NUTT IN  
THE STRAND. M.D.CCCLXXXIX.

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¶ Here begynneth the book  
of the subtyl historyes and Fables  
of Esope whiche were translated  
out of Frensshe in to Englysshe  
by william Caxton



At Westmynstre In the yere of oure Lorde  
.m. cccc.lxxxiiij



¶ Here begyneth the peface or prologue of  
the fyrfte booke of Esope



Romulus fon of thybere of the  
Cyte of Atyque / gretynge / Esope  
man of grece / fubtyll and In-  
genyous / techeth in his fables  
how men ought to kepe and  
rewle them well / And to thende that he  
fhould fhewe the lyf and cuftomes of al maner  
of men / he induceth the byrdes / the trees and  
the beeftes fpekyng to thende that the men  
may knowe wherfore the fables were found /  
In the whiche he hath wreton the malyce of  
the euylle people and the argument of the  
Improbables / He techeth alfo to be humble and  
for to vfe wordes / And many other fayr En-  
famples rehersed and declared here after / the  
whiche I Romulus have tranflated oute of grekes  
tongue in to latyn tongue / the whiche yf thou  
rede them / they fhalle aguyfe and fharppe thy  
wytte and fhall gyue to the caufe of Joye /

**¶** The first fable is of the cock and of the  
precious stone /



As a Cock ones sought his pasture in  
the donghülle / he fond a precious  
stone / to whome the Cock sayd /  
Ha a fayre stone and precious  
thow arte here in the fylth And  
yf he that desyreth the had found the / as I  
haue he wold haue take the vp / and sette the  
ageyne in thy fyrst estate / but in vayne I haue  
found the / For no thyng I haue to do with  
the / ne no good I may doo to the ne thou  
to me / And thys fable sayde Esope to them  
that rede this book / For by the cok is to  
vnderstond the fool which retcheth not of  
sapyence ne of wysedome / as the cok retcheth  
and setteth not by the precious stone / And by  
the stone is to vnderstond this fayre and play-  
saunt book



¶ This second fable is of the wulf and the  
lambe /



¶ Of the Innocent and of the shrew  
Esopo reherceth to vs suche a  
fable / howe it was so / that the  
lambe and the wulf had bothe  
thurst / and went both to a Ryuer  
for to drynke / ¶ It happed that the wulf dranke  
aboue & the lambe dranke bynethe / And as the  
wulf sawe & percyued the lambe / he sayd with  
a hyghe voys / Ha knaue why hast thou troubled  
and

and fowled my water/ whiche I hold now drynke /  
Allas my lord fauf your grece / For the water  
cometh fro yow toward me / Thenne fayd the  
wulf to the lambe / Haft thou no shame ne drede  
to curfe me / And the lambe fayd My lord with  
your leue / And the wulf fayd ageyne / Hit is  
not fyxe monethes paffyd that thy fader dyd to  
me as moche / And the lambe anfuerd yet was  
I not at that tyme born / And the wulf faid  
ageyne to hym / Thou haft ete my fader / And  
the lambe anfuerd / I have no teeeth / Thenne  
faid the wulf / thou arte wel lyke thy fader /  
and for his fyne and myfdede thou shalt deye /  
The wulf thenne toke the lambe and ete hym /  
This fable sheweth that the euylle man retcheth  
not by what maner he may robbe and deftroie  
the good and Innocēt man.

**C** The thyrð fable is of the rat / and of the  
frogge /



Now it be so / that as the rat went in  
pylgremage / he came by a Ryuer /  
and demaunded helpe of a frogge  
for to passe / and go over the  
water / And thenne the frogge  
bound the rats foote to her foote / and thus  
fwymed vnto the myddes ouer the Ryuer / And  
as they were there the frogge stood styll / to  
thende that the rat shold be drowned / And in  
the meane whyle came a kyte vpon them / and  
bothe bare them with hym / This fable made  
Esöpe for a synylytude whiche is prouffitabie to  
many folkes / For he that thynketh evylle ageynst  
good / the evil whiche he thynketh shall ones  
falle upon hym self.

¶ The fourth fable is of the dogge and the  
sheep



f the men chalengynge / whiche ever  
be sekynge occasion to doo some  
harme and dommage to the good /  
saith Esope fuche a fable / Som-  
tyme was a dogge / whiche de-  
maunded of a sheep a loof of brede that she had  
borowed of hym / And the sheep answered that  
neuer she had none of hym / The dogge made  
her to come before the Juge / And by cause the  
sheep denyed the dette / the dogge provysed and  
broughte with hym fals wytnes / that is to wete  
the wulf / the mylan & the spaehawk / And  
whanne these wytnes shold be examyned and  
herd / the wulf sayd to the Juge / I am certayne  
& me remembreth wel / that the dogge lend to  
her a loof of brede / And the myllan went and  
sayd / she receyued hit presente my persone /  
And the sperowhawk said to the sheep / come  
hyder why denyest thou that whiche thou hast  
take and recyued / And thus was the poure sheep  
vaynquysshed ¶ And thenne the Juge com-  
maunded to her that she shold paye the dogge /  
wherefore

wherfore the fold away before the wynter her  
flees and wulle for to paye that / that the nener  
had / and thus was the poure sheep despoyled /  
In fuche maner done the euylle hongry peple  
which by theyr grete vntrouthe and malyce  
robben and despoillen the poure folke

¶ The fyfthe fable is of the dogge and of the  
pyece of flesshe



He that desyreth to haue other mens  
goodes oft he loseth his owne  
good / whereof Esope reherceth to  
vs fuche a fable / In tyme passed  
was a dogge that wente ouer a  
brydge / and held in his mouthe a pyece of  
fleshe / and as he passed ouer a brydge / he  
perceywed and sawe the shadowe of hym /  
and of his pyece of fleshe within the water /  
And he wenyng that it had be another pyece  
of fleshe / forthwith he thought to haue take  
it / And as he opened his mouthe / the pyece  
of fleshe fylle in to the water / and thus he lost  
it / Ryghte soo is of many / for whanne they  
thynke to robbe other / they lese theyr owne  
and propre good / wherfor for the loue of a vayn  
thyng men ought not to leue that whiche is  
certeyn.

**C** The by fable is of the lyon and of the cowe /  
of the goote and of the sheep



Men sayen that it is not good to ete  
plommes with his lord / ne to the  
poure it is not good to have par-  
tage and dyuyfyon with hym which  
is ryche & myghty / wherof Elope  
reherceth suche a fable / The cowe / the gote &  
the sheep went ones a hūtyng & chafe / with the  
lyon and toke a herte / And whanne they cake /  
[came] to haue theyr parte / the lyon sayd to  
them / My lordes I late you wete / that the fyrst  
part is myn by cause I am your lord / the second  
by cause / I am stronger than ye be / the thyrd /  
by cause I ranne more swifter than ye dyd / and  
who so ever toucheth the fourthe parte / he shall  
be myn mortal enemy / And thus he took for  
hym selfe alone the herte / And therefore this  
fable techeth to al folk / that the poure ought  
not to hold felauship with the myghty / For  
the myghty man is neuer feythfull to the poure

¶ The teuenth fable is of the theef and of  
the sonne.



O man is chaunged by nature but  
of an euyl man maye wel yssue  
and come a wers than hymself/  
wherof Esope telleth suche a  
fable / A theef held the feest of  
his weddyng / And his neyghbours came there  
as the fest was holden and worshipped / and bare  
honour to the theef / And as a wyse man sawe  
that the neyghbours of this theef were ioyeful  
and glad / he sayd to them / Ye make joye &  
gladnes of that / wherof ye sholde wepe / take  
hede thenne to my wordes and vnderstond your  
ioye / ¶ The sonne wolde ones be maryed / But  
alle the Nacions of the world were ageynst hym /  
& prayd Iupiter that he shold kepe the sonne  
fro weddyng / & Jupiter demaūded of them  
the cause why they wolde not haue hym to be  
wedded / the one of them said / Iupiter thou  
knowest wel / how ther is but one sonne & yet  
he brenneth vs al / & yf he be maryed & haue  
ony children / they shal destroye al kynde / And  
this fable techeth vs that we ought not to be  
reioysshed of euyl felowship /



¶ The viij fable is of the wulf and of the crane



Ho so euer doth any good to the  
 euyl man he synneth as Esope  
 faith / for of any good which is  
 don to the euils cometh no prou-  
 fit / wherof Esope rehcereth to  
 vs suche a fable / A wulf ete & deuoured a sheep  
 of whos bones he had one in his throte which he  
 coule not haue out & sore it greued hym / thenne  
 went the wulf & praid the crane that she wold  
 draw oute of his throte the bone / & the crane  
 put her nek in to his throte & drewe out the bone  
 wherby the wulf was hole / ¶ And the crane de-  
 maunded of hym to be payd of her salary ¶ And  
 the wulf answerd to her / Thou arte well vn-  
 cōnyng & no good connyng / remembryng the  
 good that I haue done to the / for whan thou  
 haddest thy neck within my throte / yf I had  
 wold / I might haue ete the / and thus it ap-  
 piereth by the fable how no proufite cometh of  
 any good whiche is done to the euyle

**C** The ix fable is of the two bytches



It is not good to byleue what flaterers  
 and euyll men saye / for by theyr  
 swete wordes / they deceyue the  
 good folke / whereof Esope re-  
 herceth such a fable / This was a  
 bytche which wold lyttre and be delyuerd of her  
 lytyll dogges / and came to the hows of another  
 bytche / & prayd her by swete and fayre wordes  
 that she would lene to her a place for to lyttre  
 her lytyll dogges / And this other lend to her /  
 her bed and her hows wenyng to doo wel /  
 And whan the bytche had lyttred her lytyll  
 dogges / the good bytche sayd to the other / that  
 it was tyme that she shold goo and departe oute  
 of her hows And then the bytche and her young  
 dogges ranne vpon the other / and boot and  
 casted her oute of her owne hows / and thus for  
 to have doo well / grete dommage cometh ofte  
 therfore And ofte the good men lese theyr goodes  
 by the decepcion and flaterye of the peruers and  
 evylle folke /

¶ The tenth fable is of the man and of the  
serpent



Hath that leneth and helpeth the euylle  
men / synneth / for after that men  
have doo to them some good /  
they hurte them afterward / For  
as men sayen comynly / yf ye  
kepe a man fro the gallows / he shalle neuer  
loue yow after / wherof Esope reherceth suche  
a fable / ¶ A man was som tyme whiche fond a  
serpent within a Vyne / and for the grete wynter  
and frost the serpent was hard / and almost dede  
for cold wherof the good man had pyte and toke  
and bare her in to his hows and leyd her before  
the fyre / and so moche he dyd that that she  
came ageyne in to her strengthe and vygour /  
She beganne thynne to crye and whystled about  
the hows and troubled the good wyt / and the  
children / wherfor this good man wold haue her  
oute of his hows / And whanne he thoughte to  
have take her she sprange after his neck for to  
have strangled hym / And thus hit is of the  
euyl folk whiche for the good done to them /  
they yeld ageyne euyl and deceyuen them whiche  
have had pyte on them / And also theyre felau-  
ship is not good ne vtyle /

¶ The xj fable is of the lyon and of the asse



Of them whiche mocken other esope  
reherceth such a fable Ther was  
an asse which met with a lyon to  
whom he said my broder god  
saue the & the lyon shaked his  
hede and with grete payne he myght hold his  
courage / to have forth with deuoured hym /  
But the lyon sayd to hym self / It behoueth not  
that teethe soo noble and so fayre as myn be  
touchen not / ne byten suche a fowle beest / For  
he that is wyse must not hurte the foole ne take  
hede to his wordes / but lete hym go for suche  
as he is

¶ The xij fable is of the two rats



Etter worthe is to lyue in pouerte  
 surely / than to lyue rychely beyng  
 euer in daunger / Wherof Esope  
 telleth suche a fable / There were  
 two rats wherof the one was grete  
 and fatte / and held hym in the celer of a Rych  
 man And the other was poure and lene / ¶ On  
 a daye this grete and fat ratte wente to spote  
 hym in the feldes and mette by the way the  
 poure rat / of the whiche he was receyued as  
 well as he coude in his poure cauerne or hole /  
 and gaf from of suche mete as he had / Thenne  
 sayd the fatte ratte come thow wyth me / And  
 I shalle gyue the wel other metes / He went  
 with hym in to the toun / and enterd bothe  
 into the celer of the rych man / the whiche  
 celer was full of alle goodes / And when they  
 were within the grete rat presented and gaf to  
 the poure rat of the delycious metes / saying thus  
 to hym / Be mery and make good chere / and  
 ete and drynke Joyously / ¶ And as they were  
 etynge / the bouteler of the place came in to the  
 celer / & the grete rat fled anon in to his hole /

&

& the poure rat wist not whyther he shold goe  
ne flee / But hyd hym behynd the dore with  
grete fere and drede / and the bouteler turned  
ageyne and sawe hym not / And whan he was  
gone the fatte rat cam out of his cauerne or  
hole / and called the poure ratte / whiche yet  
was shakynge for fere / and said to hym / come  
hyder and be not aferd / & ete as moche as thou  
wylt / And the poure rat sayd to hym / for  
goddes loue lete me go oute of this celer / For I  
haue better ete some corne in the feldes and lyue  
surely / than to be ever in this torment / for thou  
arte here in grete doubte & lyuest not surely /  
And therefore hit is good to lyue pourely &  
surely For the poure lyueth more surely than  
the ryche

¶ The xiiij fable is of the Egle and of the foxe



How the puyſſant & myghty muſt  
doubte the ſeble Eſope reherceth  
to vs ſuche a fable / Ther was an  
Egle whiche came ther as young  
foxes were / and took away one of  
them / and gaf hit to his younge Egles to fede  
them with The foxe wente after hym & praid  
hym to reſtore and gyue hym ageyne his yong  
fox / and the Egle ſaid that he wold not / For he  
was ouer hym lord and maiſter / ¶ And thenne  
the foxe fulle of ſhrewdnes and malyce beganne  
to put to gyder grete habondaunce of ſiraws  
round aboute the tree / where vpon the egle and  
his yonge were in theyr neſt / and kyndeled it  
with fyre / ¶ And whan the ſmoke and the  
flambe began to ryſe vpward / the Egle ſerd-  
fulle and doubtyng the dethe of her lytylle egles  
reſtored ageyne the younge foxe to his moder  
¶ This fable ſheweth vs / how the myghty men  
oughte not to lette in ony thyng the ſmall folke /  
For the lytyle ryght ofte may lette and trouble  
the grete

¶ The xiiij fable is of the Eggle whiche bare a  
nutte in his becke and of the rauē



that is sure and wel garnysshed yet  
by fals counceyll may be betrayed /  
wherof Esope telleth suche a fable /  
¶ An Eggle was somtyme vpon a  
tree / whiche held with his bylle  
a nutte / whiche he coulde not breke / the rauē  
came to hym / and sayd / Thow shalt neuer  
breke it / tylle thow fleest as hyghe as thow  
mayst / and thenne late it falle vpon the stones /  
And the Eggle beganne to flyhe and lete fall his  
proye / and thus he lost his notte / ¶ And thus  
many one ben deceyued thorughe fals councyllle /  
and by the fals tongue of other



¶ The xv fable is of the rauē and of the foxe



Hey that be glad and Joyefull of the  
 prayfyng of flaterers oftyme re-  
 pente them therof / wherof Esope  
 reherceth to us ſuche a fable / A  
 rauē whiche was vpon a tree /  
 and held with his bylle a cheſe / the whiche  
 cheſe the fox deſyred moche to haue / wherfore  
 the foxe wente and preyed hym by ſuche wordes  
 as folowen / O gentyll rauē thow art the fayreſt  
 byrd of alle other byrdes / For thy ſethers ben ſo  
 fayr ſo bright and ſo reſplendyſſhyng / and can  
 alſo ſo wel ſyng / yf thow haddeſt the voyes clere  
 and ſmall thow ſholdeſt be the mooſt happy of  
 al other byrdes / And the foole whiche herd the  
 flatteryng wordes of the foxe beganne to open  
 his bylle for to ſyng / And then the cheſe fylle  
 to the grounde / and the fox toke and ete hit /  
 And whan the rauē ſawe that for his vayn  
 glorye he was deceyued wexed hery and ſorow-  
 full / and repented hym of that he had byleued  
 the foxe / And this fable techeth vs / how men  
 ought not to be glad ne take reioyſſhyng in the  
 wordes of caytyf folke / ne alſo to leue flattery ne  
 vayn glory

¶ The xvi fable is of the Lyon / of the wyld  
bore / of the hole & of the asse



Whanne a man hath lost his dignyte or  
offyce / he muste leue his fyrst audu-  
cyte or hardynels / to thende / that  
he be not iniuryed and mocked of  
euery one / wherof Esope sheweth  
vnto fuche a fable / There was a lyon whiche  
in his yongthe was fyers and moche outragious /  
¶ And when he was come to his old age / there  
came to hym a wyldbore / whiche with his  
teeth rent and barst a grete pyece of his body  
and auenged upon hym of the wrong the lyon  
had doo to hym before that tyme / ¶ After  
came to hym the boole whiche smote and hurted  
hym with his hornes / And an asse came there /  
whiche smote hym in the forhede with his feete  
by maner of vyndycacion / And thenne the poure  
Lyon beganne to wepe sayenge within hym self  
in this manere / When I was yonge and uertuous  
euery one doubted and fered me / and now that  
I am old and feble / and nyghe to my dethe /  
none is that setteth ne holdeth ought by me /  
but of euery one I am setten aback / I haue lost  
alle

alle good and worship / and therfore this fable  
 admonesteth many one whiche ben enhaunced  
 in dygnyte and worship shewing to them / how  
 they must be meke and humble / For he that  
 geteth and acqyreth no frendes ought to be  
 doubtfulous to falle in suche caas and in suche  
 peryl

¶ The xviij fable is of the asse and of the  
yong dogge



**N**one ought to entermete hym of that  
what he can not do wherof Esope  
recyted suche a fable / Of an asse  
whiche was in the hows of a lord /  
whiche lord had a lytyle dogge /  
whiche he loued wel / and gaf hym mete and  
ete vpon his table / And the lytyle dogge looked  
and chered / and lepte vpon his gowne / And to  
alle them that were in the hows he made chere /  
wherfor

wherfor the asse was enuyous and sayd in hym self/ yf my lord and his meyny loue this myfchaunt besie by cause that he chereth and maketh fesse to euery body / by gretter reason they ought to loue me vf I make chere to them / Thenne sayd he in hym self / Fro henforth I shall take my disporte and shall make Joye and playe with my lord / and wyth his meyny / And ones as the asse was in this thoughte and ymagynacion / hit happed that he sawe his lord whyche entryd in to his hows / the asse beganne thenne to daunse and to make feest and songe with his swete voys / and approched hym self toward his lord & went & lepte vpon his iholders / and beganne to kyss and to lykke hym / The lord thenne beganne to crye oute with a hyghe voys and sayd / lete this fowl and payllard / whiche hurteth and byteth me fore / be bete and putt away / The lordes seruantes thenne toke anone grete staues / and beganne to smyte vpon the poure asse / and so fore corryged and bete hym / that after he had no lufte ne courage to daunse / ne make to nonne chere ne fesse / and therfore none ought to entermete hym self for to doo a thyng / whiche as for hym impossyble is to be done / For the vnwyse displeieth there / where as he supposeth to please

¶ The xviij fable is of the lyon and of  
the rat /



He myghte and puyssant must par-  
donne and forgyue to the lytyll  
and feble / and ought to kepe hym  
fro al euylle / For oftyme the lytyll  
may wel gyue ayde and help to  
the grete / wherof Esope reherceth to vs suche a  
fable Of a lyon whiche slepte in a forest and the  
rats desported and playd aboute hym / It happed  
that the rat wente vpon the lyon / wherfore the  
lyon awoke / and within his clawes or ongles he  
tooke the rat / ¶ And whanne the rat sawe hym  
thus taken & hold sayd thus to the lyon / My  
lord pardonne me / For of my deth noughte ye  
shalles wynne / For I supposed not to haue done  
to yow ony harme ne displayfye / ¶ Thenne  
thought the lyon in hym self that no worship ne  
glorye it were to put it to dethe / wherfor he  
graunted his pardonne and lete hym go within  
a lytyll whyle / After this it happed so that the  
same lyon was take at a grete trappe / and as he  
sawe hym thus caught and taken / he beganne  
to crye and make sorowe / and then whan the  
rat

rat herd hym crye / he approched hym & demaunded of hym wherfor he cryed / And the lyon anfuerd to hym / Seest thou not how I am take & bound with this gynne / Thenne sayd the ratte to hym / My lord I wylle not be vnkynde / but euer I shal remembre the grace whiche thou hast done to me / And if I can I shall now helpe the / The ratte beganne thenne to byte the lace or cord / and so long he knawed it that the lace brake / And thus the lyon escaped / ¶ Therefore this fable techeth vs how that a man myghty and puyssant ought not to dysprayse the lytyll / For somtyme he that can no body hurte ne lette may at a nede gyue help and ayde to the grete

¶ The xix fable is of the mylan whiche was  
seke and of his moder



He that euer doth euylle ought not  
to suppose ne haue no trust that  
his prayer at his nede shalle be  
herd / Of the whiche thyng Esope  
sheweth to us suche a fable / Of  
a mylan whiche was seke / so moche that he had  
no truste to recouer his helthe / And as he sawe  
hym so vexed with feblenes / he prayd his moder  
that she shold praye vnto the goddes for hym /  
And his moder ansuerd to hym / My sone thou  
hast so gretely offendyd and blasphemyd the  
goddes that now they wol auenge them on the /  
For thou preyest not them by pyte ne by loue /  
but for dolour and drede / For he whiche ledeth  
euylle lyf / and that in his euylle delynge is ob-  
stynate / ought not to haue hope to be delyuered  
of his euyll / For whan one is fall into extremyte  
of his sekenes / thenne is the tyme come that he  
must be payed of his Werkes and dedes / For he  
that offendeth other in his prosperyte / whan he  
falleth in to aduersyte / he fyndeth no frendes /



¶ The xx fable maketh mencion of the swalowe /  
and other byrdes



ME that byleueth not good counceyll /  
may not fayll to be euylle coun-  
ceyllled / wherof Esope reherceth  
to vs suche a fable / Of a plowgh  
man / whiche sowed lynseed / and  
the swalowe seyng that of the same lynseed men  
myght make nettes and gynnes / wente and sayd  
to al other byrdes / Come with me ye al & lete  
vs plucke vp al this / For yf we leue hit growe /  
the labourer shal mowe make therof gunnes and  
nettes for to take vs al / Alle the byrdes desprayed  
his counceyl / ¶ And thenne as the swalowe  
fawe this / he wente and herberowed her in the  
plowgh mans hows / ¶ And whanne the flaxe  
was growen and pulled vp / the labourer made  
gynnes and nettes to take byrdes / wherwith he  
took every day many other byrdes / and brought  
them to his hows / to the whiche byrdes the  
swalowe thenne sayd / I told yow wel / what  
that shold happe therof / wherfore men ought  
not to despraise good counceylle / For he that is  
euyl aduyfed and not wel counceyled thalle haue  
moche payne

¶ Here songsshed the fyrst booke of Esope /

¶ Here foloweth the prohemye of the second book  
of fables of esope / man wyse subtile and  
Engenpous



le maner of fables ben found for to  
shewe al maner of folk / what  
maner of thyng they ought to  
ensyewe and folowe / ¶ And also  
what maner of thyng they must  
and ought to leue and flee / for fable is as  
moche to feye in poeterye / as wordes in theo-  
logye / ¶ And therfor I shalle wryten fables  
for to shewe the good condycions of the good  
men / for the lawe hath be gyuen for the tref-  
pacers or mysdoers / And by cause the good ond  
Juste be not subget to the lawe as we fynde and  
rede of alle the Athenyens / the whiche lyued  
after the lawe of Kynde / And also they lyued  
at theyr lyberte / but by theyre wylle wold haue  
demaunded a kynge for to punyssh alle the  
euyl / but by cause they were not custumed to  
be reformed ne chaastyfed / whan ony of them  
was corrected / and punysshed / they were gretely  
troubled / whan theyr newe kynge made Justyce /  
For by cause that before that tyme they had  
neuer

neuer be vnder no mans subjection / and was  
grete charge to them to be in feruytude / wher-  
fore they were sorowful that euer they had de-  
maunded ony thyng / ageynst the whiche esope  
reherceth suche a fable whiche is the fyrst and  
formest of this second book

¶ The fyrst fable is of the frogges and of  
Juppter



O thyng is so good as to lyue Justly  
and at lyberte For fredome and  
lyberte is better than ony gold or  
fyluer / wherof Esope reherceth  
to vs suche a fable / There were  
frogges whiche were in dyches and pondes at  
theyre lyberte / they alle to gyder of one assente  
& of one wyllle maade a request to Jupiter that  
he wold gyue them a kynge / And Jupyter be-  
ganne

ganne therof to merueylle / And for theyr kyng  
he caſted to them a grete pyece of wood / whiche  
maade a grete ſowne and noyſe in the water /  
wherof alle the frogges had grete drede and  
fered moche / And after they approched to theyr  
kyng for to make obeyſſaunce vnto hym / ¶ And  
whanne they perceyued that hit was but a pyece  
of wood / they turned ageyne to Jupiter prayenge  
hym ſwetely that he wold gyue to them another  
kyng / And Jupiter gaf to them the Heron for  
to be theyr kyng / And then the Heron beganne  
to entre in to the water / and ete them one after  
other / And whanne the frogges ſawe that theyr  
kyng deſtroyed / and ete them thus / they beganne  
tendyrly to wepe / ſayeng in this manere to the  
god Jupiter / Ryght hyghe and ryght myghte  
god Jupiter pleaſe the to delyuere vs fro the  
throate of this dragon and fals tyraunt which eteth  
vs the one after another / And he ſayd to them /  
the kyng whiche ye haue demounded ſhalle be  
your mayſter / For whan men haue that / which  
men oughte to haue / they ought to be ioyful  
and glad And he that hath lyberte ought to kepe  
hit wel / For nothyng is better than lyberte / For  
lyberte thold not be wel fold for alle the gold  
and ſyluer of all the world

¶ The second fable is of the Columbes or douues  
of the kyte and of the sperehawke



Ho that putte and submytteth hym  
felf vnder the faue gard or protec-  
tion of the euylle / thou oughtest  
to wete & knowe / that whan he  
asketh & demanded ayde & helpe /  
he geteth none / ¶ Wherof Esope reherceth to  
vs fuche a fable / Of the douues whiche de-  
maunded a sperehawke for to be theyr kynge /  
for to kepe them fro the kyte or mylan / And  
whanne the sperehawke was maade kynge ouer  
them / he beganne to deuoure them / the whiche  
columbes or douues sayd amonge them / that  
better it were to them to suffre of the kyte than  
to be vnder the subjection of the sperehawke /  
& to be martyred as we be / but therof we be  
wel worthy / For we oure self ben cause of this  
meschyef / And therefore whanne men done ony  
thyng / men ought well to loke and confydere  
thende of hit / For he dothe prudently and  
wyfely whiche taketh good hede to the ende

¶ The thyrde fable is of the theef and of the  
dogge



Hanne that one gyueth ony thyng /  
men ought wel to take hede / to  
what ende hit is gyuen / wherof  
Esope reherceth fuche a fable /  
Of a theef which came on a nygt  
within a mans hows for to haue robbed hym /  
And the good mans dogge beganne to bark at  
hym / And thenne the theef casted at hym a  
pyece of brede / And the dogge sayd to hym /  
thow castest not this brede for no good wyll /  
but only to the ende / that I hold my pees / to  
thende that thou mayst robbe my mayster / and  
therfore hit were not good for me / that for a  
morsell of brede / I thold lese my lyf / wherfore  
goo fro hens / or els I thalle anone awake my  
mayster and alle his meyne / The dogge theynne  
beganne to bark / and the theef beganne to flee /  
And thus by couetyse many one haue oostyme  
receyued grete yestes / the whiche haue been  
cause of theyr dethe and to lese theyre heedes /

¶ Wherfore

¶ Wherfore hit is good to confydere and loke  
wel / to what entencion the yest in gyuen / to  
thende that none may be betrayd thurgh yestes /  
ne that by ony yestes none maketh some trayson  
ageynst his mayster or lord



¶ The fourthe maketh mencyon of the sowe  
and of the wulf



It is not good to byleue all suche  
thynges as men may here / wherof  
Esop sayeth suche a fable / Of a  
wulf whiche came toward a sowe  
whiche wepte and made sorowe  
for the grete payne that she felte / by cause she  
wold make her young pygges / And the wulf  
came to her sayeng / My suster make thy yonge  
pygges surely / for ioyously and with good wyll /  
I thalle helpe & serue the / And the sowe sayd  
thenne to hym / go forth on thy waye / for I  
haue no nede ne myster of suche a seruaunt / For  
as longe as thou shalt stonde here I thal not  
delyuere me of my charge / For other thyng  
thou desyrest not / than to haue and ete them /  
The wulf then wente / and the sowe was anone  
delyuerd of her pygges / For yf she had bylenyd  
hym she had done a sorowful byrthe / And thus  
he that folyshly byleueth it happeth to hym

**C** The fyfthe fable maketh mencyon of the  
montayn whiche fhoke



Yght fo it happeth / that he that  
menaceth hath drede and is ferd-  
ful / wherof Esope reherceth to vs  
fuche a fable Of a hylle whiche  
beganne to tremble and fhake by  
caufe of the molle whiche delued hit / And whanne  
the folke sawe that the erthe beganne thus to  
fhake / they were fore aferd and dredeful / and  
durft not wel come ne approche the hylle / But  
after whanne they were come nyghe to the mon-  
tayne / & knewe how the molle caused this hylle  
fhakynge / theyr doubte and drede were con-  
uerted vnto Joye / and beganne alle to lawhe /  
And therfore men ought not to doubte al folk  
which ben of grete wordes and menaces / For  
some menacen that haue grete doubte

¶ The vi fable is of the wulf and of the lambe



He byrth causeth no so moche to gete  
some frendes / as doth the good-  
nes / wherof Esope reherveth to vs  
suche a fable / Of a wulf whiche  
sawe a lambe among a grete herd  
of gootes / the whiche lambe sowked a gote /  
And the wulf wente and sayd to hym / this gote  
is not thy moder / goo and seke her at the Mon-  
tayne / for she shalle nouryssh the more swetely  
and more tendyrly than this gote shalle / And  
the lambe answered to hym / This goote nouryssheth  
me insiede of my moder / For she leneth to me  
her pappes soner than to ony of her own chil-  
dren / And yet more / hit is better for me to be  
here with these gootes than to departe fro hens /  
and to falle in to thy throte for to be deuoured /  
And therefore he is a foole whiche leueth fredome  
or surete / For to put hym self in grete perylle  
and daunger of dethe / For better is to lyue  
surely and rudely in fewrte than swetely in peryll  
& daunger

¶ The iii fable speketh of the old dogge and  
of his mayster



Men ought not to dyspraye the aun-  
cyent ne to putte a bak / For yf  
thow be yonge / thow oughte to  
desyre to come to old age or aun-  
cyente / and also thow oujtest to  
loue and prayse the fayttes or dedes whiche they  
haue done in theyr yongthe / wherof Esope re-  
herceth to vs suche a fable / Of a lord whiche  
had a dogge / the whiche dogge had be in his  
yonghe of good kynde / For ye wote wel / that  
of kynde the dogges chacen and hunten in theyr  
yongthe / and haue grete luste to renne and take  
the wyld beestes / whan thenne this dogge was  
come to old age / and that he myght no more  
renne / It happeth ones that he lete scape and go  
fro hym an hare / wherfore his mayster was sorow-  
full and angry / and by grete wrathe beganne to  
bete hym / The dogge sayd thenne to hym / My  
mayster / of good seruise thow yeldest to me  
euylle gwerdone & reward / For in my yonge  
age I serued the ful wel / And now that I am  
comen to myn old age / thow betest and settest  
me

me a bak / haue memorye how in myn yong  
age / I was stronge and lusty / And how I made  
grete outrages and effors / the whiche caused my  
yongthe / And now when I am bycome old and  
feble thow setttest nought of me / ¶ This fable  
teacheth that who so euer doth ony good in his  
yongthe / in his auntyente and old age he shalle  
not contynue in the vertues which he posseded  
in his yong age

¶ The viij fable is of the hares and of the  
frogges



En say conynly that after that the  
tyme goth / so must folke go / For  
yf thow makest destinction of the  
tyme thow shalt wel accord the  
Scriptures / wherof Esope reher-  
ceth to vs suche a fable / And sayth thus / that  
he whiche beholdeth the euylle of other / must  
haue pacyence of the euylle that maye come  
vpon hym / For somtyme as a hunter chaced  
thurgh the feldes and woodes / the hares beganne  
to flee for fere And as they ranne / they adressyd  
them in to a medowe fulle of frogges / ¶ And  
whanne the frogges herd the hares renne they  
beganne also to flee and to renne fast / And thenne  
a hare whiche perceyued them so ferdfull sayd  
to alle his felawes / Lete us no more be dredeful  
ne doubtuous / for we be not alone that haue had  
drede / For alle the frogges ben in doubte / and  
haue fere and drede as we haue / Therefore we  
ought not to despayre / but haue trust and hope  
to lyue / And yf somme aduersyte cometh vpon  
us / we must bere it pacyently / For ones the  
tyme

tyme thalle come that we thalle be oute of payne  
and oute of all drede / Therfore in the vnhappy  
and Infortunat tyme men ought not to be def-  
payred / but oughte euer to be in good hope to  
haue ones better in tyme of prosperyte / For after  
grete werre cometh good pees / And after the  
rayne cometh the fair weder

¶ The ix fable maketh mencyon of the wulf  
and of the kydde



Good Children ought to obserue and  
kepe euer the comaundements of  
theyr good parents and frendes/  
wherof Esope reciteth to vs suche  
a fable/ Of a gote whiche had  
made her yonge kyde/ and longer toke her soo  
that she wold haue gone to the felde for to ete  
some grasse/ wherfore she sayd to her kyd/ My  
child/ beware wel/ that yf the wulf come hyder  
to ete the/ that thou opene not the dore to hym  
¶ And whanne the gote was gone to the felde/  
came the wulf to the dore/ And faynyng the  
gotes voyce sayd to the kydde/ My child opene  
to me the dore/ And thenne the kydde answerd to  
hym/ goo hens euylle and fals beste/ For well  
I see the thurgh that hole/ But for to haue me  
thow faynest the voyce of my moder/ ¶ And  
therfore I shalle kepe me well fro openyng of  
ony dore of this hows/ And thus the good chil-  
dren ought euer to kepe wel/ and put in theyr  
hert & memory the doctryne and the techyng of  
theyr parentes/ For many one is vndone and lost  
for faulte of obedyence



¶ The tenth tale is of the good man and  
of the serpente



ME that ought not to be answered that  
applyketh and setteth hym to doo  
somme other eny euill / wherof  
esope reherceth suche a fable / Of  
a serpent / whiche wente & came  
into the hows of a poure man / which serpent  
lyued of that whiche felle fro the poure mans  
table / For the whiche thyng happed a grete  
fortune to this poure man and bycame moche  
ryche / But on a daye this man was angry  
ageynste the serpent / and took a grete staf / and  
smote at hym / and gretely hurted him / wherfore  
the serpente wente oute of his hous And therein  
he came neuer ageyne / And within a lytyll  
whyle after this / this man retourned and felle  
ageyne in to grete pouerte / And thenne he  
knewe that by the fortune of the Serpent he was  
bycome ryche / and repented hym moche of that  
he smote the serpent / And thenne this poure  
man wente and hūbled hym before the serpent  
sayenge to hym / I praye the that thou wylt par-  
donne me of thoffense that I have done to the /

¶ And

¶ And thenne sayd the serpente to the poure  
man / Syth thow repentest the of thy myfdede /  
I pardonne and forgyue it to the / But as longe as  
I shalle be on lyue / I shalle remember me of thy  
malyce / For as thow hurtest me ones / thow  
maest as wel hurte me another tyme / For the  
wounde that thow madeest to me / may not for-  
gete the euylle whiche thow hast done to me  
wherfore he that was ones euylle / shalle euer be  
presumed & holden for euylle / And therefore  
men ought to presume ouer hym / by whome  
they receyue somme damage and not haue sus-  
pecte theyr good and trewe frendes

**C** The xi fable is of the herte / of the sheep &  
of the wulf



He thyng which is promysed by  
force & for drede is not to be  
hold / wherof esope reherceth suche  
a fable of a hert which in the  
presence of a wulf demāded of  
a sheep that she shold paye a busshel of corn /  
And the wulf commaūded to the sheep to paye  
hit / And whanne the day of payment was come  
the herte came and demaunded of the sheep his  
corn And the sheep sayd to hym / the conenaunces  
and pactyons made by drede and force oughte  
not to be holden / For it was force to me beyng  
to fore the wulf to promytte & graunte to gyue  
to the that whiche thou neuer lenest to me / And  
therfor thou shalt haue ryght nought of me /  
wherfore somtyme it is good to make promisse  
of some thyng for to eschewe gretter damage  
or losse / For the thyngs whiche are done by  
force haue none fydelite

¶ The xij fable is of the halled man /  
and of the fye /



**Q**F a lytyl euylle may wel come a  
gretter / Wherof Esope recyteth  
suche a fable / Of a fye / whiche  
pryked a man vpon his bald hede /  
And whanne he wold have smyte  
her / she flewgh away / And thus he smote hym  
self / wherof the fly beganne to lawhe / And the  
bald man sayd to her / Ha a euylle beest thou  
demaundest wel thy dethe / yf I smote my self  
wherof thou lawhest and mocquest me / But yf I  
had hytte the / thou haddest be therof slayne /  
And therefore men sayen comynly that of the  
euylle of other / men ought not to lawhe ne  
scorne / But the Iniuryous mocquen and scornen  
the world / and geteth many enemyes / For the  
whiche cause oftyme it happeth that of a fewe  
wordes euyll sette / cometh a grete noyse and  
daunger

¶ The xiiij fable is of the foxe and of the storke



How oughtest not to doo to other  
that whiche thou woldest not that  
men shold doo to the / wherof  
Esop reherceth to vs suche a  
fable / Of a foxe whiche conueyed  
a storke to soper / And the foxe put the mete  
vpon a trauncher / the whiche mete the storke  
myght not etc / wherof she tooke & had grete  
displayfaunce / & wente & departed oute of the  
foxes

foxes hows al hungry and wente geyne to her  
lodgys / and by cause that the foxe had thus  
begyled her / she bythoughte in her self / how  
she myght begyle the Foxe / For as men faye /  
it is meryte to begyle the begylers / wherfore the  
storke prayd the foxe to come and soupe with  
her / and put his mete within a glas / And  
whanne the foxe wold haue eten / he myght not  
come ther by / but only he lycked the glas / by  
cause he cowde not reche to the mete with his  
mouthe / And thenne he knewe wel that he was  
deceyued / And thenne the storke fayd to hym /  
Take of fuche goodes as thou gauest to me /  
And the poure foxe ryght shameful departed fro  
thens / And with the staf whiche he had made  
he was bete And therefore he that begyleth other /  
is oftyme begyled hym self /

**C** The xiiij fable is of the wulf and of the  
dede mans hede



Any one ben whiche haue grete  
worship and glorye / but noo pru-  
dence / ne noo Wyfedom they haue  
in them wherof Esope reherceth  
suche a fable / Of a wulf which  
found a dede mans hede / the whiche he torned  
vp so doune with his foote / And sayd / Ha a  
how fayr hast thou be and playfaunt / And now  
thou hast in the neyther wytte / ne beaute / &  
yet thou arte withoute voyes and withoute ony  
thought / and therefore men ought not only to  
behold the beaute and fayrenesse of the body /  
but only the goodnes of the courage / For som-  
tyme men gyuen glorye and worship to some /  
whiche haue not deseruyd to haue hit /

¶ The xv fable is of the Jaye and of the pecok



One ought to were and putte on  
hym the gowne of other / wherof  
Esop reherceth to vs fuche a  
fable Of a Jaye full of vayne  
glory / whiche tooke and putte  
on hym the fethers of a pecok / and with them  
he a[d]ourned / and arayed hym self well / And  
whanne he was wel dresyd and arayed / by his  
oultrecuydaunce or ouerwenynge wold haue gone  
and conuersed amonge the pecoks / and des-  
prayed alle his felawes / And whanne the pecokes  
knewe that he was not of theyr kynd / they anone  
plucked of alle his fethers / and smote and bete  
hym by fuche maner / that no fethers abode  
vpon hym / And he fledde away al naked and  
bare /

¶ And thenne whanne his felawes sawe  
hym / they sayd to hym / What gallaunt come  
hyther / where ben thy fayre fethers / whiche  
thow haddeft but late a gone / Hast thou no  
shame ne vergoyne to come in oure companye /

And thenne alle the byrdes cam vpon hym /  
and smote & bete hym / sayenge thus to hym /  
yf



yf thou haddest be content of thyn owne vesty-  
mentes / thow hadest not come to this vylony /  
Ther for hit appereth that hit is not good to  
were another mans gowne / For suche weren  
fayre gownes and fayr gyrdels of gold that haue  
theyr teeth cold at home

¶ The xvj fable is of the mule and of the flye.



Omme maken gretemenaces / whiche  
 haue no myghte / ¶ Wherof Esope  
 reherceth suche a fable / ¶ Of a  
 carter / whiche ladde a Charyot  
 or carte / whiche a Mule drewe  
 forth / And by cause the Mule wente not fast  
 ynough / the flye sayd to the Mule / Ha a payllart  
 Mule / why goost thou not faster / I shalle soo  
 egrely pryke the / that I shalle make the go  
 lyghtely / ¶ And the Mule answered to the  
 flye / God kepe and preſerue the mone for the  
 wolues / For I haue ne grete drede ne fere of  
 the / But I drede and doubte ſore my mayſter /  
 whiche is vpon me / whiche conſtrayneth me to  
 fulfyll his wyll / ¶ And more I oughte to  
 drede and doubte hym more / than the / whiche  
 arte nought / and of no valewe ne myght /  
 ¶ And thus men ought not to gette by ne  
 double them / whiche haue no myght ne that  
 ben of no valewe

¶ The xviij fable is of the ante and the flye.



To make boost and auauntynge is but  
vayne glorie and folye / wherof  
Esope recyteth suche a fable / Of  
the ante or formyce and of the  
flye / whiche soryued to gyder /  
for to wete whiche was the most noble of  
them bothe / & the flye sayd to the formyce /  
Come hyder formyce / wylt thou compare thy  
self to me that dwelle in the kynges places and  
palays / and ete and drynke at theyr table / And  
also I kysse bothe kyng and quene / and the  
most fayre maydens / and thou poure and mys-  
chaunt beest thou arte euer within the erthe /  
And the formyce ansuerd to the flye / Now  
knowe I wel thy vanyte and folye / ¶ For thou  
aunauntest the of that wherof thou sholest des-  
praye the /

For fro alle places where as thou goost or  
flyest / thou arte hated chaced and put oute / and  
lyuest in grete daunger / for asone as the wynter  
shal come thou shalt deye / And I shal abyde  
on lyue alone within my chamber or hole /  
where as I drynke and ete at my playfyr / For  
the

the wynter shalle not forgyue to the thy mys-  
dede / but he shalle flee the / ¶ And thus he  
that wylle mocque or despreyse somme other /  
he ougt fyrst to loke and behold on hym self  
wel / For men fayn comynly / who that be-  
holdeth in the glas / well he seeth hym self /  
¶ And who seeth hym self / wel he knoweth hym  
self / And who that knowith hym self / lytel he  
preyseth hym self / ¶ And who that preyseth  
hym self lytyll / he is ful wyse and sage.

¶ The xviij fable is of the wulf / of the foxe /  
and of the ape



Hence that ones falleth in to somme  
euylle faytte or dede / he thalle  
euer lyue with dethonour and in  
suspecion / of the peple / ¶ And  
how be it that by aduenture he  
purposed to doo somme prouffitable thyng to  
somme other / yet he thold not be trusted ne  
byleued / wherof Esope reherceth to vs suche a  
fable / Of a wulf whiche maade the foxe to be  
cyted before the Ape / ¶ And the wulf sayd  
that the foxe was but a theef and a payllart and  
a knaue of poure folke / And the foxe sayd that  
he lyed / and that he was a good and trewe man /  
And that he dyde moche good /

¶ And thenne the Ape whiche was sette as  
a Juge / gaf suche a sentence / and sayd to the  
wulf / Come hyther / thow hast not lost al that  
whiche thow demaundest / ¶ And thow Foxe  
I beleue wel that thow hast vsurped and robbed  
som thyng / howe be it / that thow denyest hit  
in Iustyce / But for as moche that pees may be  
bytwexe yow bothe / ye thalle parte to gyder  
your

your good / to thende / that none of yow haue  
no hole parte / For he that is wonte and acuf-  
tomed to robbe and gnawe / with grete payne he  
may abſteyne hym ſelf fro hit / For a begyler  
wylle euer begyle other / ¶ And by cauſe that  
the ape felte them bothe gulty and ſuſpycious  
made theyr dyfference to be acorded / and parted  
half by half / For they that ben cuſtomed to doo  
ony frawde or falſhede / ſhall euer lyue rygte  
heuyly and in ſuſpycon

¶ The xix fable is of the man and of the  
wesel



Men ought wel to loke and behold the  
courage & thought of hym / whiche  
dothe good / and the ende / wher-  
for he dothe hit / wherof Esope  
reherceth suche a fable / Of a man  
whiche tooke a wesele / the whiche chased after  
the rattes wythynne his hows / ¶ And after  
whanne he had taken her / he wold haue kylled  
her / ¶ And whanne the poure Wesele sawe  
the wrathe and furour of her mayster / she cryed  
to hym / mercy / sayenge thus / My lord I re-  
quyre and praye the / that thou wylt pardonne  
to me / and that thou wylt reward me of the  
grete seruyse whiche I haue done to the / For  
euer I haue chased the rats oute of thy hows /

¶ And the man sayd to her / thou dydest not  
that for the loue of me / but only thou hast done  
it for to fylle thy bely / For yf thou haddest done  
it for the loue of me / I shold haue pardonned to  
the / ¶ And by cause that thou dydest not for  
to serue me / but for to lette and adōmage me /  
For that the rattes myght not ete / thou barest  
it

it away / And foo bycause / that thow arte waxed  
fatte of myne owne brede / thow must rendre  
and geue to me alle the fatnesse / whiche thou  
hast conquered and gotten here / For he that  
robbeth shall be robbed / Juxta illud / pellatores  
pillabuntur / For hit suffyseth not to doo wel /  
but men must haue good wylle and good enten-  
cion for to do hit / For an almesse that is done  
for vayne glorye / is not merited / but dismeryted /  
wherfore I shal not pardonne the / but incon-  
tynent and withoute taryenge thow shalt deye /  
For by cause that thow hast deseruyd no mercy /  
thow shalt now be putte to dethe



¶ The xx fable maketh mencion of the Oxe / and  
of the frogge / whiche wold haue compared  
her to hym



He poure ought not to compare hym  
self to hym which is ryche and  
myghty / As sayth this fable of a  
frogge / whiche was in a medowe /  
when she aspyed and sawe an oxe  
whiche pastured / She wold make her self as grete  
and as myghty as the oxe / and by her grete  
pryde she beganne to swelle ageynste the oxe /  
And denaunded of his children yf she was not  
as grete as the oxe and as myghty / And theyr  
children ansuerd and sayd nay moder / For to  
loke and behold on the oxe / it semeth of yow to  
be nothyng / And thenne the frogge beganne  
more to swelle / ¶ And when the oxe sawe her  
pryde / he thradde and thrested her with his fote /  
and brake her bely / Therefore hit is not good to  
the poure to compare hym self to the ryche /  
Wherefore men sayn comynly / Swelle not thy  
self / to thende that thou breste not

¶ Were songsshed the second booke of Esope /

¶ Here begyneth the thyrdd booke of the subtyle  
fables of Esope / wherof the fyrste maketh  
mencion / of the lyon / & of the pastour or  
herdman



He myghty and puyffant oughte not  
to be slowfull of the benefetes  
done to them by the lytyl and  
smalle And oughte not also to for-  
gete them / but that they may be  
rewarded of them / ¶ And this fable approueth  
esope & sheweth vnto vs / of a lyon whiche ranne  
after a beest / and as he ranne / a thorne entred  
into his foote / whiche hurted and greued hym  
gretely / wherfore he mught no ferther goo /  
but as wel as he cowde he came to a shepeherd  
whiche kepte his sheep and beganne to flatere  
with his taylle shewynge to hym hys foote / whiche  
was fore hurted and wounded / The shepherd  
was in grete drede and casted before the lyon  
one of his sheep / But the lyon demaunded no  
mete of hym / For more he desyred to be me-  
dycyned and made hole of his foote / ¶ And  
after whenne the shepherde sawe the wounde / he  
with

with a nydle subtylly drewe oute of his foote the  
thorne / and had oute of the wound alle the  
roten fleshe / and enoynted hit with swete oyne-  
ments / ¶ And anone the lyon was hole / And  
for to haue rendryd graces and thankys to the  
shepherd or pastour the lyon kyssed his handes /  
And after he retorned ageyn in to the hyest of  
the woode / And within a lytel whyle after it  
happed that this lyon was taken and conueyed  
to the Cyte of Rome and was put amonge the  
other beestes for to deuoure the mysdoers / Now  
it befelle that the sayd shepherd commysed a  
crynynous dede / wherfore he was condempned  
to be deuoured by these bestes / And ryght so as  
he was cast among them the lyon knewe hym /  
and beganne to behold on hym / and made to  
hym chere and lykked hym with his tongue /  
And preserued and kepte hym from alle the  
other bestes / Thenne knewe the shepherd that  
it was the lyon whiche he maade hole / And  
that he wold thenne haue recompensed hym of  
the good whiche he had done to hym / wherof  
alle the Romayns were all wonderly abashed /  
And wold knowe the cause of hit And the  
shepherd sayd to them as aboue is sayd /  
¶ And whanne they knewe the cause / they  
gaf leue to the shepherd / to goo home and  
sente ageyne the lyon in to the forest / And  
therefore

therfore this is notary and trewe that al maner  
of folke ought to rendre and gyue thankynges  
grace and mercye to theyr good doers/ For  
flowfulnes is a fynne / whiche is moche display-  
faunt to god

¶ The second fable is of the lyon and of the hors



The one ought to eschewe dyslymy-  
 lyng / for none onȝt to were on hym  
 the skyn of the wulf / but that he  
 wyll be lyke to hym / For none  
 ought to fayne hym self other than  
 suche as he is / As to vs reherceth this fable /  
 ¶ Of a lyon whiche sawe a hors / whiche ete  
 grasle in a medowe / And for to fynde somme  
 subtylyte and manere for to ete and deuoure  
 hym approached to hym / and sayd / God kepe  
 the my broder / I am a leche / and with al a good  
 phesycyen / ¶ And by cause that I see that  
 thou hast a fore foote / I am come hyther for  
 to hele the of hit / And the hors knewe wel  
 all his euyell thought And sayd to the lyon /  
 My broder I thanke the gretely / and thou arte  
 welcome to me / I preye the that thou wylt  
 make my foote hole / And thenne the lyon sayd  
 to the hors / late see thy foote / And as the lyon  
 looked on hit / the hors smote hym on the for-  
 hede / In suche wyse that he brake his hede and  
 fyll oute of his mynde / & the lyon felle to the  
 ground / and soo wonderly he was hurte / that  
 almost

almost he myght not ryse vp ageyne / And thenne  
fayd the lyon in hym self / I am wel worthy to  
haue had this / For he that sercheth euylle /  
euyll cometh to hym / And by cause that I  
dyffymyled and fayned my self to be a medycyn /  
where as I shold haue shewed mysel a grete  
enemye / I therfore haue receyued good reward /  
and therfore euery body oughte to shewe hym  
self fuche as he is /

**C** The thyrd fable maketh mencion of the asse /  
of the hors / & of theyr fortune



**H**E that is wel fortunèd and happy /  
and is atte vppereft of the whele  
of fortune / may wel falle doune /  
And therfore none oughte to des-  
praysè the poure / but oughte to  
thynke how the whele of fortune is moche  
doubtous as shewethe this present fable / Of a  
fayr hors whiche was wel harnayfed and arayed /  
and his sadel and brydel garnysshed with gold /  
whiche hors mete with an asse fore laden in a  
narowe way / And by cause that the asse tourned  
hym not a bak Incontynent the hors sayd to  
hym / Ha a chorle hast thou noo shame ne ver-  
goyne / that thou doste ne bereft none worshippe  
ne reuerence vnto thy lord / who holdeth now  
me / that wyth my foote I breke not thyn hede /  
by cause that thou puttest not thy self asyde  
and oute of my waye / so that I myght passe  
& goo on my waye / The poure asse answerd  
ne sayd to hym neuer a word / and was fore  
asferd that the horse shold haue bete hym / wher-  
fore

fore he held his pees as wyfe and fage / And  
the hors wente his waye / ¶ And within a lytyl  
why after / it befelle / that fortune tourned his  
whele vp foudoune / For thys fayre hors became  
old lene and feke / ¶ And whanne his mayfter  
fawe that his hors was thus lene and feke and  
oute of prosperyte / he comaūded that he fhold  
be had in to the toun and that in ftede of his  
ryche fadel men fhold put and fette on his  
backe a panyer for to bere dounge in to the  
feldes / Now it happed that the affe whiche was  
in a medowe etyng graffe perceyued and fawe  
the hors and wel knewe hym / wherof he was  
wonder abafhed / and merueylled moche that  
he was thus poure and fo lene bycome / ¶ And  
the affe went toward hym and fayd / Ha a felawe.  
where is now thy fayre fadel / and thy ryche  
brydel / garnyſhed with gold / how arte thou  
now bycome foo lene and fuche a payllard /  
what haue proufftyed to the thy fayre and ryche  
rayments / and what auaylled now to thy grete  
fyerſte and pryde / and thy grete pretumpcion  
whiche ones thou ſheweſt to me / Thynke now /  
how thou arte lene and vnthryfty / and how  
thou and I ben now of one offyce / And the  
myterable and vnhappy hors was abafhed / and  
for ſhame lokd downward / & anſuerd neuer  
one word / for alle his felicitie was thenne  
turned



turned into aduerfyte / **C** And therfore they that  
ben in felycite / oughte not to dysprayfe them /  
whiche ben in aduerfyte / For many one I  
knewe ryche and myghty / whiche are now  
poure

¶ The iiij fable maketh mencyon of the beestes  
and of the byrdes



One maye do no good to two lordes  
at ones / whiche ben cōtrary one  
to that other / as sayth to vs this  
fable that the beestes made grete  
werre ageynst the byrdes / & fought  
euery day to gyder / And the backe feryng the  
wulues And that the beestes shold vaynquyshe  
and ouercome the byrdes / wold haue hold with  
the beestes / and be ageynst the byrdes / And  
whanne the batylle was ordeyned on bothe fydes /  
the egle beganne to entre in to the batayll of  
the beestes by fuche a strengthe / that with the  
help of the other byrdes he gat the feld /  
and vaynquysshed / and ouercame the bestes /  
wherfor the bestes maade pees with the byrdes /  
and were alle of one accord and of one wylle /  
And for the treason that the backe had made /  
she was condempned to neuer see the day / And  
neuer flee / but only by nyght / And also she was  
despoyllled of alle her fethers / And therefore he  
that wylle serue two lordes cōtrary one to other  
may-not be good ne trewe / And they wheche  
relynquen

relynquen and leue theyr owne lordes for to  
serue another straunger / whiche is enemy to  
theyr lord / ben wel worthy to be punysshed /  
For as the Euangele sayth / None may serue  
bothe god and the deuyl

**C** The v fable is of the nyghtyngale and of  
the sperehawke



**E** that oppresseth the Innocents  
shalle haue an euyl ende / wherof  
Esop reherceth to vs suche a  
fable / Of a sperehawk / whiche  
dyd put hym within the nest of  
a nyghtyngale / where he fond the lytyl and  
yonge byrdes / the nyghtyngale came and per-  
ceyued hym / wherfore she praed the spere-  
hawk / sayeng / I requyre and praye the as  
moche as I may / that thou haue pyte on  
my smal byrdes / And the sperehawk answerd  
and sayd / yf thou wylt that I graunte the  
thy request / thou must synge swetely after my  
wylle and gree And thenne the nyghtyngale  
beganne to synge swetely / not with the herte /  
but with the throte onely / For he was so fulled  
with sorowe that otherwyse he myght not doo /  
The sperehawk sayd thenne to the nyghtyngale /  
This songe playfeth me not / And toke one of the  
yonge byrdes and deuoured hit / And as the sayd  
sperehawk would haue deuoured and eten the  
other came there a hunter whiche dyd caste a  
grete

grete nette vpon the sperehawk / And whanne she  
wold haue fleen away / he myght not / for he  
was taken / And therfore he that doth harne &  
letteth the Innocents / is worthy to deye of euylle  
dethe / As Caym dyd whiche flewe his broder  
Abel

¶ The seventh fable is of the foxe and of  
the wulf



Fortune helpeth bothe the good and  
euylle folke / and to alle them /  
whiche she helpeth not she sendeth  
euylle to them / And they that  
setten alle theyr malyce ageynste  
fortune ben subuertysed and ouerthrawn by  
her / wherof Esope reherceth suche a fable / Of  
a wulf whiche had assembled to gyder a grete  
proye / or moche mete for to haue lyued more  
delyciously / wherof the foxe had grete anuye /  
and for to haue robbed somme of this good / he  
came vnto the cauerne or hole where as this  
proye or mete was in / and sayd to the wulf /  
My godsep the wulf / by cause hit is longe syth I  
sawe the / I am in grete heuynesse and sorowe /  
and also by cause we haue not been in longtyme  
gone chaced and gone to gyder / ¶ And whan  
the wulf knewe the malyce of the foxe / he sayd  
to hym thow arte not come hyder for to see me /  
ne how I fare / but thou arte come for to robbe  
and rauyshe my good / For the whiche wordes  
the foxe was moche angry / and wente toward a  
sheepherd /

shepherd / to whome he sayd / yf thou wilt be  
auenged of the wulf whiche is enemy of thy heerd  
or parke / on this day I shalle put hym under  
thy handes / And the shepherd answered to the  
foxe in this manere / yf thou doo as thou sayst /  
I shall paye the wel / And thenne the foxe  
shewed to hym the hool / wherein the wulf was /  
And the shepherd Incontinent wente toward  
the hole / and with a spere he kyld the wulf /  
And by this manere the foxe was wel fylled and  
refresht of the good of the other / but as he  
returned home ward / he was take and deuoured  
by somme dogges / wherfore he sayd to hym self /  
by cause that ryght euylle I hane done / euylle  
cometh thou to me / For synne retorneth euer  
vpon his mayster / And he that lyueth but of  
raun and robbery shal at the last be knowen  
and robbed /

¶ The feuenth fable is of the herte and of the  
hunter



En preyſen ſomtyme that / that  
ſhold be blamed & vitupered /  
And ofte men blamen & vytu-  
peren that / that ſhold be preyſed /  
as reciteth to vs this fable of a  
herte / To whome it happyd on a tyme that he  
drank in a fonteyn or welle as he dranke / he  
ſawe in the water his hede which was horned /  
wherfore he preyſed moche his hornes / And  
as he loked on his legges / whiche were  
lene and ſmal / he deſpreyſed and vytupered  
them / And as he was drynkynge in the fontayne  
he herd the voys and barkynge of dogges /  
wherfore he wold haue fledde away in to the  
foreſt for to ſaue hym ſelf / but as he ſawe the  
dogges ſo nyghe hym he wold haue entred within  
a buſſhe / but he myght not / for his hornes  
kepte hym withoute / And thenne ſeyng that  
he myght not eſcape began to ſaye within hym  
ſelf / I haue blamed and vytupered my legges /  
whiche haue ben to me vtile and prouffitable /  
and haue preyſed my hornes / whiche ben now  
cauſe



cause of my dethe / And therefore men ought to  
despraye that thyng / whiche is vnprouffitable /  
and preye that whiche is vtile and prouffitable /  
And they ought to preye and loue the churche and  
the commaundements of the same / the whiche  
ben moche vtile & prouffitable / And despreye  
and flee al synne and vyce / whiche ben inutyle  
harmeful and damageable

¶ The viij fable maketh mencion of Iuno / of  
Venus / and of the other wgymmen



Before the goddes and the goddeffes  
men muſte euer preyſe chaſtite /  
for it is a worſhipful & an honeſt  
thyng to a woman to hold hyr  
contente with a man alone / but  
Venus for her deſporte & for to dryue awaye the  
tyme / wold Interpret the ſayenge of the hennes /  
wherfore ſhe demaunded a henne whiche was  
in her hows / but at this tyme I ſhal kepe my  
tongue / and no ferther I ſhalle ſpeke therof /  
For many wyſe men whiche haue ſene and  
redde alle this book vnderſtanden wel alle the  
nature of hit / and by cauſe it is lycyte & honeſt /  
And that we alle ben bounden to kepe the ladyes  
in theyre worſhip and honour / alſo that in euery  
place where hit ſhalle be poſſyble to vs we ought  
to preyſe them / We ſhalle now ceſſe to enquire  
ferther of this matere / and historyye / whiche  
we ſhall leue in latyn for the grete clerkes / & in  
eſpecial for them that wyll occupye theyr tyme  
to judge and rede the gloſe of the ſayd Eſope

¶ The nyntyhe fable is of the knyght and of  
the wydowe



He woman whiche lyueth in this world without reproche or blame is worthely to be gretely preyfied / Wherof Esope reherceth fuche a fable of a man and of a woman / whiche loued moche eche other / It happed thenne by the effors of Atropos or dethe / the whiche we al must suffer that the sayd man deyde / And as men wold haue borne hym in to his graue / whiche was withoute the toun there to be buried / his wyf made grete sorowe and wepte pyteously / And whanne he was buried / she wold abyde styll vpon the graue / and lete do make a lytyll lodge or hows therupon / and oute of this lodge she wold neuer departe for no prayer ne fayr word / neyther for ony yestes ne for menaces of her parents Now it befell in the toun that a myfdoer was condampned to be hanged / ¶ And to thende that he shold not be taken fro the gallows / hit was thenne commaunded that a knyght shold kepe hym / And as the knyght kepte hym / grete thurste took hym / And as he perceyued the lodge  
of

of the fayd woman he wente to her / and prayd  
her to gyue hym fomme drynke / And she with  
good herte gaf hym to drynke / And the knyght  
dranke with grete appetyte / as he that had grete  
thurste / & whan he had dronke / he torned ageyne  
to the galhows ward / This knight came another  
tyme to the woman for to comforte her / And  
thre tymes he dyd soo / And as he was thus goyng  
and comynge / doubtynge hym of nobody / his  
hanged man was taken and had fro the galhows /  
And whanne the knyght was come ageyne to  
the galhows & sawe that he had losie his dede  
man / he was gretely abasshed & not withoute  
cause For hit was charged to hym vpon peyne  
to be hanged / yf he were take away / This  
knyght thenne seyng his Judgement / tourned  
and went ageyne to the fayd woman / & cast  
hym at her feete / and laye before her as he  
had be dede / And she demaūded of hym / My  
frend / what wylt thou that I doo for the / Allas  
fayd he / I praye the that thou focoure and  
counceylle me now at my grete nede / For by  
cause I haue not kept wel my theef / whiche  
men haue rauysshed fro me / the kynge shalle  
make me to be put to dethe / And the woman  
fayd / Haue no drede my friend / For well I shalle  
fynde the manere wherby thou shalt be delyuerd /  
For we shall take my husbond / and shalle  
hange

hange hym in stede of thy theef/ ¶ Thenne  
beganne she to delue / and tooke out of the erthe  
her hufbond / and at nyȝt she hanged hym at  
the gallows in stede of the other / and sayd to  
the knyght / My ryght dere frend I pray the  
that this be kept well secrete / For we doo hit  
theefly / and thus the dede men haue somme /  
whiche make sorowe for them / but that sorowe  
is sone gone and passyd / And they whiche ben  
on lyue haue some whiche drede them / but  
theyr drede wantith and faylleth whan they ben  
dede

**C** The tenth fable maketh mencyon of the yong  
man / and of the comyn woman



**F** the comyn and folyſhe wymmen  
Eſope reherceth to vs ſuche a  
fable / Of a woman whiche had  
to name Tahys / the whiche was  
cauſe by her feyned loue of the  
dethe and loſſe of many yonge men / to one of the  
whiche ſhe had be bete ofte before that tyme /  
ſhe ſayd to hym in this wyſe / My ryght dere  
loue and good frende / I ſuppoſe that of many  
one I am wel byloued and deſpred / Neuertheles  
I ſhall ſette my loue on thy ſelf alone / wherefore  
I pray the that thou mayſt be myn / and I ſhalle  
be thyn for alle thy goodes I retche not / but  
only I deſyre thy ſwete body / And he that  
knewe the feyntiſe and falſheed of the woman /  
anſwered to her / ryght benyngly and ſwetely / thy  
wyll and the myn ben both but one alone / For  
thow arte ſhe whiche I mooſt deſyre / and the  
whiche I ſhalle loue all the terme of my lyf / Yf  
thow deceyue me nomore / For by cauſe that  
thow haſt decyued me in tyme paſſed / I am  
euer aferd of the / but notwithſtondyng this /  
thow

thow arte now moche playfaunt and fayr to the  
fyghte of me / And thus the one begyled that  
other / For the loue of a comyn woman is not to  
be trusted / For thow oughtest to knowe and  
thynk within thy self / that the comyn and  
folysh woman loue the not / but she loueth thy  
fyluer

¶ The xj fable is of the fader and of the  
cuglle sone



He good and wyse fader ought to  
chastyse his children in theyr yong  
age / and not in theyr old age /  
For thenne hit is moche dyffycyle  
to make them bowe As to us  
reciteth this fable / Of a fader of famylle /  
whiche had a sone / the whiche dyd no thyng  
that he oughte to haue done / but euer was  
goyng and playeng in the toun / And the  
fader for the cryme and myfrewle of his sone  
brawled euer and bete his meyny / And sayd to  
them suche a fable / Of a ploughman or la-  
bourer / whiche bond a bole by the hornes to  
an oxe The booll wold not be bound / and  
smote strongly whith his feet after the man / and  
launched his hornes at hym / ¶ And at the last  
whan he was bound / the labourer sayd to them  
I haue ioyned and bound you bothe to gyder /  
to thende that ye doo somme labour / But I wyll  
that the lest of yow two / that is to wete the  
boole / be lerned and corryged of the moste /  
whiche is the oxe / For I must sayd the labourer  
to



to hym felf bynde them thus to gyder / to thende  
that the bole / whiche is yong fyen and maly-  
cious and strong / synye ne hurte nobody /  
wherof grete damage myght come to me / But  
by cause that I bote well / that the oxen shalle  
teche and corryge hym wel / I haue put and  
bound them bothe to gyder / ¶ Thus this fable  
sheweth to vs / that the fader ought to teche and  
gyue good enfample to his children and chaſtyſe  
them whanne they be yong For he that well  
loueth / wel he chaſtyſeth

## ¶ The xij fable is of the serpent



He Auctor that is to wete Esope  
 reherceth to vs fuche a fable of  
 two euyls / sayeng that a serpent  
 entryd som tyme within the forge  
 of a smythe / for to serche somme  
 mete for her dyner / It happed / that she fond a  
 fyle whiche she beganne to gnawe with her  
 teethe / Thenne sayd the fyle to her / yf thou  
 byte and gnawe me / yet shalt thou doo to me  
 no hurte / but bytynge and gnawynge on me /  
 thou shalt hurte thyn owne self / For by my  
 strengthe alle the yron is planed by me / And  
 therefore thou arte a foole to gnawe me / For  
 I telle the / that none euyll may hurte ne adom-  
 mage another as euylle as he / Ne none wycked  
 may hurte another wycked / ne also the hard  
 ageynst the hard shalle not breke eche other /  
 ne two enuyous men shal not both ryde vpon an  
 asse / wherfor the myghty and stronge must loue  
 hym whiche is as myghty and as strong as hym  
 self is

¶ The xiiij fable is of the wolues and of  
the sheep



Hanne men haue a good hede / and  
a good defencour / or a good Capi-  
tayne / men oughte not to leue  
hym / for he that leueth hym re-  
penteth hym after ward of hit / as  
to vs reherceth this fable / Of the sheep whiche  
had werre and descencion with the wolues / And  
by cause that the wolues made to stronge werre  
ageynst the sheep / the shepe thenne tooke for  
theyr help the dogges / and the whethers also /  
And thenne was the bataylle of the sheep so grete  
and so stronge / & fought so vygorously ageynst  
the wolues that they put them to flyȝt ¶ And  
whanne the wolues sawe the strengthe of theyr  
aduersaryes / they sent an ambassade toward the  
sheep for to trete the pees with them / the whiche  
Ambassade sayd to the sheep in this maner / yf  
ye wylle gyue us the dogges / we shalle swere  
vnto yow oure feythe / that we shalle neuer kepe  
ne hold werre ageynst yow / And the sheep  
ansuerd / yf ye wylle gyue vs your fayth / we  
shal be content / And thus they made pees to  
gyder /

gyder / but the wulues kyld the dogges / whiche  
were capytayns and protectours of the sheep /  
And the dogges dyde but lytyll hurt to the wulues /  
wherfore whanne the lytyl and yong wulues  
were growen in theyr age / they came of eche  
part and countrey / and assembled them to gyder /  
and all of one accord and wylle sayd to theyr  
auncestres and faders / we must ete vp alle the  
sheep / And theyr faders answered thus to them /  
we haue made pees with them / Neuertheles the  
yonge wulues brake the pees and ranne fyrerly  
vpon the sheep / and theyr faders wente after  
them / ¶ And thus by cause that the sheep had  
delyuerd the dogges to the wulues / the whiche  
were theyr capytayns / and that they had none  
that kepte them / they were all eten and deuoured  
of the wulues / Therefore hit is good to  
kepe well his capytayne / whiche may at a nede  
gyue socor and helpe / For a trewe frend is  
oftyme better at a nede than a Royallme / For  
yf the sheep had kepte the loue of the dogges /  
the wulues had neuer deuoured them / wherfore  
it is a sure thyng to kepe wel the loue of his  
protectour and good frende /

## ¶ xiiij fable is of the man and of the wood



Man that gyueth ayde and help to his enemy is cause of his dethe / as reeyteth this fable of a man whiche made an axe / And after that he had made his axe / he asked of the trees / and sayd / ye trees gyue yow to me a handle / and the trees were content / ¶ And whanne he had maade fast his handle to the axe / he began to cutte and throwe doune to the ground alle the trees / wherfore the oke and the ashe sayd / yf we be cutte / hit is wel ryght and reason / For to oure owne self we ben cut and thrawen doune / ¶ And thus hit is not good to put hym self in to the daunger and subiection of his enemye / ne to helpe hym for to be adōmaged / as thou maist see by this presente fable / For men ought not to gyue the staf by whiche they may be beten with

¶ The xii fable is of the wulf and of the dogge.



Liberte or freedome is a moche swete thyng / as Esope rehcereth by this fable / of a wulf and of a dogge whiche by aduenture mette to gyder / wherfore the wulf demaunded of the dogge / wherof arte thou so fatte and so playfaunt / And the dogge answered to hym / I haue wel kepte my lordes hows / & haue barked after the theues whiche came in the hows of my mayster / wherfore he and his meyn gyue to me plente of good mete / wherof I am fatte and playfaunt / and the wulf sayd thenne to hym / It is wel sayd my broder / Certaynly syth thou arte so wel atte thyn ease and farest so wel I haue grete desyre to dwelle with the / to thende that thou & I make but one dyner / wel sayd the dogge / come on with me yf thou wilt be as wel at thyn ease as I am / and haue thou no doubte of no thyng / The wulf wente with the dogge / and as they wente by the way / the wulf beheld the dogges neck / whiche was al bare of here / and demaunded of the dogge / My broder why is thy neck so shauen / And the  
dog

dog answered / it is by cause of my grete coler  
of yron / to the whiche dayly I am fasted / And  
at nyght I am vnbound for to kepe the hows the  
better / Thenne sayd the wulf to the dogge /  
This I wythe ne nede not / For I that am in  
lyberte / wyll not be put in no subiection / And  
therefor for to fylle my bely / I wyll not be  
subget / yf thou be acustommed for to be bound /  
contynue thow in hit / and I thalle lyue as I  
am wonte and acustommed / therfore there is no  
rycheſſe gretter / than lybete / for lyberte is  
better than alle the gold of the world /

¶ The xvj fable maketh mencion of the handes /  
of the feet / and of the mans bely



Now shalle one do ony good to another / the whiche can doo no good to his owne self / as thow mayst see by this fable / Of the feet and of the handes / whiche somtyme had grede stryf with the bely / sayenge / Al that we can or may wyne with grete labour thow etest it all / and yet thou doost no good / wherefore thou shalt no more haue nothyng of vs / and we shalle lete the deye for hunger / And thenne when the bely was empty and fore hongry / she beganne to crye and sayd Allas I deye for hunger / gyue me somwhat to ete / and the feet and handes sayd / thou getest no thyng of vs / and by cause that the bely myght haue no mete / the conduyts thorough whiche the metes passeth became smal and narowe / And within fewe dayes after the feete and handes for the feblenes whiche they felte wold thenne haue guen mete to the bely / but it was to late / for the conduits were ioyned to gyder And therefore the lymmes myght doo no good to other / that  
is



is to wete the bely / And he that gouerneth not  
wel his bely withe grete payne he may hold the  
other lymmes in theyr strengthe and vertue /  
wherfore a seruaunt ought to serue wel his  
mayster / to thende that his mayster hold and  
kepe hym honestly / and to receyue and haue  
good reward of hym / when his mayster thalle  
see his feythfulnesse

¶ The xviij fable is of the Ape and of the foxe.



F the poure and of the Ryche Esope  
 reherceth fuche a fable / Of an  
 ape / whiche prayd the foxe to  
 gyue hym somme of his grete  
 taylle for to couere his buttokes  
 therwith / sayenge thus to hym / what auaylleth  
 to the soo long a taylle / hit doth but wagge /  
 And that whiche letteth the / shalle be prouffit-  
 able and good for me / The foxe said to hym  
 I wold that hit were yet lenger / For rather I  
 wold see hit al to fowled and dagged / than hit  
 shold bere to yow fuche honour / as to couere  
 thy fowle buttoks therwith / And therefore gyue  
 thou not that thyng of whiche thou hast nede  
 of / to the ende that afterward thou myster not  
 of hit

C The xviij fable is of the marchaunt and  
of the asse



any one ben trauaylled after theyr  
dethe / wherfore men ought not  
to desyre the dethe / As reherceth  
Esope by this fable / Of a mar-  
chaunt whiche ladde an asse laden  
vnto the market / And for to be the sooner at  
the market / he bete his asse / and fore prycked  
hym / wherfore the poure asse wysshed & desyred  
his owne deth / wenyng to hym that after his  
dethe he shold be in reste / And after that he  
had be wel bete and chaced he deyde / And  
his mayster made hym to be flayne / and of his  
skynne he dyd doo make tumbours whiche ben  
euer bete / And thus for what payne that men  
may haue duryng his lyf / he ought not to  
desyre and wyshe his dethe / For many one  
ben / whiche haue grete payne in this world  
that shall haue a gretter in the other world /  
For the man hath no reste for the dethe but for  
his merytes

¶ The xix fable is of the herte and of the oxen



Nely for to flee is assured to scape  
the daunger wherfore he fleeth /  
As thou shalt nowe see by this  
fable / Of a herte whiche rane  
byfore the dogges / and to thende  
that he shold not be take / he fledde in to the  
fyrst toun that he found / & entryd in to a stable  
where as many oxen were / to whom he sayd the  
cause why he was come there / prayeng them  
swetely that they wold saue hym / And the  
oxen sayd then to hym / Allas poure herte thou  
arte amonge vs euylle adressyd / thou sholdest  
be more surely in the felde ¶ For yf thou be  
perceyued or sene of the oxeherd or els of the  
mayster / Certaynly thou arte but dede / Helas  
for god & for pyte I praye yow that ye wyll  
hyde me within your racke / and that ye deceyue  
me not / and at nyght next comynge / I shalle  
goo hens / and shalle putte my self in to a sure  
place / ¶ And whanne the seruants came for  
to gyue hey to the oxen / they dyd cast hey  
before the oxen / and wente ageyne theyre waye  
and sawe not the hert / wherof the herte was  
gretely reioysshed wenyng to haue scaped the  
peryll

perylle of dethe / He thenne rendred thanke  
 and grace to the oxen / and one of the oxen sayd  
 to hym / It is facyle to scape out of the handes  
 of the blynd but hit is not facyle to scape out of  
 the handes of hym thet seeth wel / For yf oure  
 mayster come hyther whiche hath more than an  
 honderd eyen / Certayn thow arte deed yf he  
 perceyue the ¶ And yf he see the not / cer-  
 taynly thow arte saued / and shalt goo forthe on  
 thy way surely /

The mayster within a short whyle after entryd  
 in to the stable / And after he commaunded to  
 vyfite and see the hey / whiche was before his  
 oxen / And hym self went and tasted / yf they  
 had ynough of hit / And as he tasted thus the  
 heye / he felt the hornes of the herte with his  
 hand / and to hym self he sayd / what is that  
 that I fele here / and beyng dredeful called alle  
 his seruantes / and demaunded of the manere  
 how the herte was come thyder / And they sayd  
 to hym / my lord I knowe nothyng therof /  
 And the lord was full gladde and made the  
 herte to be taken and flayne / and maade a grete  
 feest for to haue ete hym / Therefore it happeth  
 oftyme / that he whiche supposeth to flee is  
 taken and hold within the lace or nette / For he  
 that fleeth away is in grete perylle / wherfore  
 men ought wel to kepe them self to doo suche  
 dede / that they must nedes flee therfore

**¶** The xx fable maketh mencion of the fallace of  
the lyon / And of his conuersacion



O conuerse with folke of euylle lyf  
is a thyng moche peryllous / And  
only to speke with them letteth  
moch other / As this fable reher-  
ceth of a lyon ryght strong and  
ryght myghty / the whiche made hym self kynge  
for to haue grete renommee and glorie / And fro  
thenne forthon he beganne to chaunge his con-  
dycions and customme shewing hym self curtois /  
and swore that he shold hurte no bestes / but  
shold kepe them ageynst euery one / And of this  
promesse he repented hym by cause hit is moche  
dyffycyle and hard to chaunge his owne kynd /  
And therfore whanne he was angry / he lad  
with hym somme smalle beestes in to a secrete  
place for to ete and deceyue them / And de-  
maunded of them / yf his mouthe stanke or not /  
And alle they that sayd that it stanke or not  
were al faued / And alle they the whiche an-  
suered not he kylled / & deuoured them al / It  
happed that he demaunded of the Ape / yf his  
mouthe stanke or not / And thape sayd no but  
that

that hit smelleth lyke bame / And thenne the  
 lyon had shame to flee the ape / but he fond a  
 grete falsheed for to put hym to dethe / He  
 fayned to be seke and commaunded that al his  
 leches & Cyrurgyens shold anone come vnto hym /  
 whan they were come / he commaunded them  
 to loke his vryne / And whan they had sene hit /  
 they sayd to hym / Syre ye shalle soone be hole /  
 But ye must ete lyght metes / And by cause  
 that ye be kynge / alle is at your commaunde-  
 ment / And the lyon ansuerd Allas Ryght fayne  
 I wold ete of an Ape / Certaynly sayd the  
 medecyn that same is good mete / Thenne was  
 the Ape sente for And notwithstanding that  
 he worshipfully spak and ansuerd to the kynge /  
 the kynge made hym to dye / and deuoured  
 hym ¶ Therefore hit is peryllous and harmeful  
 to be in the felauthip of a Tyraunt / For be hit  
 euylle or good he wyll ete and deuoure euery  
 thyng / And wel happy is he / that may escape  
 fro his bloody handes / And that may eschewe  
 and flee the felauthip of the eyyll tyraunt

¶ Here synnsshed the thyrdd booke of the  
 subtyl fables of Esope /

¶ The fyrst fable maketh mencyon of the foxe  
and of the raysons



**H**E is not wyse / that desyreth to haue  
a thyng whiche he may not  
haue / As reciteth this fable Of  
a foxe / whiche loked and beheld  
the raysyns that grewe vpon an  
hyghe vyne / the whiche raysyns he moche  
desyred for to ete them ¶ And whanne he  
fawe that none he myght gete / he torned his  
sorowe in to Ioye / and sayd these raysyns ben  
fowre /



fowre / and yf I had fome I wold not ete them /  
And therefore this fable fheweth that he is wyle /  
whiche fayneth not to defyre that thyng the  
whiche he may not haue /

¶ The second fable is of the auncient wesel and  
of the rat /



Wyte is better than force or strengthe /  
As reherceth to vs this fable of  
an old wesel / the whiche myghte  
no more take no rats / wherfore  
she was ofte sore hongry and be-  
thought her that she shold hyde her self with-  
ynne the flowre for to take the rats whiche came  
there for to ete hit. And as the rats came to the  
floure / she took and ete them eche one after  
other / And as the oldest rat of all perceyued  
& knewe her malyce / he sayd thus in hym  
self / Certaynly I shalle kepe me wel fro the /  
For I knowe alle thy malyce & falskede ¶ And  
therfore he is wyse that scapeth the wytte and  
malyce of eyylle folke / by wytte and not by  
force

¶ The thirde fable is of the wulf and of the  
sheepherd and of the hunter



Any folke shewe themself good by  
theyr wordes whiche are ful of  
grete fantasyes / As reherceth to  
vs thys fable of a wulf whiche  
fledde byfore the hunter / and as  
he fledde he mette with a sheepherd / to whome  
he said my frende I praye the that thou telle  
not to hym that folowith me whiche wey I am  
gone / & the sheep herd said to hym haue no  
drede ne fere nothyng / For I shalle not accuse  
the / For I shalle shewe to hym another way /  
And as the hunter came / he demaunded of the  
sheepherd yf he had sene the wulf passe / And  
the hunter both with the heed and of the eyen  
shewed to the hunter the place where the wulf  
was / & with the hand and the tongue shewed  
alle the contrarye / And incontynent the hunter  
vnderstood hym wel / But the wulf whiche per-  
ceyned wel all the fayned maners of the sheep-  
herd fled away / ¶ And within a lytyl whylle  
after the sheepherd encountred and mette with  
the wulf / to whome he sayd / paye me of that

I haue kepte the secrete/ ¶ And thenne the  
wulf answered to hym in this maner/ I thanke  
thyn handes and thy tongue/ and not thyn hede  
ne thyn eyen/ For by them I shold haue ben  
betrayed/ yf I had not fledde aweye/ ¶ And  
therefore men must not truste in hym that hath  
two faces and two tongues/ for fuche folk is  
lyke and semblable to the scorpion/ the whiche  
enoynteth with his tongue/ and prycketh fore  
with his taylle

¶ The fourth fable is of Iuno the goddessse and  
of the pecok and of the nyghtyngale



Very one oughte to be content of  
kynde / and of suche good as god  
hath sente vnto hym / wherof he  
must vie Iustly / As reherceth  
this fable of a pecok whiche came  
to Iuno the goddesse / and sayd to her I am  
heuy and sorowful / by cause I can not synge  
as wel as the nyghtyngale For euery one  
mocketh and scorneth me / by cause I can not  
synge / And Iuno would comforte hym and  
sayd / thy fayre forme and beaute is fayrer and  
more worthy and of gretter preysynge than the  
songe of the nyghtyngale / For thy fethers and  
thy colour ben resplendyſhyng as the precious  
Emerawd And theyr is no byrde lyke to thy  
fethers ne to thy beaulte / ¶ And the pecok  
sayd thenne to Iuno / All this is nought / syth  
I can not synge / And thenne Iuno sayd ageyne  
thus to the pecok for to contente hym / This is  
in the desposycion of the goddess / whiche haue  
gyuen to eyther of yow one proprete / and one  
vertue / suche as it pleasyd them / As to the  
they

they haue gyuen fayr fygure / to the egle haue  
they gyuen strengthe / and to the nyghtyngale  
fayr & playfaūt songe / And so to all other  
byrdes / wherfore euery one must be content  
of that that he hath For the myserable auary-  
cious / the more goodes that they haue the more  
they desyre to haue

¶ The 6 fable maketh mencion of the panthire  
and of the vylayns



Very one ought to do wel to the  
straunger and forgyue to the  
myferable / As reherceth this  
fable of a panthere whiche fylle in  
to a pytte / And whan the vylaynes  
or chorles of the country sawe her /  
somme of them beganne to synye on her / and  
the other sayd pardonne and forgyue her / for  
she hath hurted no body / and other were that  
gaf to her breed / And another sayd to the  
vylayns / beware ye well that ye flee her not /  
And by cause that they were al of dyuerse wyll /  
euerychone of them wente and retorned home  
ageyne wenyng that she shold deye within the  
sayd pytte / but lytyl and lytyl she clymmed vp /  
and wente to her hows ageyne / and made her  
to be wel medicyned / in so moche / that soone  
she was al hole / ¶ And within a whylle after  
she hauynge in her memorye the grete Iniurye  
that had be done to her came ageyne to the  
place where she had be hurte and fore bete / &  
began to kille & flee al the bestes whiche were  
there

there about and put al the shepherds and fwyne-  
herds & other whiche kepte beeftes all to flyght /  
ſhe brente the Corne & many other euyl and  
grete harme ſhe dyd then aboute / And whanne  
the folke of the country ſawe the grete dom-  
mage that ſhe dyd to them / they came toward  
her / prayenge that ſhe wold haue pyte on them /  
And to them ſhe anſuerd in this manere / I am  
not come hyther to take vengeance on them  
whiche haue had pyte and myſerycorde of me /  
but only on them that wold haue ſlayne me /  
And for the wycked and eueyle folk I recyte this  
fable / to thende that they hurte no body / For  
yf alle the vylaynes hadde hadde pyte / the one  
as the other of the poure panthere or ſerpent  
whiche was ſtraunger and myſerable / as moche  
as ſhe was fallen in to the pytte / the for ſayd  
euylle and dommyge had not come to them



¶ The bi fable is of the bochers and of the  
whethers



Hanne a lygnage or kynred is indyfferent or indyuyfyon / not lyghtly they shalle doo any thyng to theyr salute / as reherceth to vs this fable / Of a bocher whiche entryd within a stable full of whethers / And after as the whethers sawe hym / none of them sayd one word / And the bocher toke the fyrst that he fonde / ¶ Thenne the whethers spake al to gyder and sayd / lete him doo what he wylle / And thus the bocher tooke him all one after another sauf one onely / And as he wold haue taken the last / the poure whether sayd to hym / Iustly I am worthy to be take / by cause I haue not holpen my felawes / For he that wylle not helpe ne comforte other / ought not to demaunde or alke helpe ne comforte / For vertue whiche is vnyed is better than vertue separate

¶ The seuenth fable is of the fawkoner and of  
the byrdes



He wyfe ought to kepe and obserue  
the good couceyll / And in no  
wyfe they ought not to doo the  
contrarye / As reherceth to vs  
this fable / Of the byrdes whiche  
were Ioyeful and gladde / as the prymtemps  
came / by cause that theyr nestes were thenne al  
couerd with leues / And Incontynent they be-  
held and sawe a fawkoner whiche dresseyd and  
leyd laces and nettes for to take them / ¶ And  
thenne they sayd al to gyder / Yonder man hath  
pyte of vs / For whanne he beholdeth vs he  
wepeth / ¶ And thenne the pertryche / whiche  
had experymented and assayed all the deceytes  
of the sayd Fawkoner / sayd to them / kepe yow  
alle wel fro that sayd man and flee hyghe in to  
the ayer / For he seketh nothyng / but the  
manere for to take yow / or to the markette he  
shalle bere yow for to be sold / And they that  
byleuyd his couceyll were saued / And they  
that byleuyed it not were taken and lost / ¶ And  
therfore they whiche byleue good counccylle are  
delyuerd oute of theyr peryles / And they whiche  
byleue it not ben euer in grete daunger



IN tyme passed men preysyd more  
 the folke full of lesynges and falsi-  
 hede than the man full of trouthe/  
 the whiche thyng regneth gretely  
 vnto this daye/ As we may see  
 by this present fable/ Of the man of trouthe  
 and of the man lyar/ whiche went to gyder  
 thorough the countrey/ And so longe they wente  
 to gyder by theyr journeyes/ that they came in  
 to the prouynce of the apes/ And the kynge of  
 thapes made them bothe to be taken and brought  
 before hym And he beyng in his Royal mageste/  
 where as he satte lyke an Emperour/ and alle  
 his Apes aboute hym/ as the subgetts ben aboute  
 theyr lord/ wold haue demaunded/ and in dede  
 he demaunded of the lyer/ who am I/ And the  
 lesynge maker and flaterer sayd to hym/ thow  
 arte emperour and kynge/ the fayrest creature  
 that is on earthe/ ¶ And after the kynge de-  
 maunded of hym ageyne/ who ben these whiche  
 ben al aboute me/ And the lyar ansuerd/ Syre  
 they ben thy knyghtes & your subgettes for to  
 kepe

kepe your persone / and your Royalme / And  
thenne the kynge sayd thow arte a good man / I  
wylle that thow be my grete styward of my  
houshold / and that euery one bere to the honour  
and reuerence / And whan the man of trouthe  
herd alle this he sayd to hym self / yf this man  
for to haue made lesynges is soo gretely en-  
haunced / thenne by gretter rayson / I shalle  
be more worshipped and enhaunced / yf I faye  
trouthe / ¶ And after the kynge wold aske the  
trewe man / and demaunded of hym / who am  
I / and alle that ben aboute me / And thenne  
the man of trouthe answerd thus to hym / thow  
arte an ape and a beste ryght abhomynable /  
And alle they whiche ben aboute the are lyke  
and semblable to the / ¶ The kynge thenne  
commaunded that he shold be broken and toren  
with teeth and clawes and put alle in to pycees /  
And therefore it happeth ofte that the lyers and  
flaterers ben enhauced / and the men of trouthe  
ben fet alowe and put aback / For oftyme for  
to faye trouthe men lese theyre lyues / the whiche  
thyng is ageynst Iustyce and equitye

¶ The ix fable is of the hors / of the hunter and  
of the hert /



One ought to put hym self in subiec-  
tion for to auenge hym on other /  
For better is not to submytte hym-  
self / than after to be submytted /  
As reherceth to vs this fable / Of  
an hors whiche had enuye ouer an herte / by  
cause the herte was fayrer than he / and the  
hors by enuye went vnto an hunter / to whome  
he sayd in this manere / yf thou wylt byleue  
me / we shalle this day take a good proue /  
Lepe vpon my bak / and take thy swerd / and  
we shalle chace the herte / and thou shalt hytte  
hym with thy swerd / and kille hym / and  
shalt take hym / and thenne his fleishe thou  
mayst ete / and his skynne thou mayst selle /

¶ And thenne the hunter moued by auaryce /  
demaunded of the hors / thynkest thou by thy  
feythe that we may take the herte / of whomme  
thow spekest to me of / ¶ And the hors answered  
thus / Suffyse the / For ther to I shalle put al  
my dylygence and alle my strengthe / lepe vpon  
me / and doo after my counceyll / ¶ And  
thenne

thenne the Hunter lepte forthwith vpon the  
hors backe / And the hors beganne to renne  
after the herte / And whanne the herte sawe /  
hym come he fled / And by cause that the hert  
ranne faster / than the hors did / he scaped fro  
them / and sauēd hym / ¶ And thenne when the  
hors sawe and felte hym moche wery / and that  
he myght no more renne / he sayd to the hunter  
in this manere / alyght fro my back / For I may  
bere the no more and haue myst of my proye /  
Thenne sayd the hunter to the hors Syth thou  
arte entryd in to my handes / yet shalt not thou  
escape thus fro me / thou hast the brydel in thy  
mouthe wherby thou mayest be kepte styll and  
arrested / And thou wylt lepe / the sadell shalle  
saue me / And yf thou wylt caste thy feet fro  
the / I haue good spores for to constrayne and  
make the goo whether thou wylt or not where  
as I wylle haue the / And therefore kepe the  
wel / that thou shewest not thy self rebelle vnto  
me / ¶ Therefore it is not good to put and  
submytte hym self vnder the handes of other  
wenynge therby to be auenged of hym / ageynste  
whome men haue enuye / For who submytteth  
hym self vnder the myght of other / he byndeth  
hym self to hym

¶ The tenth fable is of the asse and of the lyon



He grete callers by theyr hyghe and  
lowd crye supposen to make folke  
aferd/ As recyteth this fable/ Of  
an asse whiche somtyme mette  
with a lyon/ to the whiche the  
asse sayd/ lette vs clymme vpon the montayne/  
and I shalle shewe to the/ how the beestes ben  
aferd of me/ and the lyon beganne to smyle/  
and he ansuerd to the asse/ Goo we my broder/  
And whan they were on the top of the hylle/  
the asse byganne to crye/ And the foxe and  
hares beganne to flee/ And whanne thasse saw  
them flee sayd to the lyon/ Seest thou not how  
these beestes dreden and doubten me/ and the  
lyon sayde/ I had ben also ferdfull of thy voys/  
yf I had not knowen veryly that thou arte but  
an asse/ ¶ And therefore men nede not doute  
ne drede hym that auanceth hym self for to do  
that that he may not doo/ For god kepe the  
mone fro the wulues/ Ne also men nede not  
doubte a foole for his menaces/ ne for his hyghe  
crye

¶ The xj fable is of the hawke and of other  
byrdes



He ypocrytes maken to god a berd  
of strawe / As recyteth to vs this  
fable / Of a hawke / whiche som-  
tyme fayned / that he wold haue  
celebrated and holden a natall or  
a grete feste / the whiche feste shold be celebred  
within a Temple / And to this feste and solemp-  
nyte he Inuyted and somoned alle the smal  
byrdes / to the whiche they came / And Inkon-  
tynent as they were all come in to the temple /  
the hawk shette the gate and put them alle to  
dethe / one after an other / ¶ And therfore this  
fable sheweth to vs / how we must kepe our self  
fro all them / whiche vnder fayre semynge haue  
a fals herte / and that ben ypocytes and decep-  
tours of god and of the world /



¶ The xij fable is of the foxe / and of the lyon



Ayre doctryne taketh he in hym  
 self / that chaastyfeth hym by the  
 perylle of other / As to vs re-  
 herceth this present fable / Of a  
 lyon whiche somtyme fayned  
 hym self seke / ¶ And whanne the beestes  
 knewe that the lyon was seke / they wold goo  
 alle to vyfite and see hym as theyr kynge /  
 ¶ And Incontynent as the beestes entryd in to  
 his hows for to see and comforte hym / he deu-  
 oured and ete them / ¶ And whan the foxes  
 were come to the yate for to haue vyfyded the  
 lyon / they knewe wel the fallace and falshede  
 of the lyon and falewed hym at the entre of the  
 yate / And entryd not within / ¶ And whan  
 the lyon sawe that they wold not entre in to his  
 hows / he demaūded of them / why they wold  
 not come within / And one of the foxes sayd to  
 hym / we knowe wel by thy traces / that alle  
 the beestes whiche haue entryd in to thy hows  
 came not oute ageyne / And also yf we entryd  
 within / nomore shold we come ageyne ¶ And  
 therfor he is wel happy that taketh ensample  
 by

by the dommage of other / ¶ For to entre  
in to the hows of a grete lord / it is wel facyle /  
but for to come oute of hit ageyne it is moche  
dyffycyle /

¶ The xiiij fable is of the asse / and of the wulf



O none eylle man seythe ne trouthe  
ought neuer to be adiousted /  
As men may wel see by this  
fable / Of a wulf whiche vyfytet  
an asse whiche was wel seke the  
whiche wulf beganne to fele and taste hym / and  
demaunded of hym / My broder and my frend  
where aboute is thy fore / And the asse sayd to  
hym / there as thow tastest ¶ And thenne the  
wulf faynyng to vyfyte hym / beganne to byte  
and smyte hym / ¶ And therfore men must not  
trust flaterers / For one thyng they faye / and  
done another

**¶** The xiiij fable is of the hedgehogge and of the  
lytyl kyddes



**T**H behodeth not to the yong and  
lytyl of age to mocke ne scorne  
theyr older / As this fable sayth /  
of thre lytyl hedgehogges / whiche  
mocked a grete hedgehogge /  
whiche fled before a wulf / And whanne he  
perceyued the scornynge of them / he sayd to  
them / Ha a poure fooles & wood ye wote not  
wherfore I fle / For yf ye wyft and knewe wel  
thyn conuenient and paryll / ye shold not mocke  
of hit / And therfore whan men seen that the  
grete and myghty ben ferdful and doubtings /  
the lasse or lytyll oughen not to be assured / For  
whan the toun is taken and goten by fortune  
of warre the Country aboute is not therfore  
more acertayned / but ouzt to tremble and shake

¶ The xv fable is of the man and of the lyon /



En ought not to byleue the paynture /  
 but the trouthe and the dede /  
 As men may see by this present  
 Fable / Of a man & of a lyon  
 whiche had stryf to gyder & were  
 in grete disencion for to wete and knowe /  
 whiche of them bothe was more stronger /  
 ¶ The man sayd that he was stronger than the  
 lyon / And for to haue his sayenge veryfied /  
 he shewed to the lyon a pyctour / where as a  
 man had vyctory ouer a lyon / As the pyctour of  
 Sampson the stronge ¶ Thenne sayd the lyon  
 to the man / yf the lyon coude make pyctour  
 good and trewe / hit had be herin paynted /  
 how the lyon had had vyctorye of the man /  
 but now I shalle shewe to the very and trewe  
 wytnesse therof / The lyon thenne ledde the  
 man to a grete pytte / And there they fought  
 to gyder / But the lyon caste the man into the  
 pytte / and submytted hym in to his subiection  
 and sayd / Thow man / now knowest thou alle  
 the trouthe / whiche of vs bothe is stronger /  
 ¶ And therefore at the werke is knowen the best  
 and most subtile werker /

¶ The xij fable is of the camel / and of the flee



E that hath no myght ought not to gloryfye ne preyse hym self of nothyng / As reherceth to vs this presente fable of a camell / whiche bare a grete charge or burden It happed that a flee by cause of the camels here lepte to the back of the camel / and made her to be borne of hym all the day And whanne they had made a grete way / And that the camel came at euen to the lodgys / and was put in the stable / the flee lepte fro hym to the grounde besyde the foote of the camel / And after sayd to the camel / I haue pyte of the / and am comen doune fro thy back by cause that I wylle nomore greue ne trauaylle the by the berynge of me / And the camel sayd to the flee / I thanke thee / how be it that I am not fore laden of the / And therfore of hym which may neyther helpe ne lette men nede not make grete estymacion of

¶ The xviij fable is of the Ant and of the fygalle



It is good to purueye hym self in the  
 somer season of suche thynges /  
 wherof he shalle myster and haue  
 nede in wynter season / As thow  
 mayst see by this present fable /  
 Of the fygalle / whiche in the wynter tyme went  
 and demaunded of the ant somme of her Corne  
 for to ete / ¶ And thenne the ant sayd to the  
 fygall / what hast thow done al the somer last  
 passed / And the fygalle answerd / I haue songe /  
 ¶ And after sayd the ante to her / Of my corne  
 shalst not thou none haue / And yf thow hast  
 songe alle the somer / danse now in wynter /  
 ¶ And therefore there is one tyme for to doo some  
 labour and werk / And one tyme for to haue  
 rest / For he that werketh not ne doth no good /  
 shal haue ofte at his teeth grete cold and lacke  
 at his nede /

¶ The xliij fable is of the pylgrym and of the  
fwerd



n euylle man maye be cause of the  
perdyction or losse of many folke /  
As reherceth to vs this present  
Fable / Of a pylgrym / whiche  
fond in his way a fwerd ¶ And  
asked of the fwerd / what is he that hath lost  
the / ¶ And the fwerd answerd to the pylgrym /  
A man alone hath lost me / but many one I  
haue lost / And therfor an euyl man may wel  
be lost / but er he be lost he may wel lette many  
one / For by cause of an euylle man may come  
in a Countrey many euyls



¶ The xix fable is of the sheep and of the Crowe



En ought not to iniurye ne des-  
 prayle the poure Innocentes ne  
 the symple folke. As reherceth  
 this fable/ Of a Crowe/ whiche  
 sette her self vpon the back of a  
 sheep/ And whan the sheep had born her a  
 grete whyle she sayd to her/ thow shalt kepe  
 thy self wel to sette vpon a dogge/ ¶ And  
 thenne the crowe sayd to the sheep/ Thynke  
 thow poure Innocent that I wote wel with  
 whome I playe/ For I am old and malycious/  
 and my kynde is to lette all Innocents/ and to  
 be frende vnto the euyls/ ¶ A[n]d therfore this  
 fable wylle telle and saye/ how ther be folke  
 of suche kynde/ that they wyl doo no good  
 werk/ but only to lette euer the Innocents and  
 symple folke

¶ The xx fable maketh mencion of the tree and  
of the reed /



One ought to be proud ageynst his  
lord / but oughte to humble hym  
self toward hym / As this fable  
reherceth to vs of a grete tre /  
whiche wold neuer bowe hym  
for none wynd / And a reed whiche was at his  
foote bowed hym self as moche as the wynd  
wold / And the tree sayd to hym / why dost  
thow not abyde styll as I doo / And the reed  
ansuerd / I haue not the myght whiche thou  
hast / And the tree sayd to the reed proudly / than  
haue I more strengthe / than thou / And anone  
after came a grete wynde / whiche threwe doune  
to the ground the sayd grete tree / and the reed  
abode in his owne beyng / For the proude  
shall be allway humbled And the meke and  
hūble shalle be enhaunced / For the roote of  
alle vertue is obedynce and humylyte

¶ Here synssheth the fourthe book of the sub-  
tyl Fables of Esope / And how be it that  
mor

mor of them ben not found in ony Reg-  
ystre / Neuertheles many other fables com-  
posed by hym / haue ben founden whiche  
here after folowen

¶ The fyrste fable maketh mencion of the mulet /  
of the foxe / and of the wulf



En Calle many folke Affes / that  
ben wel subtyll / And fuche  
wenen to knowe moche / and to  
be a grete clerke that is but an  
affe / As hit appiereth by thys  
fable / Of a mule whiche ete graffe in a medowe  
nyghe to a grete forest / to whome came a foxe  
whiche demaunded of hym / What arte thou /  
And the mule anfuerd I am a beeft / And the  
foxe sayd to hym / I ne demaunde ne aske of  
the that / but I aske who was thy fader / ¶ And  
the mule anfuerd / my grete fader was a hors /  
And the foxe sayd ageyne I ne demaunde to the  
that / but only that thou tellest me / who thou  
arte named / And the mule sayd to the foxe /  
I ne wote / by cause I was lytyll whanne my  
fader deyde / Neuertheles to thende that my  
name shold not be forgotten / my fader made hit  
to be wretton vnder my lyfte foote behynde /  
wherfore uf thou wylt knowe my name / goo  
thou and loke vnder my foote / ¶ And whanne  
the foxe vnderstood the fallace or falskede / he  
wente

wente ageyne into the forest / And met with  
the wulf / to whome he sayd / Ha myschaunt  
beest / what dost thou here / Come with me  
and in to thy hand I shall put a good prey  
Loke in to yonder medowe / there shalt thou  
fynde a fatte beast Of the whiche thou mayst  
be fylled / ¶ And thenne the wulf entryd in  
to the medowe / and fonde there the mule /  
Of whom he demaunded / who arte thou /  
And the mule answered to the wulf / I am  
a beast / And the wulf sayd to hym / This  
is not that that I aske to the / but telle how  
thou arte named / And the mule sayd I wote  
not / but neuertheless yf thou wilt knowe my  
name / thou shalt fynde it wreten at my lyfte  
foote behynde / Thenne sayd the wulf / I praye  
the / vouches sauf to shewe it to me / And the  
mule lyft up his foote / ¶ And as the wulf  
beheld and studyed in the foote of the mule / the  
Mule gaf hym suche a stroke with his foote  
before his forhede / that almost the brayne ranne  
oute of his hede / And the foxe whiche was  
within a bushe and sawe alle the maner beganne  
to lawhe and mocque the wulf / to whomme  
he sayd / Foole beeste thou wost wel / that  
thou canst not rede / wherfore yf euylle is therof  
come to the / thy self is cause of hit / For none  
ought not to entremete hym to doo that / that  
Impossyble is to hym /

¶ The second fable is of the bore and of the wulf



Vche desyren to be grete lordes/  
and dyspreysen his parents/ that  
at the last becomen poure and  
fallen in to grete dishonour/ As  
thow mayst see by this present  
fable/ Of a bore/ whiche was amonge a grete  
herd of other swynes/ And for to haue lordship  
and domynacion ouer alle them/ he beganne to  
make grete rumour/ and shewed his grete teethe  
for to make the other swynes aferd/ but by  
cause they knewe hym/ they sette naught by  
hym/ wherof he displeased moche/ and wold  
goo in to a herd of sheep/ and emonge lambes/  
And whanne he was amonge the lambes/ he  
began to make grete rumour/ and shewed his  
sharp and long teeth ¶ And whanne the lambes  
herd hym/ they were sore aferd/ and begganne  
to shake for fere/ ¶ And thenne sayd the bore  
within hym self/ here is the place wherin I  
must abyde and duell For here I shalle be  
gretely worshipped/ For euerychone quaken  
for fere of me/ ¶ Thenne came the wulf there  
for to haue and rauyssé somme proye/ And  
the

the lambes beganne alle to flee / but the bore  
 as prowde wold not fere hym / ne go fro the  
 place / by cause he supposed to be lord / but the  
 wulf toke hym / and bare hym in to the wode  
 for to ete hym / ¶ And as the wulf bare hym /  
 it happed that he passed before the herd of  
 swynes / whiche the bore had leste / ¶ And  
 thenne whanne the bore perceyued and knewe  
 them / he prayd and cryed to them / that for the  
 loue of god they wold helpe hym / And that  
 withoute her help / he was deed / And thenne  
 the swynes alle of one assent and owne wyll  
 wente and recouered theyr felewe / and after  
 slewe the wulf / And as the bore was delyuerd /  
 and sawe hym amonge the swynes / and that alle  
 his doubte and fere was gone / he beganne to  
 haue vergoyne and shame / by cause that he was  
 thus departed / and gone fro theyr felauship and  
 sayd to them / My bretheren and my frendes / I  
 am well worthy to haue had this payne / by  
 cause / I was gone & departed from yow / And  
 therefore he that is wel / lete hym beware that  
 he moue not hym self / For fuche by his pryde  
 desyreth to be a grete lord / whiche ofte falleth  
 in grete pouerte /

¶ The thyrd fable is of the foxe and of the cocke /



Ftyme moche talkynge letteth / As  
hit appiereth by this fable / Of a  
foxe / whiche came toward a  
Cocke / And sayd to hym / I  
wold fayne wete / yf thou canst  
as wel synge as thy fader dyde / And thenne  
the Cock shette his eyen / and beganne to crye  
and synge / ¶ And thenne the Foxe toke and  
bare hym away / And the peple of the towne  
cryed / the foxe bereth away the cok / ¶ And  
thenne the Cocke sayd thus to the Foxe / My  
lord vnderstandest thou not / what the peple  
sayth / that thou berest away theyr cock / telle  
to them / that it is thyn / and not theirs / And  
as the foxe sayd / hit is not yours / but it is  
myn / the cok scaped fro the foxe mouthe / and  
flough vpon a tree / And thenne the Cok sayd  
to the fox thou lyest / For I am theirs and not  
thyn / And thenne the foxe beganne to hytte  
erthe bothe with his mouthe & heed sayenge /  
mouthe / thou hast spoken to moche / thou  
sholdest haue eten the Cok / had not be thyn  
ouer



ouer many wordes/ And therfor ouer moche  
 talkyng letteth/ and to moche crowynge smart-  
 eth/ therfore kepe thy ſelf fro ouer many  
 wordes/ to thende/ that thow repentest the  
 not

¶ The fourthe fable is of the dragon and of the  
herte



En ought not to rendre euylle for  
good / And them that helpen  
ought not to be letted / As re-  
herceth thys fable Of a dragon  
whiche was within a Ryuer / and  
as this Ryuer was dymynuyshed of water / the  
dragon abode at the Ryuage / whiche was al  
drie / And thus for lack of watre he coude  
not stere hym / A labourer or vylayne came  
thēne that waye / and demaunded of the dragon /  
what doſt thou there / And the dragon anſuerd  
to hym / I am here leſte withoute water / with-  
oute whiche I can not meue / but yf thou wilt  
bynd me / and ſette me vpon thyn aſſe / and  
lede me in to my Ryuer / I ſhal gyue to the  
habondaunce of gold and fyluer / And the  
vylayne or chorle for courtyſe bound and ledde  
hym in to his repayre / And whanne he had  
vnbounden hym / he demaunded his ſallary /  
and payment / And the dragon ſayd to hym /  
By cauſe that thou haſt bounden me / thou  
wylt

wylt be payd And by cause that I am now  
hongry / I thalle ete the / and the vylayne  
anfuerd and fayd / For to haue done wel / thow  
wylt ete and deuoure me / And as they stryued  
to gyder / the foxe whiche was within the forest  
herd wel theyr question and different came to  
them / and fayd in this manere / Stryue ye no  
more to gyder / For I wyll acord / and make  
pees bytwixt you Late eche of yow telle to me  
his reason for to wete / whiche of yow hath  
ryght / And whanne eche of them had told  
his caas the foxe fayd to the vylayne / Shewe  
thow to me / how thow boundest the dragon /  
to thende / that I may gyue therof a trewe and  
lawfull sentence / And the vylayne put the  
dragon vpon his asse / and bound hym as he  
had done before / And the fox demaunded of  
the dragon / helde he thenne the so fast bounden /  
as he dothe now / And the dragon anfuerd / ye  
my lord / and yet more hard / And the foxe  
fayd to the vylayn / Bynde hym yet more  
harder / For who that wel byndeth / well can  
he vnbynd And whanne the dragon was fast  
and wel bounden / the fox fayd to the vylayne /  
bere hym ageyne there as thow fyrst tokeft hym /  
And there thow shalt leue hym bounden as he  
is now / And thus he thalle not ete ne deuoure  
the / For he that dothe euylle / euylle he must  
haue /

haue/ For Iustly he shall ben punyshed of  
god/ they that done harme and dommage to  
the poure folke For who so euer rendreth  
euylle for good/ he shalle therof iustly be re-  
warded

¶ The v fable is of the foxe and of the catte /



Here is many folke / whiche auaun-  
 cen them and saye that they ben  
 wyse and subtile / whiche ben  
 grete fooles and knowynge no  
 thyng / As this fable reherceth  
 Of a foxe whiche som tyme mette with a  
 Catte / to whome he sayd / My godsep / god  
 geue yow good daye / And the catte answerd /  
 my lord god gyue yow good lyf / And thenne  
 the foxe demaunded of hym / My godsep what  
 canst thou doo / And the catte sayd to hym /  
 I can lepe a lytyl / And the fox sayd to hym /  
 Certaynly thou art not worthy to lyue / by cause  
 that thou canst nought doo / And by cause that  
 the cat was angry of foxes wordes / he asked and  
 demaunded of the foxe / And thou godsep what  
 canst thou doo / A thousand wyles haue I sayd  
 the foxe / For I haue a sak ful of scyences and  
 wyles / And I am so grete a clerke / that none  
 maye begyle ne deceyue me / And as they were  
 thus spekyng to gyder the cat perceyued a knyght  
 comynge toward them / whiche had many dogges  
 with hym / and sayd to the foxe / My godsep /  
 certaynly

certaynly I see a knygtt comynge hyther ward /  
 whiche ledeth with hym many dogges / the  
 whiche as ye wel knowe ben our enemyes / The  
 foxe thenne anfuerd to the cat / My godſep /  
 thou ſpekeſt lyke a coward / and as he that is  
 aferd / lete them come and care not thow / And  
 Incontynently as the dogges perceyued and ſawe  
 the foxe and the catte / they beganne to renne  
 vpon them / And whanne the foxe ſawe them  
 come / he ſayd to the kat / Flee we my broder /  
 flee we / To whome the kat anfuerd / Certaynly  
 godſep / therof is none nede / neuer the les the  
 foxe bylued not the cat / but fledde / and ranne  
 as faſt as he myght for to ſaue hym / And the  
 catte lepte vpon a tree and ſaued hym ſelf /  
 ſayenge / Now ſhalle we ſee / who ſhalle playe  
 beſt for to preſerue and ſaue hym ſelf / And  
 whanne the catte was vpon a tree / he loked  
 aboute hym / and ſawe how the dogges held the  
 foxe with theyr teethe / to whome he cryed and  
 feyd / O godſep and ſubtyl foxe / of thy thow-  
 fand wyles that ſyth late thow coudeſt doo / lete  
 me now ſee / and ſhewe to me one of them /  
 the foxe anſuerd not / but was killed of the  
 dogges fend the catte was ſaued / ¶ And ther-  
 fore the wyſe ought not to deſpraye the ſymple /  
 For ſuche ſuppoſeth to be moche wyſe whiche  
 is a kynd and a very foole /

for  
 killed

**C** The by fable is of the hegoot and of the wulf



He feble ought not to arme hym  
ageynst the stronge / As recyteth  
this present fable of a wulf / whiche  
some tyme ranne after a hegoot /  
and the hegoot for to saue hym  
lept vpon a rocke / and the wulf besyged hym /  
**C** And after whan they had duelled there two  
or thre dayes / the wulf beganne to wexe hongry /  
and the hegoot to haue thurst / And thus the  
wulf went for to ete / and the hegoot went for  
to

to drynke / And as the hegoot dranke he sawe  
his shadowe in the water / and speculynge and  
beholdynge his shadowe profered and sayd fuche  
wordes within hym self / Thou hast so fayre  
legges / so fayr a berd / and so fayre hornes / and  
hast fere of the wulf / yf hit happed that he  
come ageyne / I shalle corryge hym wel / and  
shalle kepe hym wel / that he shalle haue no  
myght ouer me / ¶ And the wulf whiche held  
hys peas / and herkened what he sayd / toke hym  
by the one legge thus sayenge / what wordes ben  
these whiche thou profereest & sayst brorder He-  
goote / ¶ And whanne the hegote sawe that  
he was taken / he beganne to saye to the wulf /  
Ha my lord / I saye no thyng / and haue pyte  
of me / I knowe wel / that it is my coulpe / And  
the wulf toke hym by the neck and strangled  
hym / ¶ And therefore it is grete folye whan  
the feble maketh werre ageynst the puyssant and  
stronge.



¶ The bij fable is of the wulf and of the asse



En ought not to byleue lyghtly the  
 counceylle of hym to whome men  
 purposen to lete / As ye maye  
 see by this fable / Of a wulf  
 whiche somtyme mette with an  
 Assē / to the whiche he sayd / My broder I am  
 hongry / wherfor I must nedes ete the / ¶ And  
 thenne the Assē ansuerd ryght benyngly / My  
 lord / with me thow mayst doo what someuer  
 thow wylt / For yf thow etest me / thow shalt  
 putte me oute of grete payne / But I preye the  
 yf thow wylt ete me / that thou vouchesauf to  
 ete me oute of the way / For wel thow knowest  
 that I brynge home the rayfyns fro the vyne /  
 and fro the feldes home the corne / ¶ Also wel  
 thow knowest / that I bere home wood fro the  
 forest / And whanne my maister wel do buyld  
 somme edyffyce / I must go fetchē the stones  
 from the montayne / And at the other parte I  
 bere the corne vnto the mylle / And after I bere  
 home the floure / And for alle short conclusions  
 I was borne in a cursyd houre / For to alle payne  
 and to alle grete labours I am submytted & sub-  
 get

get to hit / For the whiche I wylle not that  
thow ete me here in the waye for the grete ver-  
goyne and shame that therof myght come to  
me / But I pray the / and Instantly requyre the /  
that thou wylt here my counceyllle / whiche is /  
that we two go in to the forest / and thou shalt  
bynde me by thy breste / as thy seruant / And  
I shalle bynd the by thy neck as my mayster  
And thou shalt lede me before the in to the  
wood where someuer thou wylt / to the ende  
that more secretelý thou ete me / to the whiche  
counceyllle the wulf acorded and sayd / I wylle  
wel that it be donne so / ¶ And whanne they  
were come in to the forest / they bounde eche  
other in the maner as aboue is sayd / ¶ And  
whanne they were wel bounden / the wulf sayd  
to the Assē / goo we where thou wylt / and goo  
before for to shewe the waye / And the assē  
wente before and ledde the wulf in to the ryght  
waye of his maysters hows / ¶ And whanne the  
wulf beganne to knowe the way / he sayd to the  
assē / we goo not the ryght way / to the whiche  
the assē answered / ¶ My lord saye not that /  
For certaynly / this is the ryght wey / But for  
alle that / the wulf wold haue gone backward /  
But neuertheles the assē ledde hym vnto the  
hows of his mayster / ¶ And as his mayster and  
alle his meyny sawe how the Assē drewe the  
wulf

wulf after hym / and wold haue entred in to the  
hows they came oute with staues and clubbes  
and smote on the wulf / ¶ And as one of them  
wold haue caste and smyten a grete stroke vpon  
the wulfes heede / he brake the cord / wherwith  
he was bounden / And so scaped and ranne away  
vpon the montayne fore hurted and beten / And  
thenne the aile for the grete ioye he hadde of  
that he was so scaped fro the wulf / beganne to  
singe / And the wulf whiche was vpon the  
montayne / & herd the voys of thasse beganne to  
faye in hym self / thow mayst wel cry and calle /  
For I thalle kepe the wel another tyme / that  
thow shalt not bynd me as thow hast done / but  
late gone / ¶ And therfore hit is grete folye to  
byleue the counceyllle of hym / to whome men  
will lette / And to putte hym self in his sub-  
iection / And he that ones hath begyled / must  
kepe hym fro another tyme that he be not de-  
ceyued / For he to whome men purposen to  
doo somme euylle tourn / syth men holden  
hym at auantage / men muste putte him self at  
the vpper syde of hym / And after men shall  
purueye for their counceyllle

¶ The viij fable is of the serpent and of the  
labourer /



HE Auctor of this booke reherceth  
suche another Fable and of suche  
sentence / as the precydent / that  
is to wete / that men shold not  
byleue hym / to whome / men  
hath done eyllle / And sayth that somtyme in  
heruest tyme a labourer wente for to see his  
goodes in the felde / the whiche mette on his  
way a serpent / And with a staf whiche he bare  
in his hand smote the sayd serpent / and gaf hym  
suche a stroke vpon the heed / that nyghe he  
slewe hym / ¶ And as the serpent felte hym  
self so sore hurted / he wente fro the man / and  
entryd in to his hole / And sayd to the labourer /  
O euylle Frende / thou hast bete me / But I  
warne the / that thou neuer byleue not hym /  
to the whiche thou hast done ony eyllle / Of  
the whiche wordes the labourer made lytyl ex-  
tyme and went forth on his way /

¶ It befelle thenne in the same yere / that  
this labourer wente ageyne by that way / for  
to goo laboure and ere his ground / To whome  
the

the sayd Serpent sayd / ¶ Ha my frend / whyther  
 goost thou / And the labourer answerd to hym /  
 I goo ere and plowe my ground / And the Ser-  
 pent sayd to hym / sowe not to moche / For  
 this yere thalle be raynfull and grete habond-  
 aunce of waters thalle falle / But bylene not to  
 hym / to whome thou hast somtyme done ony  
 euylle / And withoute ony wordes the labourer  
 wente forthe on his waye / and byleued not the  
 serpent / but made alle his ground to be cultyed  
 and ered / and sowed as moche corne as he  
 myghte / In that same yere felle grete habond-  
 aunce of water / wherfore the sayd labourer had  
 but lytyl of his corne / For the mooste parte of  
 the corne that he had sowed peryshed that same  
 yere by cause of the grete rayne that felle that  
 same yere / ¶ And the next yere after folow-  
 ynge / as this labourer passyd before the repayre  
 or dwellynge place of the sayd Serpent and  
 went for to sowe his ground / the Serpent de-  
 maunded thenne of hym / My Frend whyther  
 goost thou / ¶ And the labourer answerd / I  
 goo for to sowe my ground wyth corn and With  
 other g[r]aynes suche as I hope that thalle ben  
 necessary for me in tyme comynge / And thēne  
 the Serpent saide to hym / My frend sowe but  
 lytyl corne / For the Somer next comynge thalle  
 be soo grete and soo hote / that by the dryenes and  
 hete /

hete / that alle the goodes sown on the erthe  
 shall perysshe But byleue not hym / to whome  
 thou hast done ony euylle / ¶ And withoute  
 sayenge ony word / the labourer wente / and  
 thought on the wordes of the Serpent / ¶ And  
 wenyng / that the Serpent hadde soo sayd for  
 to deceyue hym / he sowed as moche corne and  
 other graynes / as he myght / ¶ And it happed  
 that the Somer next folowyng was fuche / as  
 aboue is sayd / Therfor the man was begyled /  
 ¶ For he gadred that same yere nothyng /  
 ¶ And the next yere after folowyng / the sayd  
 feason as the poure labourer wente ageyne for  
 to ere and cultyue his ground the serpent sawe  
 hym come fro ferre / ¶ And as he came and  
 passed before his repayre he asked of the labourer  
 in fuche maner / ¶ My friend whyther goost  
 thou / And the labourer answered / I goo cultyue  
 and ere my ground / ¶ And thenne the serpent  
 seyde to hym / My Frend sowe not to moche ne  
 to lytyl of corne and of other graynes / but sowe  
 bytwene bothe / Neuertheles byleue not hym /  
 to the whiche thou hast done euyl ¶ And I  
 telle the that this yere shalle be the most tem-  
 perate and the moost fertile of alle maner of  
 corne / that euer thou sawest / And whanne the  
 labourer hadde herd these wordes / he wente  
 his waye / and dyd as the Serpent had sayd /  
 And

And that yere he gadred moche good / by cause of  
the good disposycion of the season and tyme /  
¶ And on a daye of the same yere / the serpent  
sawe the sayd labourer comynge fro the heruest /  
to whome he came ageynste / And sayd / Now  
saye me my good Frend / Haft thou not fond  
now grete plente of goodes / as I had told to  
the byfore And the labourer answered and sayd  
ye certaynly / wherof I thanke the / ¶ And  
thenne the Serpent demaunded of hym Re-  
muneracion or reward / ¶ And the labourer  
thenne demaunded what he wold haue of hym /  
And the Serpent sayd I ne demaunde of the  
nothyng / but only that to morowe on the  
mornyng thou wylt sende me a dyshe ful of mylk  
by som of thy children / ¶ And thenne the  
serpent shewed to the labourer the hole of his  
dwellynge / & sayd to hym / telle thy sone  
that he brynge the mylke hyther / but take  
good heede to that that other whyle I told to  
the / that thou byleuest not hym / to whome  
thou hast done euylle / ¶ And anone after  
whanne these thynges were sayd / the labourer  
wente homeward / and in the morninge next  
folowyng / he betoke to his sone a dyshe full  
of mylke / whiche he brought to the serpent /  
and sette the dyshe before the hool / And  
anone the serpent came oute and slewe the  
child

child through his venym / and when the labourer  
cam fro the feld / and that he came before the  
repayre or dwellinge of the ſerpent / he fond his  
ſonne whiche laye doune deed on the erthe /  
Thenne beganne the ſayd labourer to crye with  
a hyghe voys / as he that was ful of ſorowe and  
of heuynesse ſayinge ſuche wordes / Ha curſed  
& euylle ſerpent / vermyn and fals traytour /  
thow haſt deceyued me / Ha wycked and de-  
ceytfull beeft / ful of all contagious euyl thow  
haſt ſorowfully ſlayne my ſone /

¶ And thenne the ſerpente ſayd to hym / I  
wylle well / that thow knowe / that I haue not  
ſlayne hym ſorowfully / ne withoute cauſe / but  
for to auenge me of that / that thow hurteſt me  
on that other daye withoute cauſe / and haſt not  
amended hit / Haſt thow now memorye / how  
ofte I ſayd to the / that thow ſholdeſt not byleue  
hym / to whome thow haſt done eyyll / haue  
now thenne in thy memorye / that I am auengyd  
of the /

¶ And thus this fable ſheweth how men ought  
not to byleue ne bere feythe to them / to whome  
men hath done ſomme harme or euylle.



¶ The ix fable is of the foxe / of the wulf / and  
of the lyon /



¶ If hit be soo that ony hath ben  
adommaged by other he ought  
not to take vengeaunce by the  
tong in gyuyng Iniuryous wordes /  
and the cause why / is by cause /  
that suche vengeaunce is dishonest. As to us re-  
herceth this present fable / Somtyme was a foxe /  
that ete fyshes in a Ryuer / ¶ It happed / that  
the wulf came that waye / ¶ And whanne he  
sawe the foxe / whiche ete with so grete appe-  
tyte / He beganne to saye / My broder gyue me  
somme fyshes / And the foxe answered to hym /  
Allas my lord / It behoueveth not that ye ete the  
releef of my table / but for the worship of your  
persone I shall counceyll eowel / Doo soo  
moche to gete yow a basket / And I shalle teche  
yow how men shalle take fyshes / to thende /  
that ye may take somme whan ye shalle be  
hongry / And the wulf wente in to the streete /  
and stalle a basket / whiche he brought with  
hym / the foxe tooke the basket / and bound  
it with a cord at the wulfs taylle / ¶ And  
whanne

whanne he was wel bounden / the foxe sayd  
to the wulf / goo thow by the Ryuer / and I  
shal lede and take hede to the basket / And  
the wulf dyde as the foxe had hym do / ¶ And  
as the wulf was goynge within the water / the  
foxe fylled the basket fulle of stones by his  
malyce / ¶ And whan the basket was full /  
the foxe sayd to the wulf / Certaynly my lord /  
I maye no more lyfte ne hold the basket / so full  
it is of fysh / ¶ And the wulf wenyng that  
the foxe had sayd truthe / profered such wordes /  
sayenge / I render graces and thanks to god /  
that I maye ones see thyn hyghe and excellent  
wyfedom in the arte and crafte of fyfshynge /  
¶ And thenne the foxe sayd to hym / My lord  
abyde me here / And I shalle fetch some to  
helpe vs for to haue and take the fyfsh oute  
of the basket / And in sayenge these wordes /  
the foxe ranne in to the strete / where he fond  
men / to whome he sayd in this manere / My  
lordes what doo ye here / why are yow werk-  
les / see yonder the wulf / which ete your sheep /  
your lambes / and your beestes / and yet now he  
taketh your fyfshes oute of the Ryuer / and  
ete them / ¶ And thenne alle the men came to  
gyder / somme with flynges / and somme with  
bowes / and other with staues vnto the Ryuer /  
where they fond the wulf / whiche they bete  
outragyously

outragyouffly / ¶ And whanne the poure wulf  
 ſawe hym thus oppreſſed / & vexed with ſtrokes  
 beganne with alle his ſtrengthe & myghte to  
 drawe / and ſuppoſed to haue caryed the fyſhe  
 away / but ſo ſtrongly he drewe / that he drewe  
 and pulled his taylle fro his ers / and thus he  
 ſcaped vnnethe with his lyf / ¶ In the mene-  
 whyle thenne happed / that the lyon whiche was  
 kynge ouer alle beeftes felle in a grete ſekeneſſe /  
 for the whiche cauſe euery beeft wente for to ſee  
 hym / as theyr lord / ¶ And when the wulf  
 would haue gone thyder / he ſalewed his lord /  
 ſaying thus to hym / My kynge I ſalewe yow /  
 pleaſe it you to knowe that I haue gone round  
 aboute the countre and prouynce / and in alle  
 places of hit for to ſerche ſomme medycynes  
 prouffitabſe for yow / and to recowere your  
 helthe / but nothyng I haue found good for  
 your ſekeneſſe / but only the ſkynne of a foxe  
 fyers and prowde and malycious / whiche is  
 youre body medycynal / but he dayneth not to  
 come hyther to ſee you But ye ſhalſe calle  
 hym to a counceyll / and whanne ye hold  
 hym / lete his ſkynne be taken from hym /  
 And thenne lete hym renne where he wyll /  
 and that fayr ſkynne which is ſo holfome / ye  
 ſhalſe make hit to be ſette and bound vpon  
 your bely / And within fewe dayes after hit  
 ſhalſe

shalle rendre yow in as good helthe / as euer ye  
were / ¶ And whanne he had sayd these wordes /  
he departed fro the lyon and toke his leue / but  
neuer he had supposyd / that the foxe had  
herd hym / but he had / For he was within  
a terryer nyghe to the lodgys of the lyon /  
where he herd alle the propofycion of the  
wulf / to the whiche he dyd put remedye and  
grete prouyfyon / For as soone as the wulf was  
departed fro the lyon / the foxe wente in to the  
feldes / And in a hyghe way he fond a grete  
donghyll / within the whiche he put hym self /  
¶ And as he supposyd after his aduys to be de-  
fowled and dagged ynough / came thus arayed  
in to the pytte of the lyon / the whiche he  
falewed as he oughte to haue done to his lord /  
sayenge to hym in this manere / Syre kynge god  
yeue good helthe / And the lyon anfuerd to hym  
God falewe the fwete frend / come nyghe me  
and kyffe me / & after I shalle telle to the somme  
secrete / whiche I wylle not that euery man  
knowe / to whome the foxe sayd in this maner  
Ha a fyre kynge be not displeasyd / for I am to  
fowle arayed and al to dagged / by cause of the  
grete way / whiche I haue gone / sekynge al  
aboute somme good medycyne for you / wher-  
fore it behoueth not me / for to be so nyghe your  
persone For the stenche of the donge myght  
wel

wel greue you for the grete sekenesse that ye haue / but dere fyre / yf hit please to the or euer I come nerer to your Royal mageste I shalle goo bathe me and make me fayre and clene / And thenne I shall come ageyne to presente my self byfore thy noble persone / And notwithstandinge al this / also er I goo / please the to wete & knowe that I come from alle the contrees here aboute / and from alle the Royalmes adiacent to this prouynce / for to see yf I coude fynde somme good medycyn duynge and nedeful to thy sikenesse / and for to recouere thy helthe / but certaynly I haue found no better counceylle than the counceylle of an auncient greke with a grete & long berd / a man of grete wyfdom / sage & worthy to be prayfed / the whiche sayd to me / how in this prouynce is a wulf withoute taylle / the whiche hath lost his taylle by the vertue of the grete medycyn whiche is within hym / For the whiche thyng it is nedeful and expedyent / that ye doo make this wulf to come to yow for the recoueraunce of the helthe of your fayr and noble body / And whan he is come dyslymylle and calle hym to counceylle / sayenge that it shalle be for his grete worship & profite / & as he shal be nyghe vnto yow cast on hym your armed feet / and as swetely as ye maye pulle the skynne fro the body of hym & kepe it hoole /  
sauf

sauf only that ye shalle leue the heed and the  
feet / And thenne lete hym gone his way to feche  
his auenture / And forthwith whan ye shalle  
haue that skynne / al hot and warme ye shal do  
bynd hit al aboute your bely / And after that or  
lytyll tyme be passed / your helthe shalle be  
restored to yow / and ye shal be as hole as euer  
in your lyf ye were / ¶ And thenne the foxe  
toke his leue of the kynge / and departed / and  
wente ageyne in to his terryer / ¶ Soone after  
came then the wulf for to see the lyon / And  
Incontynent the lyon called hym to counceylle /  
and castynge softly his feet vpon hym dyspoyled  
the wulf of his skynne sauf the skynne of his hede  
and of his feet / And after the lyon bound it al  
warme about his bely / ¶ And the wulf ranne  
awaye skynles / wherfore he had ynough to doo  
to defende and put from hym the flies / whiche  
greued hym fore / And for the grete destresse  
that he felte by cause of the flies / that thus ete  
his fleshe / he as wood beganne to renne / and  
passyd vnder an hylle / vpon the whiche the foxe  
was / ¶ And after whanne the foxe sawe hym /  
he beganne to crye / and calle / lawhyng after  
the wulf / and mocked / and sayd to hym / who  
arte thou that passest there before with suche a  
fayre hood on thy heed and with ryght fayr  
glouues in thyn handes / Herke herke / what I  
shalle

shalle saye to the / whan thou wente & camest  
by the kynges hows / thou werte bleſſed of the  
lord / & whan thou were at the Court thou her-  
kenest and alſo ſayeſt many good wordes and  
good talkynge of al the world /

¶ And therefore my godſep be it euyl or good /  
thou muſte al lete paſſe / and goo / and haue  
pacyence in thyn aduerſyte /

¶ And thus this fable ſheweth vnto vs / that yf  
ony be hurted or dommaged / by ſomme other  
he muſt not auenge hym ſelf by his tonge for  
to make ony treſon / ne for to ſay of other ony  
harne ne open blaſphemye / For he ought to  
conſydere / that who ſo euer maketh the pytte  
redy for his broder / ofte it happeth that he hym  
ſelf falleth in the ſame / and is beten with the  
ſame rodde that he maketh for other

¶ The x fable is of the wulf whiche made a fart



T is folye to wene more / than men  
ought to doo / For what someuer a  
foole thynketh · hit semeth to hym  
that hit shalle be / As it appiereth  
by this fable / of a wulf / whiche  
somtyme rose erly in a mornynge / And after  
that he was ryfen vp fro his bedde / as he retched  
hym self / made a grete fart / and beganne to saye  
to hym self / blessed be god therfore / these ben  
good tydynges / this daye / I shalle be wel for-  
tunate and happy / as myn ers syngeth to me /  
And thenne he departed from his lodgys / and  
biganne to walke and goo / & as he wente on his  
way he fonde a sak ful of talowe / whiche a  
woman had lete falle / and with his foote he  
torned hit vpso doune / and sayd to hym / I shalle  
not ete the / For thou sholdest hurte my tendre  
stomak / and more is / I shall this day haue better  
mete / and more delycious / For well I knowe  
this by myn ers / whiche dyd synge it to me /  
And sayenge these wordes went his way / And  
anone



anone after he fond a grete pyece of bakon wel  
falted / the whiche he tourned and retourned vp  
fodoune / And whan he had torned and retorned  
hit longe / ynough / he sayd / I dayne not to ete  
of this mete / by cause that hit thold cause me  
for to drynke moche / for it is to salte And as  
myn ers songe to me last I thalle ete this fame  
day better and more delycious mete / ¶ And  
thenne he beganne to walke fether / And as he  
entryd in to a fayr medowe / he sawe a mare /  
and her yong foole with her / and sayd to hym  
self alone / I rendre thanks and graces to the  
goddess of the godes that they send me / For wel  
I wyft and was certayne / that this daye I thold  
fynde somme precious mete / And thenne he  
came nyghe the mare and sayd to her / Certaynly  
my suster I thalle ete thy child / And the mare  
ansuerd to hym / My broder doo what someuer  
hit thalle please the / But fyrst I praye the that  
one playfye thow wylt do to me / I haue herd  
saye that thow art a good Cyrurgyen / wherfore  
I praye the / that thou wylt hele me of my foote /  
I saye to the my good broder / that yester daye  
as I wente within the forest / a thorne entryd in  
to one of my feet behynd / the whiche greueth  
me fore / I praye the / that or thow ete my  
fool / thow wylt drawe and haue it oute of my  
foote / And the wulf answerd to the mare that  
thalle I doo gladly my good suster / shewe me  
thy

thy foote / ¶ And as the mare shewed his foote  
to the wulf / she gaf to the wulf fuche a stroke  
bytwexe bothe his eyen / that alle his hede was  
astonyed and felle doune to the ground / and a  
longe space was the wulf lyenge vpon the erthe /  
as deed / And whanne he was come to hym self  
ageyne / and that he coud speke / he sayd / I care  
not for this myshap / For wel I wote that yet  
this day I shalle ete / and be fylled of delycious  
mete / And in sayenge these wordes lyft hym  
self vp / and wente awaye / ¶ And whanne he  
had walked and gone a whyle / he fond two  
rammes within a medowe whiche with theyr  
hornes laüched eche other / And the wulf sayd  
to hymself / Blessed be god / that now I shal  
be wel fedde / he thenne came nyghe the two  
rammes / & said / Certaynly I shall ete the one  
of you two And one of them sayd to hym /  
My lord doo alle that it plese yow / but fyrst ye  
must gyue vs the sentence of a proceffe of a  
plee whiche is bytwixe vs bothe / And the wulf  
ansuerd / that with ryght a good wyll he wold  
doo hit / And after sayd to them / My lordes  
telle my your refons and caas / to thende that the  
better I may gyue the sentence of your dyferent  
and question / And thenne one of them beganne  
to say / My lord / this medowe was bylongynge  
to our fader / And by cause that he deyde with-  
oute

oute makynge ony ordenaunce or testament / we  
 be now in debate and stryf for the partynge of  
 hit / wherfore we praye the that thou vouches-  
 fauf to accomde oure dyferent / so that pees  
 be made bytwene vs / And thenne the wulf  
 demaunded of the rammes how theyr question  
 myght be accorded / Ryght wel sayd one of  
 them / by one manere / whiche I shal telle to  
 the / yf hit please to the to here me / we two  
 shalle be at the two endes of the medowe / and  
 thou shalt be in the myddes of it / And fro  
 thende of the medowe / we bothe at ones shalle  
 renne toward the / And he that fyrst shalle come  
 to the / shalle be lord of the medowe / And the  
 last shalle be thyn / Wel thene sayd the wulf /  
 thyn aduys is good and wel purposed / late see  
 now who fyrst shalle come to me / Thenne wente  
 the two rammes to renne toward the wulf / And  
 with alle theyr myght came and gaf to hym  
 suche two strokes bothe at ones ageynst bothe  
 his sydes / that almost they brake his herte within  
 his bely / & then fyll doune the poure wulf alle  
 afwowned / And the rammes wente theyr way /  
 ¶ And whanne he was come ageyn to hym self /  
 he took courage and departed / sayenge to hym  
 self / I care not for alle this Iniurye and shame /  
 For as myn ers dyde synge to me / yet shalle I  
 this day ete somme good and delycious mete /

¶ He

¶ He had not long walked / whanne he fond a  
fowe / and her smal pygges with her / And In-  
contynent as he sawe her / he sayd / blessed be  
god of that I shalle this daye ete and fylle my  
bely with precious metes / and shalle haue good  
fortune / And in that sayenge approched to the  
fowe / & sayd to her / My suster I must ete  
somme of thy yonge pygges And the fowe wente  
and sayd to hym / my lord I am content of alle  
that / whiche pleaseth to yow / But or ye ete  
them / I praye yow that they maye be baptyfied  
and made clene in pure and fayre water / And  
the wulf sayd to the fowe / Shewe me thenne  
the water / And I shalle washe and baptyse  
them wel / And thenne the fowe wente and  
ledde hym at a stange or pond where as was a  
fayr mylle ¶ And as the wulf was vpon the  
lytyl brydge of the sayd mylle / and that he wold  
haue take one pygge / the fowe threwe the wulf  
in to the water with her hede / and for the swyft-  
nesse of the water / he must nedes passe vnder  
the whele of the mylle / And god wote yf the  
wynges of the mylle bete hym wel or not / And  
as soone as he myght / he ranne away / And as  
he ranne seyde to hym self / I care not for soo  
lytyl a shame / ne therfore I shall not be bette /  
but that I shalle yet this daye ete my bely full  
of metes delycious / as myn ers dyd synge it erly  
to

to me / ¶ And as he passed thurgh the strete /  
 he sawe somme sheep / and as the shepe sawe  
 hym / they entryd in to a stable / ¶ And whan  
 the wulf came there he sayd to them in this  
 manere / God kepe you my susters / I must ete  
 one of yow / to thende / that I may be fylled  
 and rassasyed of my grete hunger / And thenne  
 one of them sayd to hym / Certaynly my lord /  
 ye are welcome to passe / For we ben comen  
 hyder for to hold a grete solemnyte / wherefore  
 we alle praye yow / that ye pontyfically wylle  
 syng And after the seruyse complete and done /  
 doo what ye wyll of the one of vs / & thenne the  
 wulf for vayn glory / saynyng to be a prelate be-  
 ganne to syng and to howle before the sheep /  
 ¶ And whanne the men of the toune herd the  
 voyes of the wulf / they came to the stable with  
 grete staues and with grete dogges / and wonderly  
 they wounded the wulf / and almost brought  
 hym to deth / that with grete payne he coude  
 goo / neuertheles he scaped / and wente vnder  
 a grete tree / vpon the whiche tree was a man  
 whiche hewe of the bowes of the tree / The  
 wulf thenne beganne to syghe sore / and to make  
 grete sorowe of his euylle fortune / and sayd / Ha  
 Jupiter how many euyls haue I had and suffred  
 this daye / but wel I presume and knowe / that  
 hit is by me and by myn owne cause / and by  
 my

my proud thoughte / For the daye in the morn-  
 ynge I fond a sak ful of talowe / the whiche I  
 dayned not but only smelle hit. And after I  
 fond a grete pycece of bakon / the whiche I wold  
 neuer ete for drede of grete thurst and for  
 my folyfhe thought / And therefore yf euylle is  
 fyn happed to me it is wel bestowed and em-  
 ployed / My fader was neuer medecyn ne leche /  
 and also I haue not studyed and lerned in the  
 scyence of medycyn or phisyke / therfore if it  
 happeth euylle to me / whanne I wold drawe  
 the thorne oute of the mares fote it is wel em-  
 ployed / ¶ Item my fader was neuer neyther  
 patryarke ne Biffhop / and also I was neuer  
 lettred / and yet I presumed / and toke on me  
 for to sacryfyce and to fynge before the goddes /  
 faynyng my self to be a prelate / but after my  
 deferte I was wel rewarded / ¶ Item my fader  
 was no legist ne neuer knewe the lawes / ne also  
 man of Justyce / and to gyue sentence of a plee /  
 I wold entremete me / and fayned my self grete  
 Justycer / but I knewe neyther / a / ne / b /  
 ¶ And yf therfore euylle is come to me / it  
 is of me as of ryght it shold be / O Jupyter I  
 am worthy of gretter punycyon whanne I haue  
 offended in so many maners / sende thow now to  
 me from thyn hyghe throne a swerd or other  
 vepn /

vepen / wherwith I maye strongly punyſhe and  
bete me by grete penaunce / For wel worthy I  
am to receyue a gretter deſcipline / And the  
good man whiche was vpon the tree / herkened  
alle theſe wordes and deuyses / and ſayd no  
word / ¶ And whanne the wulf had ſynyſhed  
alle his ſyghes and complayntes / the good man  
toke his axe / wherwith he had kytte away the  
dede braunches fro the tre / and caſt it vpon the  
wulf / and it felle vpon his neck in ſuche maner  
that the wulf torned vpfodoun the feet vpward  
and laye as had ben dede / And whan the wulf  
myght releue and dreſſe hym ſelf / he loked and  
byheld vpward to the heuen / and beganne thus  
to crye / Ha Jupiter I ſee now wel that thou  
haſt herd and enhaunced my prayer / and thenne  
he perceyued the man whiche was vpon the tree /  
& wel wende that he had ben Jupiter / And  
thenne with alle his myght he fledde towards  
the foreſt fore wounded / and rendred hym ſelf  
to humylyte / and more meke and humble he  
was afterwards than euer before he had ben  
ſyers ne prowde / ¶ And by this fable men  
may knowe and ſee that moche reſteth to be  
done of that / that a foole thynketh / And hit  
ſheweth to vs / that whan ſomme good cometh  
to ſomme / it ought not to be reſuſed / For it  
maye

maye not ben recouerd as men wyll / And also  
it sheweth / hou none ought to auaunte hym to  
doo a thyng whiche he can not doo / but ther-  
fore euery man ought to gouerne and rewle  
hym felf after his estate and faculte /



¶ The xj fable is of the enuyous dogge /



one ought not to haue enuye of  
good of other / As it appiereth  
by this fable / Of a dogge whiche  
was enuyous / and that somtyme  
was within a stable of oxen / the  
whiche was ful of heye / This dogge kept the  
oxen that they shold not entre in to theyr stable /  
and that they shold not ete of the sayd heye / And  
thenne the oxen sayd to hym / thow arte wel  
peruers and euylle to haue enuye of the good /  
the whiche is to vs nedefull and prouffitable /  
and thow hast of hit nought to doo / for thy  
kynde is not to ete no heye / And thus he dyd of  
a grete bone / the whiche he held at his mouthe /  
and wold not leue hit by cause and for enuye of  
another dogge / whiche was therby / And ther-  
fore kepe the wel fro the company or fellowship  
of an enuyous body / For to haue to doo with  
hym hit is moche peryllous and dyslycyle / As  
to vs is wel shewen by Lucyfer

¶ The xij fable is of the wulf and of the  
hongry dogge /



Uche supposen somtyme wyne that  
lesen / As hit appiereth by this  
Fable / For hit is sayd comunly  
that as moche despendeth the  
nygard as the large / As hit ap-  
piereth by this fable of a man whiche had a grete  
herd of sheep / And also he had a dogge for to  
kepe them fro the wulues / To this dogge he gaf  
no mete / for the grete auaryce whiche held hym /  
And therefore the wulf on a daye came to the  
dogge and demaunded of hym the rayson / why  
he was soo lene / and sayd to hym / I see wel  
that thou dyest for honger / by cause that thy  
mayster gyueth the no mete / by his grete scar-  
cyte / but yf thou wylt byleue me I shalle gyue  
to the good counceyll / And the dogge sayd to  
hym / Certaynly I myster gretely of good coun-  
ceyll / ¶ Thenne the wulf sayd to hym / This  
shalt thou doo / Lete me take a lambe / And  
whanne I shalle haue hit I shalle renne away /  
and whanne thou shalt see me renne / make  
thenne

thenne semblant to renne after me / and lete thy  
self falle faynyng that thou canst not ouertake  
me / for lack and fawte of mete / whiche maketh  
the so feble / And thus whanne the sheepeerd  
thalle see that thou mayst not haue the lambe fro  
me by cause of the grete febleneffe and debylyte  
of thy lene body / he shell telle to thy lord that  
thow myghtest not socoure the lambe / by cause  
that thou arte so fore ahongryd / and by this  
means thou shalt haue mete thy bely ful / ¶ The  
dogge thenne acorded this with the wulf / and  
eche of them made and dyde as aboue is sayd /  
¶ And whane the sheep herd sawe the dogge  
falle / suposed wel / that longer was a cause of  
it Forthe whiche cause whanne one of the  
sheep herdes came home he told hit to his mayf-  
ter / And whan the mayster vnderstood hit / he  
sayd as a man wroth for shame / I wyll that  
fro hens forthon he haue breed ynough / ¶ And  
thenne euery daye the sayd dogge hadde soppes  
of brede / and of drye breed he hadde ynough /  
¶ Thenne the dogge toke strengthe / and vygour  
ageyne / ¶ It happed within a lytyl whyle after /  
that the wulf came ageyne to the dogge / and sayd  
to hym / I perceyue wel / that I gaf to the good  
counceylle / And the dogge sayd to the wulf /  
My broder thou sayst soothe / wherfore I thanke  
the moche / For of hit I hadde grete nede /  
¶ And

¶ And thenne the wulf sayd to hym / yf thou  
wylt I shall gyue to the yet better counceyll /  
And the dogge answerd hym with ryght a good  
wylle I shalle here hit / And yf hit be good I  
shalle do after hit / ¶ Thenne sayd the wulf to  
hym Lete me take yet another lambe / and doo  
thy dylygence for to haue hit fro me / and to  
byte me / and I shalle ouerthrowe the thy feet  
vpward / as he that hath no puyssaunce ne  
strenght withoute hurtyng of thy self / byleue  
me hardly / and wel hit shalle happe to the /  
And whanne thy maysters seruants shalle haue  
sene thy dylygence / they shal shewen hit to thy  
mayster how that thou shal kepe ful wel his  
folde / yf thou be wel nourysht / ¶ And  
thenne the dogge answerd to the wulf that he  
was contente / And as hit was sayd / ryght so  
hit was done / and bothe of them maad good  
dylygence The wulf bere awaye the lambe /  
and the dogge renne after hym / and ouertook  
hym / & bote hym fayntly / And the wulf ouer-  
threwe the dogge vpfodoune to the ground /  
And whan the sheepherdes sawe gyue suche  
strokes amonge the dogge & the Wulf / sayd  
Certaynly we haue a good dogge / we muste telle  
his dylygence to our mayster / and soo they dyd /  
& how he bote the wulf / and how he was ouer-  
throwen / And yet sayd Certaynly yf he hadde  
hadde

hadde euer mete ynough / the wulf had not  
borne away the lambe / Thenne the lord com-  
maunded to gyue hym plente of mete / wherof  
the dogge took ageyne al firengthe and vertue /  
And within a whyle after the wulf came ageyne  
to the dogge / and sayd to hym in this manere /  
My broder haue I not gyuen to the good coun-  
ceyll / And thenne the dogge anſuerd to hym /  
Certaynly ye / wherof I thanke yow / And the  
wulf sayd to the dogge / I praye the my broder  
and my good frend that thou wylt yet gyue  
another lambe / and the dogge sayd to hym /  
Certaynly my broder / wel hit maye ſuffiſie the  
to haue had tweyne of them / ¶ Thenne ſayd  
the wulf to the dogge / ¶ At the left waye I  
maye haue one for my labour and fallarye / That  
ſhalt thou not haue ſayd the dogge / Haſt thou  
not had good fallarye for to haue hadde two  
lambes oute of my mayſters herd / ¶ And the  
wulf anſuerd to hym ageyne / My brother gyue  
hit me yf hit pleaſe the / ¶ And after ſayd the  
dogge to hym / Nay I wyll not / And yf thou  
takeſt hit ageynſte my wyll / I promytte and  
warne the / that neuer after tyme thou ſhalt  
ete none / And thenne the wulf ſayd to hym /  
Allas my broder I deye for hunger / Counceyll  
me for goddys loue what I ſhalle doo / And the  
dogge ſayd to hym / I ſhal counceyll the wel a  
walle

walle of my mayfters celer is fallen doune / go  
thyder this nyght and entre in hit / and there  
thow mayft both ete and drynke after thy play-  
fyr / For bothe breed fleſhe and wyn ſhalt thou  
fynde at plente there within / And thenne the  
wulf ſayd to hym / Allas my broder / beware  
wel thenne / that thou accuſe ne deceyue me  
not / And the dogge anſuerd / I waraunt the /  
but doo thy faythe ſoo prynely / that none of my  
felawes knowe not of hit / ¶ And the wulf  
came at the nyght / and entryd in to the celer /  
and / ete and dranke at his playfyr / In ſo  
moche that he wexed dronke And whanne he  
hadde dronke ſoo moche / that he was dronke /  
He ſayd to hym ſelf / whanne the vylaynes ben  
fylled wyth metes / and that they ben dronke /  
they ſynge theyr ſonges / and I wherfore ſhold  
I not ſynge / ¶ And thenne he beganne to crye  
and to howle / And the dogges herd the voys of  
hym wherfore they beganne to barke and to  
howle / And the ſeruaunts whiche herd them  
ſayd / It is the wulf / whiche is entryd within  
the celer / And thenne they al to gyder wenten  
thyder / and kylled the wulf / And therfore  
more deſpendeth the nygard than the large /  
For auaryce was neuer good / For many one  
ben whiche dare not ete ne drynke as nature  
requyreth / But neuertheles euery one oughte  
to

to use and lyue prudently of all suche goodes  
as god sendeth to hym / This fable also sheweth  
to vs / that none ought to do ageynste his kynde /  
as of the wulf whiche wexed dronke / for the  
whiche cause he was slayne

¶ The xiiij fable maketh menegon of the fader  
and of his thre children



He is not wyse / whiche for to haue  
vanyte and his plesyr taketh debate  
or stryf / As hit appiereth by this  
fable / Of a man whiche hadde  
thre children / and at the houre  
of his dethe he byquethed / and gaf to them his  
herytage or lyuehode / that is to wete a grete  
pere tree / a gote & a mylle / ¶ And whanne  
the fader was deed / the bretheren assembled  
them thre to gyder / and wente before the Juge  
for to parte their lyuehode / and sayd to the  
Juge / My lord the Juge / Oure fader is dede  
whiche hath byquethed to vs thre bretheren al  
his herytage and as moche of hit shold haue  
the one as the other And thenne the Juge  
demaunded / what was theyr lyuehode / And  
they answerd a pere tree / a gote and a mylle /  
And thenne the Juge sayd to them / that they  
shold sette and make partyes egal of your lyue-  
lede / And the one to haue as moche of hit as  
the other / hit is a thyng moche dyffycyle to  
doo / but to your aduys how shold ye parte it /  
And



And thenne the eldest of the three bretheren  
spake and sayd / I shalle take fro the pere tree  
alle that is croked and vpright / And the second  
sayd / I shalle take fro the pere tree alle that is  
grene and drye / And the thyrd sayd I shalle  
haue alle the rote / the pulle or masse and alle  
the branches of the pere tree / ¶ And thenne  
the Juge sayd to them / He that thenne shalle  
haue the most parte of the tree / lete hym be  
Juge / For I ne none other may know ne  
vnderstande who shalle haue the more or lesse  
parte / And therefore he that can or shalle proue  
more openly / that he hath the most parte shal  
be lord of the tree / ¶ And after the Juge de-  
maunded of them / how that theyr fader had  
deuyfied to them the gote / And they sayd to  
hym / he that shalle make the fayrest prayer and  
request must haue the gote / And thene the  
fyrste broder made his request / and sayd in this  
manere / wold god that the goot were now soo  
grete that the myght drynke alle the water  
whiche is vnder the cope of heuen / And that  
whanne she hadde dronken it / she shold yet be  
fore thursty ¶ The second sayd / I suppose that  
the gote shalle be myn / For a fayrer demaunde  
or request than thyn is I shalle now make / ¶ I  
wold / that alle the hempe / and alle the Flaxe  
and alle the wulle of the worlde were made in

one

one threed alone / And that the Gote were so  
grete / that with that fame threde men myght  
not bynde one of his legges / ¶ Thenne sayd  
thirdd / yet shalle be myn the gote / ¶ For I  
wolde / that he were soo grete / that yf an Egle  
were at the vppermost of the heuen / he myght  
occupye and haue thenne as moche place as the  
Egle myght loke and see in hyght / in lengthe and  
in breed / ¶ And thenne the Juge sayde to them  
thre / who is he of yow thre / that hath maade the  
fayrest prayer / Certaynly I nor none other canne  
not faye ne gyue the Jugement / And therfore  
the goote shalle be bylongynge to hym that of  
hit shalle say the trouthe ¶ And the Mylle how  
was hit deuyfed by your Fader for to be parted  
amonge yow thre / ¶ And they ansuerde and  
sayde to the Juge / He that shalle be moost lyer /  
mooste euylle and most slowe ought to haue hit /  
¶ Thenne say the eldest sone / I am moost flow-  
full / For many yeres I haue dwellyd in a grete  
hous / and laye vnder the conduytes of the fame /  
oute of the whiche felle vpon me alle the fowle  
waters / as pyffe / dyffe water / and alle other  
fylthe that wonderly stanke / In so moche that  
al my fleshe was roten therof / and myn eyen  
al blynd / and the durt vnder my back was a foot  
hyghe / And yet by my grete flouthe I hadde  
leuer to abyde there / than to tourne me / and  
haue lyfte me vp ¶ The

¶ The second sayd / I suppose wel / that the mylle shalle be myn / For yf I had fasted twenty yere / And yf I hadde come to a table couerd of al maner of precious and delyate metes / therof I myght wel ete yf I wold take of the best / I am so slouthfull that I maye not ete Withoute one shold putte the mete in to my mouthe /

¶ And the thyrde sayd / the mylle shalle be myn / For I am yet a gretter lyar and more slouthfull / than ony of yow bothe / For yf I hadde ben athurst vnto the dethe / And yf I found thenne my self within a fayre water into the neck / I wold rather deye / than to meue ones my heed for to drynke therof only one drop /

¶ Thenne sayd the Juge to them / Ye wote not what ye saye / For I nor none other maye not wel vnderstande yow / But the cause I remytte and put amonge yow thre / And thus they wente withoute any sentence / For to folysh the demaunde behoueth a folysh anfuere

¶ And therefore they ben fooles that wylle plete suche vanyte one ageynste other / And many one ben fallen therfore in grete pouerte / For for a lytyl thyng ought to be made a lytyl plee

¶ The xiiij fable is of the wulf and of the foxe



One maye not be mayster without  
 he haue be fyrste a disciple / As  
 hit appiereth by this Fable / Of  
 a Foxe whiche came toward a  
 wulf / and sayd to hym / My lord  
 I praye yow that ye wylle be my godsep /  
 And the wulf anfuerd / I am content / And the  
 foxe toke to hym his sone prayenge hym that to  
 his sone he wold shewe and lerne good doctryne /  
 the whiche the wulf tooke / and wente with hym  
 vpon a montayne / And thenne he sayd to the  
 lytyll foxe whanne the beestes shalle come to the  
 feldes calle me / And the foxe wente and sawe  
 fro the top of the hylle / how the beestes were  
 comynge to the feldes / and forth with he wente  
 and called his godfader / and sayd My godfader  
 the beestes comen in to the feldes / And the wulf  
 demaunded of hym / what bestes are they / and  
 the fox anfuerd / they be bothe kyne & swyn to  
 gyder / Wel sayd the wulf / I gyue no force for  
 them / lete them go for the dogges ben with  
 them / And soone after the foxe dyd loke on  
 another syde / and perceyued the mare whiche  
 wente

wente to the feldeſ / and he wente to his god-  
fader & ſayd / godfader the mare is goo to the  
feldeſ / & the wulf demaunded of hym where  
aboute is ſhe / And the foxe anſwered ſhe is by  
the foreſt / And the wulf ſayd / Now go we to  
dyner / And the wulf with his godſone entryd  
in to the wood / and came to the mare / ¶ The  
wulf perceyued wel and ſawe a yonge colt /  
whiche was by his moder / the wulf tooke hym  
by the neck with his teethe and drewe hit within  
the wood / and ete & deuoured hym bytwene  
them bothe / ¶ And whan they had wel eten  
the godſon ſayd to his godfader / My godfader  
I commaunde yow to god and moche I thanke  
yow your doctrine / For wel ye haue taught me /  
in ſo moche / that now I am a grete clerke / &  
now I wylle goo toward my moder / And thenne  
the wulf ſayd to his godſon / My godſone yf  
thow goſt away / thow ſhalt repente the ther-  
fore / For thow haſt not yet wel ſtudyed / and  
knoweſt not yet the Sylogyſmes / ¶ Ha my  
godfader ſayd the Foxe / I knowe wel al / ¶ And  
the wulf ſayd to hym / Sythe thow wylt goo /  
to god I commaunde the /

¶ And whanne the Foxe was come toward  
his moder / ſhe ſayd to hym / Certaynly / thow  
haſt not yet ſtudyed ynough / ¶ And he thenne  
ſayd to her / Moder I am ſoo grete a clerke that

I

I can cast the deuylle fro the clyf/ Lete vs go  
chace/ and ye shalle see yf I haue lerned ought  
or not/ ¶ And the yong foxe wold haue done  
as his godfader the wulf dede/ and said to his  
moder/ make good watche/ ¶ And whanne  
the beestes shalle come to the feld/ lete me  
haue therof knowlege/ And his moder sayd/  
wel my sone so shalle I doo/ She maade good  
watche/ And whanne she sawe that bothe kyne  
and swyne wente to the feldes/ she sayd thenne  
to hym My sone the kyne and the swyn to gyder  
ben in the feldes/ And he anfuerd/ My moder  
of them I retche not/ lete them goo/ for the  
dogges kepe them wel/ ¶ And within a short  
whyle after/ the moder sawe come the mare  
nyghe vnto a wode/ and wente/ and sayd to  
her sone/ My sone the mare is nyghe the wood  
And he anfuerd/ My moder these ben good  
tydynges/ Abyde ye here/ For I goo to fetch  
our dyner/ and wente and entred in to the  
Wode/ And after wold doo as his godfader  
dyd before/ and wente and tooke the mare by  
the neck/ But the mare tooke hym with her  
teeth/ and bare hym to the sheepherd And  
the moder cryed from the top of the hylle/  
My sone lete goo the mare/ and come hyder  
ageyne/ but he myght not/ For the mare  
held hym fast with her teethe/ ¶ And as the  
sheepherde

sheepherde came for to kylle hym / the moder  
cryed and sayd wepynge / Allas my sone thow  
dydest not lerne wel / And hast ben to lytel  
a whyle atte schole / wherfore thow must now  
deye myserably / And the sheepherdes took and  
flewe hym / For none ought to say hym self  
mayster withoute that he haue fyrst studyed /  
For some wene to be a grete clerke / that can  
nothyng of clergye /

¶ The xv fable is of the dogge / of the wulf and  
of the whether



Rete folye is to a fool that hath no  
myght / that wylle begyle another  
stronger thā hym self / as reher-  
ceth this fable of a fader of  
famylle whiche had a grete herd  
or flock of sheep / and had a grete dogge for to  
kepe them which was wel stronge / And of his  
voys all the wolues were aferd wherfore the  
sheepherd slepte more surely / but it happed /  
that this dogge for his grete age deyde / wher-  
fore the sheepherdes were fore troubled and  
wrothe / and sayd one to other / we shal no  
more slepe at oure ease by cause that our dogge  
is dede / for the wulues shal now come and  
ete our sheep / ¶ And thenne a grete wether  
fyers and prowde / whiche herd alle these wordes  
came to them and sayd / I shalle gyue yow good  
counceyll / Shaue me / and put on me the  
skynne of the dogge And whanne the wulues  
shal see me / they shalle haue grete fere of me /  
¶ And whanne the wulues came and sawe the  
wether clothed with the skynne of the dogge /  
they



they beganne all to flee / and ranne away / ¶ It  
happd on a day that a wulf whiche was fore  
hongry / came and toke a lambe / and after ran  
away therwith / ¶ And thenne the sayd wether  
ranne after hym / And the wulf whiche supposd  
that it had ben the dogge shote thryes by the  
waye for the grete fere that he had / And ranne  
euer as fast as he coude / and the wether also  
ranne after hym withoute cesse / tyl that he  
ranne thurgh a bushe full of sharp thornes / the  
whiche thornes rente and brake alle the dogges  
skynne / whiche was on hym / And as the wulf  
loked and sawe behynde hym / beyng moche  
doubtous of his dethe / sawe and perceyued alle  
the decepcion and falshede of the wether / And  
forthwith retorned ageynste hym / and demaunded  
of hym / what beest arte thou / And the wether  
ansuerd to hym in this maner / My lord I am a  
wether whiche playeth with the / And the wulf  
sayd / Ha mayster ought ye to playe with your  
mayster and with your lord / thou hast made me  
so fore aferd / that by the waye as I ranne before  
the / I dyte shyte thre grete toordes / And thene  
the wulf ledde hym unto the place where as he  
had shyte / sayenge thus to hym / loke hyther /  
callest thou this a playe / I take hit not for playe /  
For now I shalle shewe to the / how thou ought-  
est not to playe so with thy lord / And thenne  
the

the wulf took and kylled hym / and deuoured  
and ete hym / ¶ And therfore he that is wyfe  
musfe take good hede / how he playeth with  
hym whiche is wyfer / more fage / and more  
ftronge / than hym felf is /

¶ The xvj fable maketh menegon of the man / of  
the lyon & of his sone



Hath that reffuseth the good doctryne  
of his fader / yf euyl hadde cometh  
to hym / it is but ryght / As to vs  
reherceth this fable of a labourer /  
whiche somtyme lyued in a deserte  
of his cultuyunge and laboure / In this deserte  
was a lyon / whiche wasted and destroyed all  
the fede / which every daye the sayd labourer  
sewed / and also this lyon destroyed his trees /  
And by cause that he bare and dyd to hym so  
grete harne and dommage / he made an hedge /  
to the whiche he putte and sette cordes and  
nettes for to take lyon / And ones as this lyon  
came for to ete corne he entried within a nette /  
& was taken / And thenne the good man came  
thyder / and bete and smote hym so wonderly /  
that vnnethe he myght scape fro deth / And by  
cause that the lyon sawe that he myght not  
escape the subtylte of the man / he took his  
lytyl lyon / and went to dwelle in another  
Regyon / and within a lytyl whyle after that  
the lyon was wel growen and was fyers &  
fyronge

stronge he demaunded of his fader / My fader  
be we of this Regyon / Nay sayd the fader /  
For we ben fledde away fro oure land / And  
thenne the lytyl lyon asked / wherfore / And  
the fader anfuerd to hym / For the subtylyte of  
the man / And the lytyl lyon demaunded of  
hym what man is that / And his fader sayd to  
hym / he is not soo grete ne so stronge as we  
be / but he is more subtyle and more Ingenyous /  
than we be / and thene sayd the sone to the  
fader / I shalle goo auenge me on hym And  
the grete lyon sayd to hym / goo not / For yf  
thow goost thyder thow shalt repente the ther-  
fore / and shalt doo lyke a sole And the sone  
anfuerd to his fader / Ha by my heed I shalle goo  
thyder / and shalle see what he can doo / And  
as he wente for to fynde the man / he mette an  
oxe within a medowe / and an hors whose back  
was al fleyen / and fore / to whome he said in  
this manere / who is he that hath ledde yow  
hyder / and that so hath so hurted yow / And  
they sayd to hym / It is the man / ¶ And  
thenne he sayd ageyne to them / Certaynly /  
here is a wonder thyng / I praye yow / that  
ye wylle shewe hym to me And they wente  
and shewed to hym the labourer / which ered  
the erthe / And the lyon forthwith and with-  
oute sayinge of ony moo wordes wente toward  
the

the man/ to whome he sayd in this maner/  
Ha man thou hast done ouer many euyls/  
bothe to me and to my Fader/ and in lyke  
wyfe to oure beefies/ Wherefore I telle the that  
to me thou shalt doo Iustyce/ And the man  
ansuerd to hym/ I promytte and warne the/  
that yf thou come nyghe me I shalle flee with  
this greete clubbe/ And after with this knyfe I  
shall flee the/ And the lyon sayd to hym/  
Come thenne before my fader/ and he as kynge  
shal doo to vs good Iustyce/ And thenne the  
man sayd to the lyon/ I am content/ yf that  
thou wylt swere to me/ that thou shalt not  
touche me/ tyll that we ben in the presence of  
thy fader/ And in lyke wyfe I shalle swere to  
the/ that I shal go with the vnto the presence  
of thy fader/ And thus the lyon and the man  
swered eche one to other/ and wente toward  
the grete lyon/ and the man begaune to goo  
by the way where as his cordes and nettes were  
dressed/ And as they wente/ the lyon lete hym  
self falle within a corde/ and by the feet he was  
take/ so that he myghte not farther goo/ And  
by cause he coude not goo he sayd to the man/  
O man I preye the that thou wilt helpe me/  
For I may no more goo/ And the man ansuerd  
to hym/ I am sworne to the that I shalle not  
touche the vnto the tyme that we ben before thy  
fader/

fader / And as the lyon supposyd to haue vnbound  
hym self for to scape / he fylle in to another nette  
And thenne the lyon beganne to crye after the  
man / sayenge to hym in this manere / O good  
man I praye the that thow wilt vnbynde me /  
And the man beganne to smyte hym vpon the  
hede / ¶ And thenne whanne the lyon sawe  
that he myght not scape / he sayd to the man /  
I praye the / that thow smyte me no more vpon  
the heed / but vpon myn erys / by cause that I  
wold not here the good counceylle of my fader /  
And thenne the man beganne to smyte hym at  
the herte and slewe hym / the whiche thyng  
happeth ofte to many children whiche ben  
hanged or by other maner executed and put to  
dethe / by cause that they wil not byleue the  
doctryne of theyr faders and moders / ne obeye  
to them by no wyse

¶ The xvi fable is of the knyght and of the  
seruaunt / the whiche fonde the Foxe /



Any ben that for theyr grete lesynges  
supposen to put vnder alle the  
world / but euer at last theyr le-  
synges ben knowen and many-  
fested / as hit appiereth by this  
fable of a knyght whiche somtyme wente with  
an archer of his thurgh the lande / And as they  
rode / they fonde a Fox And the knyght sayd  
to the archer in good sooth I see a grete Foxe /  
And the archer beganne to saye to his lord / My  
lord / merueylle ye therof / I haue ben in a Regyon  
where as the Foxes ben as grete as an oxe / And  
the knyght ansuerd In good sooth theyr skynnes  
were good for to make mantels with / yf skynners  
myght haue them / And as they were rydyng  
they felle in many wordes and deuyses / And  
thenne by cause the knyght perceyued wel the  
lesyng of his Archer / he beganne to make  
preyers and orysons to the goddes / for to make his  
Archer aserd / And sayd in this manere / O Jupiter  
god almyghty / ¶ I preye the / that this daye  
thow wylt kepe vs fro all lesynges / so that we may  
sauf

fauf passe thys flood and this grete Ryuer whiche  
is here before vs / and that we may surely come  
to oure hows / And whanne the Archer herd  
the prayer and oryson of his lord / he was moche  
abasshed ¶ And thenne the Archer demaunded  
of hym / my lord wherfore prayest thou now soo  
deuoutely / And the knyght anfuerd wost thou not  
wel that hit is wel knowen and manyfested / that  
we soone must passe a ryght grete Ryuer / And  
that he who on al this daye shalle haue made ony  
lesynge / yf he entre in hit / he shalle neuer come  
oute of hit ageyne / Of the whiche wordes the  
Archer was moche doubtous and dredeful / And  
as they had ryden a lytyl waye / they fond a lytyl  
Ryuer / wherfore the Archer demaunded of his  
lord / Is this the flood whiche we must passe / Nay  
sayd the knyght / For hit is wel gretter / O my  
lord I saye by cause that the foxe whiche ye sawe  
may wel haue swymmed and passed ouer this lytyl  
water / And the lord sayd / I care not therfore /  
¶ And after that they had ryden a lytyl ferther /  
the fond another lytyll Ryuer / And the Archer  
demaunded of hym / Is this the flood that ye spake  
of to me / Nay sayd he / For hit is gretter &  
more brode / And the Archer sayd ageyne to  
hym / My lord I say so / by cause that the foxe  
of the whiche I spake of to daye was not gretter  
than a calf / ¶ And thene the knyght herkyng  
the



the dyffymylacion of his archer / answerd not /  
 And soo they rode forthie so longe that they fond  
 yet another Ryuer And thenne the Archer  
 demaunded of his lord / Is this the same hit /  
 Nay sayd the knyght / but soone we shalle come  
 therto / O my lord I saye so by cause that the  
 Foxe wherof I spak to yow this daye / was not  
 gretter than a sheep / ¶ And when they had  
 ryden vnto euen tyme they fond a grete Ryuer  
 and of a grete brede / ¶ And whan tharcher  
 sawe hit / he began al to shake for fere / and de-  
 maunded of his lord / My lord is this the Ryuer /  
 Ye sayd the knyght / O my lord I ensure you on  
 my feythe / that the Foxe of the whiche I spake  
 to daye / was not gretter than the Foxe / whiche  
 we sawe to day / wherfore I knowlege and con-  
 fesse to yow my synne / ¶ And thenne the knyght  
 beganne to smyle / and sayd to his Archer in this  
 manere / Also this Ryuer is no wors than the  
 other whiche we sawe to fore and haue passed  
 thurgh them / And thenne the archer had grete  
 vergoyne and was shameful / by cause that he  
 myght no more couere his lesynge / And ther-  
 fore hit is fayre and good for to saye euer the  
 trouthe / and to be trewe bothe in speche and in  
 dede / For a lyer is euer begyled / and his le-  
 syng is knowen and manifested on hym to his  
 grete shame & dompage

¶ Here

¶ Here after folowen some Fables of Elope  
after the newe translacion / the whiche  
Fables ben not founden ne wroton  
in the bookes of the philo=  
sopher Romulus

¶ The fyrst fable is of the Egle and of the  
rauen



One ought to take on hym self to  
doo a thyng / whiche is peryllous  
without he fele hym self strong  
ynouȝ to doo hit / As reherceth  
this Fable / Of an Egle / whiche  
fleyng took a lambe / wherof the Rauē hadde  
grete enuy wherfor vpon another tyme as / the  
sayd rauē sawe a grete herd of sheep / by his  
grete enuy & pryde & by his grete outrage de-  
scended on them / And by suche fashon and  
manere smote a wether that his clowes abode to  
the flyes of hit / In soo moche that he coude  
not flee away / The sheep herd thenne came and  
brake and toke his wynges from hym / And after  
bare hym to his children to playe them with /  
And demaunded of hym / what byrd he was /  
And the Rauē answered to hym / I supposed to  
haue ben an Egle / And by my overwenyng I  
wende to haue take a lambe / as the egle dyd /  
but now I knowe wel that I am a Rauē / wher-  
fore the feble ought not in no wyse to compare  
hym

hym felf to the ftronge / For fomtyme when he  
fupposeth to doo more than he may / he falleth  
in to grete defhonour / as hit appiereth by this  
present Fable / Of a Rauē / whiche fupposen  
to haue ben as ftronge as the egle

**C** The second Fable is of the egle and of the  
wesel



One for what so euer myght that  
he haue / ought not to despreyse  
the other / As hit appiereth by  
this present fable of an Egle /  
whiche chaced somtyme after an  
hare And by cause that the hare myght not  
resyste ne withstande ageynst the egle / he de-  
maunded ayde and helpe of the wesel / the whiche  
tooke hym in her kepyng / And by cause that  
the egle sawe the wesel soo lytyl / he despreysed  
her / and before her toke the hare / wherof the  
wesel was wrothe / And therfore the wesell wente /  
and beheld the Egles nest whiche was vpon a  
hyghe tree / And whanne she sawe hit / the lytell  
wesell clymmed vpon a tree / and toke and cast  
doune to the ground the yonge egles wherfore  
they deyde / And for this cause was the Egle  
moche wrothe and angry / and after wente to the  
god Jupiter And prayd hym that he wold fynde  
hym a sure place where as he myght lye  
his egges and his lytyl chykynes / And Jupiter  
graunted hit and gaf hym suche a gyfte / that  
whan

whan the tyme of choldynge shold come / that  
 she shold make her yong Egles within his bosome /  
 And thenne whanne the wesel knewe this / she  
 gadred and assembled to gyder grete quantite of  
 ordure of fylthe / and therof made an hyghe hylle  
 for to lete her self falle fro the top of hit in to  
 the bosome of Jupiter / And whanne Jupiter  
 felte the stenche of the fylthe / he beganne to  
 shake his bosome / and both the wesel and the  
 egges of the egle felle doune to the erthe / And  
 thus were alle the egges broken and lost / And  
 whanne the Egel knewe hit / she made auowe /  
 that she shold neuer make none egles / tyll of  
 the wesel she were assuerd / And therefore none  
 how stronge and myghty that he be / ought not  
 despreyse somme other / For there is none soo  
 lytyl / but that somtyme he may lette and auenge  
 hym self / wherfore doo thou ne desplayfyr to  
 none / that desplayfyr come not to the

¶ The thyrddē fable is of the Foxe and of  
the gote



HE whiche is wyse and sage ought  
fyrst to lōke and behold the ende /  
or he begynneth the werke or  
dede / as hyer appiereth by this  
fable / Of a foxe & of a gote /  
that somtyme descended and wente doune in  
to a depe welle / for to drynke. And Whanne  
they had wel dronke / by cause that thei coude  
not come vpward ageyne / the Foxe sayd to the  
gote in this maner / my frend yf thou wylt helpe  
me / we shall sone ben bothe oute of this welle /  
For yf thou wylt sette thy two feet ageynst the  
walle / I shal wel lepe vpon the / & vpon thy  
hornes And thenne I shal lepe oute of this  
welle / ¶ And whanne I shalle be oute of hit /  
thou shalt take me by the handes / and I shal  
plucke and drawe the oute of the welle / And  
at this request the gote / acorded and ansuerd /  
I wyllē wel / And thene the gote lyfte vp his  
feet ageynst the walle / and the foxe dyd so  
moche by his malyce that he got out of the  
welle / And whan he was oute / he began to  
loke

loke on the gote / whiche was within the welle /  
 & thenne the gote sayd to hym / help me now  
 as thow hast promysed / And thene the foxe  
 beganne to lawhe and to sorne hym / and sayd  
 to hym / O mayster goote / yf thow haddeft be  
 wel wyfe with thy fayre berde / or euer thow  
 haddeft entryd in to the welle / thow sholdest  
 fyrst haue taken hede / how thow sholdest haue  
 comen oute of hit ageyne /

¶ And therfore he whiche is wyfe / yf he  
 wysely wylle gouerne hym self / ought to take  
 euer good hede to the ende of his werke



**C** The fourthe fable is of the catte and of  
the chyken.



**H**E whiche is fals of kynde / & hath  
begonne to deceyue some other /  
euer he wyl use his craft / As it  
appiereth by this present Fable  
of a kat whiche somtyme toke a  
chyken / the whiche he beganne strongly to  
blame / for to haue fonde somme cause that he  
myght ete hit / and sayd to hym in this manere /  
Come hyther thou chyken / thou dost none  
other good but crye alle the nyght / thou  
letest not the men slepe / And thenne the chyken  
ansuerd to hym / I doo hit for theyre grete  
prouffite / And ouer ageyne the catte sayd to  
hym / yet is there wel wors / For thou arte  
an inceste & lechour For thou knowest natu-  
relly both thy moder and thy doughter And  
thenne the chyken sayd to the cat / I doo hit  
by cause that my mayster maye haue egges for  
his etynge / And that hys mayster for his prou-  
ffyte gaf to hym bothe the moder and the  
doughter for to multiplye the egges / And  
thenne the catte sayd to hym / by my feythe  
godsep

godſep thow haſt excuſacions ynough / but  
neuertheſſe thow ſhalt paſſe thurgh my throte /  
for I ſuppoſe not to faſte this day for alle thy  
wordes / ¶ And thus is it of hym whiche is  
cuſtommed to lyue by rauyn / For he can not  
kepe ne abyſteyne hym ſelf fro hit / For alle  
the excuſacions that be leyd on hym.

¶ The v fable is of the Foxe and of the busshie.



Men ouzt not to demaude ne aske help of them that ben more accustomed to lette than to do good or prouffit / as it appereth by this fable of a fox which for to scape the peril to be taken wente vpon a thorne busshie / whiche hurted hym sore / And wepyng sayd to the busshie / I am come as to my refuge vnto the / and thow hast hurted me vnto the dethe / And thenne the busshie sayd to hym / thow hast erred / and wel thou hast begyled thy self / For thow supposest to haue taken me as thow arte custommed to take chekyns and hennes / ¶ And therfore men ought not to helpe them whiche ben acustomed to doo euylle / but men ought rather to lette them.

¶ The vij fable is of the man and of the god of  
the wodes



**O**F the euylle man som tyme prouffiteth  
some other / he doth hit not by  
his good wyll / but by force / As  
reherceth to vs this fable / Of a  
man whiche had in his hows an  
ydolle the whiche oftyme he adoured as his god /  
to whome ofte he prayed that he wold gyue to  
hym moche good And the more that he prayed  
hym / the more he faylled / And became pouere /  
wherfore the man was wel wrothe ageynst his  
ydolle / and took hit by the legges / and smote  
the hede of hit so strongly ageynst the walle / so  
that it brake in to many pyeces / Oute of the  
whiche ydolle yssued a ryght grete tresoure /  
wherof the man was ful gladde and Joyous /  
And thenne the man sayd to his ydolle / Now  
knowe I wel / that thou art wycked / euyl and  
peruers / For whanne I haue worshipped the /  
thou hast not holpen me / And now whanne I  
haue bete the / thou hast moche done for me /  
¶ And therfore the euylle man whanne he doth  
ony good / it is not of his good wyll / but by  
force

¶ The vij fable is of a fyfther



Alle thynges which ben done & made  
in theyr tyme & feason ben wel  
made / as by this present fable it  
appereth Of a fyfther whiche som-  
tyme touched his bagpype nyhe  
the Ryuer for to make the fyfthe to daunce /  
¶ And whan he sawe that for none songe that  
he coude pype / the fyfthes wold not daũse / As  
wroth dyd cast his nettes in to the Ryuer / & toke  
of fyfthe grete quantite / And whanne he had  
drawe oute his nettes oute of the water / the  
fyfthe beganne to lepe and to daũse / and thenne  
he sayd to them / Certaynly hit appiereth now  
wel / that ye be euylle beestes / For now whanne  
ye be taken / ye lepe and daunse / And whanne  
I pyped and played of my muse or bag pype ye  
dayned / ne wold not daunse / Therefore hit ap-  
piereth wel that the thynges whiche ben made  
in feason / ben wel made and done by reason

¶ The eyght fable is of the catte and of the rat



Hath which is wyse / and that ones  
 hath ben begyled / ought not to  
 truste more hym that hath begyled  
 hym As reherceth this Fable of a  
 catte which wente in to a hows /  
 where as many rats were / the whiche he dyd  
 ete eche one after other / ¶ And whanne the  
 rats perceyued the grete fyerfnes and crudelyte  
 of the catte / held a councyll to gyder where  
 as they determyned of one comyn wyll / that  
 they shold no more hold them ne come nor goo  
 on the lowe floore . wherfore one of them moost  
 auncyent profered and sayd to al the other suche  
 wordes / ¶ My bretheren and my frendes / ye  
 knowe wel / that we haue a grete enemye / whiche  
 is a grete persecutour ouer vs alle / to whome we  
 may not resyste / wherfor of nede we must hold  
 our self vppn the hyghe balkes / to thende that  
 he may not take vs / Of the whiche propofycion  
 or wordes the other rats were wel content and  
 apayd / and byleuyd this councyll / And whanne  
 the kat knewe the councyll of the rats / he  
 hynge hym self by his two feet behynd at a pynne  
 of

of yron whiche was flyked at a balke / feynynge  
 hym self to be dede / And whanne one of the  
 rats lokynge downward sawe the katte beganne  
 to lawhe and sayd to the cat / O my Frend yf  
 I supposed that thou were dede / I shold goo  
 doune / but wel I knowe the so fals & peruers /  
 that thou mayst wel haue hanged thy self / fayn-  
 ynge to be dede / wherfore I shall not goo doune /  
 And therefore he that hath ben ones begyled by  
 somme other / ought to kepe hym wel fro the  
 same

¶ The ix fable is of the labourer and of the  
pyelarge



He whiche is taken with the wicked  
and euyl ouzte to suffre payne  
and punycyon as they / As it  
appiereth by this fable / Of a la-  
bourer whiche somtyme dressyd  
and sette his gynnes and nettes for to take the  
ghees and the cranes / Whiche ete his corne / It  
happed thenne that ones amonge a grete meyny  
of ghees and cranes / he took a pyelarge / whiche  
prayd the labourer in this maner / I praye the  
lete me go / For I am neyther goos ne cranne  
nor I am not come hyther for to do the ony  
eylle / The labourer beganne thenne to lawhe /  
and sayd to the pyelarge / yf thow haddest not be  
in theyr felauship / thow haddest not entryd in to  
my nettes / ne haddest not be taken / And by  
cause that thow arte founde and taken with them /  
thow shalt be punysshed as they shalle be Ther-  
fore none ought to hold companye with the euylle  
with oute he wylle suffre the punycion of them  
whiche ben punysshed



**C** The tenth fable is of the child / whiche kepte  
the sheep



HE whiche is acustomed to make les-  
ynges / how be it that he saye  
trouthe / Yet men byleue hym  
not / As rehcereth this fable / Of  
a child whiche somtyme kepte  
sheep / the whiche cryed ofte withoute cause /  
sayenge / Allas for goddes loue socoure yow me /  
For the wulf wyll eate my sheep / And whanne  
the labourers that cultyued and ered the erthe  
aboute hym / herd his crye / they come to helpe  
hym / the whiche came so many tymes / and fond  
nothyng / And as they sawe that there were no  
wulues / they retorned to theyr labourrage / And  
the child dyd so many tymes for to playe hym /  
**C** It happed on a day that the wulf came / and  
the child cryed as he was acustomed to doo /  
And by cause that the labourers supposyd / that  
hit had not ben trouthe / abode styll at theyr  
laboure / wherfore the wulf dyd eate the sheep /  
For men bileue not lyghtly hym / whiche is  
knownen for a lyer

¶ The xj fable is of the ante and of the columbe



One ought to be slowful of the good  
 whiche he receyueth of other / As  
 reherveth this fable of an Ante /  
 whiche came to a fontayne for  
 to drynke / and as she wold haue  
 dronke she felle within the fontayn / vpon the  
 whiche was a columbe or douue / whiche seying  
 that the Ante shold haue ben drowned withoute  
 helpe / took a braunche of a tree / & cast it to  
 her for to saue her self / ¶ And the Ante wente  
 anone upon the braunche and saued her / ¶ And  
 anone after came a Fawkoner / whiche wold haue  
 take the douue / And thenne the Ante whiche  
 sawe that the Fawkoner dresyd his nettes came  
 to his foote / and soo fast pryked hit / that she  
 caused hym to smyte the erthe with his foote /  
 and therwithe made soo gret noyse / that the douue  
 herd hit / wherfore she flewhe awaye or the  
 gynne and nettes were al sette / ¶ And therefore  
 none ought to forgete the benyfyce whiche he  
 hath receyued of some other / for slowfulnesse is  
 a grete synne

¶ The xij fable is of the Bee and of Jupiter



Now the euyl which men wyshe to  
 other / cometh to hym whiche  
 wysbeth hit / as hit appiereth by  
 this fable / of a Bee whiche offred  
 and gaf to Jupyter a pyce of hony /  
 wherof Jupyter was inoche Joyous / And thenne  
 Jupyter sayd to the bee / demaunde of me what  
 thow wylt / and I shalle graunte and gyue hit to  
 the gladly / And thenne the Bee prayed hym in  
 this manere / God almyghty I pray the that thow  
 wylt gyue to me and graūte / that who so euer  
 shal come for to take away my hony / yf I pryke  
 hym / he may sodenly deye / And by cause that  
 Jupyter loued the humayn lygnage he sayd to  
 the Bee / Suffyse the / that who so euer shalle  
 goo to take thy hony / yf thow pryke or slynge  
 hym / Incontynent thow shalt deye / And thus  
 her prayer was tourned to her grete dommage /  
 For men ought not to demaude of god / but suche  
 thynges that ben good and honest

¶ The xiiij fable is of a carpenter



Nas moche as god is more propyce  
and benygne to the good and holy /  
moche more he punyssheth the  
wycked and euylle / As we may  
see by this fable / Of a carpenter  
whiche cutte wode vpon a Ryuer for to make a  
temple to the goddes / And as he cutte wode /  
his axe felle in the Ryuer / wherfore he beganne  
to wepe and to calle helpe of the goddes / And  
the god Mercurye for pyte appiered before hym  
And demaunded of hym wherfore he wepte / and  
shewed to hym an axe of gold / and demaunded  
of hym yf hit was the axe whiche he had lost /  
& he sayd nay / And after the god shewed to hym  
another axe of syluer / And semblably said nay  
And by cause that Mercurius sawe that he was  
good and trewe / he drewe his axe oute of the  
water / and took hit to hym with moche good  
that he gaf to hym / And the carpenter told thy-  
story to his felawes / of the whiche one of them  
came in to the same place for to cutte woode as  
his felawe dyd before / & lete falle his axe within  
the water / and beganne / to wepe and to de-  
maund

maund the helpe and ayde of the goddes / And  
 thenne Mercury appiered to fore hym / and shewed  
 to hym an axe of gold / and demaunded of hym  
 in suche manere / Is the fame hit that thou hast  
 lost / And he answered to Mercury / ye fayre fyre  
 and myghty god the fame is it / And Mercury  
 feynge the malyce of the vylayne gaf to hym  
 neyther the fame ne none other / and lefte hym  
 wepyng / For god whiche is good and Just re-  
 warded the good and trewe in this world / or  
 eche other after his deserte and punyssheth the  
 eyylle and Iniuste

¶ The xiiij fable is of a yonge theef and of his  
moder



He whiche is not chaftyfed at the  
begynnyng is euyl and peruers  
at the ende / As hit appiereth by  
this fable of a yonge child whiche  
of his yongthe beganne to ftele /  
and to be a theef / And the theftys whiche he  
maad / he broughte to his moder / and the moder  
toke them gladly / & in no wyse ſhe chaftyfed  
hym / And after that he had done many theftys /  
he was taken / and condempned to be hanged /  
And as men ledde hym to the Juſtyce / his moder  
folowed hym and wepte fore / And thenne the  
child prayed to the Juſtyce / that he myght ſaye  
one word to his moder / And as he approuched  
to her / made ſemblaunt to telle her ſomme  
wordes at her ere / & with his teeth he bote of  
her noſe / wherof the Juſtyce blamed hym / And  
he anſuerd in this manere / My lordes ye haue  
no cauſe to blame me therfore / For my moder  
is

is cause of my deth For yf she had wel chaftyfed  
me / I had not come to this shame and vergoyne /  
For who loueth wel / wel he chaftyfeth / And  
therfore chaftyse wel youre children / to thende /  
that ye falle not in to fuche a caas

¶ The xv fable is of the flee and of the man.



He that dothe euyl/ how be hit  
that the euylle be not grete  
men ought not to leue hym  
vnpunyshted/ As it appereth  
by this fable/ Of a man whiche  
took a flee whiche bote hym/ to whome the  
man sayd in this manere/ Fle why bytest thou  
me/ and letest me not slepe/ and the flee  
ansuerd It is my kynd to doo soo/ wherfore  
I praye the that thou wylt not put me to  
dethe/ And the man beganne to lawhe/ &  
sayd to the flee/ how be it/ that thou mayst  
not hurte me fore/ Neuertheless/ to the be-  
houeth not to prycke me/ wherfore thou shalt  
deye/ For men ought not to leue none euyl  
vnpunyshted how be hit that hit be not grete.



**C** The xvi fable is of the husband and of his  
two wyues.



Oo thyng is werse to the man than  
the woman / As it appereth by  
this fable / of a man of a meane  
age / whiche tooke two wyues /  
that is to wete an old / & one  
yong / whiche were both dwellyng in his hows /  
& by cause that the old desyred to haue his  
loue / she plucked the blak herys fro his hede  
and his berde / by cause he shold the more be lyke  
her / And the yonge woman at the other syde  
plucked

plucked and drewe oute alle the whyte herys /  
to the ende / that he shold seme the yonger /  
more gay and fayrer in her fyghte / And thus  
the good man abode withoute ony here on his  
hede And therfore hit is grete folye to the  
auncyent to wedde them self ageyne / For to  
them is better to be vnwedded / than to be  
euer in trouble with an euyl wyf / for the  
tyme in whiche they shold reste them / they  
put it to payne and to grete labour.

¶ The xviij fable is of the labourer and of his children.



He that laboureth and werketh continually maye not faylle to haue plente of goodes / as it appiereth by this present fable / Of a good man labourer / whiche all his lyf had laboured and wrought / and was ryche / and whan he shold deye / he sayd to his children / My children I muste now deye / and my tresour I haue leste in my vyne / And after that the good man was dede / his children whiche supposed that his tresour had ben in the vyne / dyd nothyng al day but delued hit / & it bare more fruyte than dyd before / ¶ For who trauaylleth wel / he hath euer brede ynough for to ete / And he that werketh not dyeth for honger.

¶ Here conyngthen the Fables of Escape

¶ And after foloweth the  
fables of Auyan

**C** The fyrst fable is of the old woman and of  
the wulf



En ought not by byleue on al maner  
spyrytes / As reherceth this fable  
of an old woman / which said to  
her child bicause that it wept /  
certeynly if thou wepst any more /  
I shal make the to be ete of the wulf / & the  
wulf heryng this old woman / abode styll to fore  
the yate / & supposyd to haue eten the old  
womans child / & by cause that the wulf had soo  
longe taryed there that he was hongry / he re-  
torned and went ageyne in to the wood / And  
the shewulf demaunded of hym / why hast thou  
not brought to me some mete / And the wulf  
ansuerd / by cause / that the old woman hath be-  
gyled me / the whiche had promysed to me to  
gyue to me her child for to haue ete hym / And  
at the laste I hadde hit not / And therefore men  
ought in no wyse to trust the woman / And he  
is wel a sole that setteth his hope and truste in a  
woman / And therefore truste them not / and thou  
shalt doo as the sage and wyse

¶ The second fable is of the tortoise and of the  
other byrdes



ME that enhaunceth hym self more  
than he oughte to do To hym  
oughte not to come noo good /  
As hit appiereth by this present  
fable / Of a tortoise / whiche said  
to the byrdes / yf ye lyft me vp wel hyghe fro  
the ground to the ayer I shalle shewe to yow  
grete plente of precius stones / And the Egle toke  
her and bare her so hyghe / that she myghte not  
see the erthe / And the Egle sayd to her shewe  
me now these precius stones that thou promysed  
to shewe to me / And by cause that the tortoise  
myght not see in the erthe / and that the Egle  
knewe wel that he was deceyued / thrested his  
clowes in to the tortoses bely / and kylled hit /  
For he that wylle haue and gete worship and  
glorye may not haue hit withoute grete labour /  
Therefore hit is better and more sure / to kepe  
hym lowely than to enhaunce hym self on hyghe /  
and after to deye shamefully and myserably /  
¶ For men sayn comynly / who so mounteth  
hyber / than he shold / he falleth lower than he  
wold

¶ The thyrd fable is of the two Creuyffes



HE which will teche and lerne some  
 other / ought first to corryge &  
 examyne hym self / as it appereth  
 by this fable of a creuyffe / which  
 wold haue chaftyfed her owne  
 doughter bicaufe that she wente not wel ryght /  
 And sayd to her in this manere / My doughter /  
 hit pleaseth me not that thou goost thus back-  
 ward / For euylle myght wel therof come to the /  
 And thenne the doughter sayd to her moder My  
 moder I shalle go ryght and forward with a good  
 will but ye must goo before for to shewe to me  
 the waye / But the moder coude not other wyse  
 goo / than after her kynd / wherfore her doughter  
 sayd unto her / My moder fyrst lerne your self  
 for to goo ryght and forward / and thenne ye  
 shalle teche me And therfore he that wylle teche  
 other / ought to shewe good ensample / For grete  
 shame is to the doctour whanne his owne coulpe  
 or faulte accuseth hym

**C** The fourthe fable is of the asse / and of the  
skynne of the Lyon



One ought not to gloryfye hym self  
of the goodes of other . as recyteth  
this fable of an asse whiche som-  
tyme fond the skynne of a lyon /  
the whiche he dyd & wered on  
hym / but he coude neuer hyde his eres ther-  
with / & when he was / as he supposed wel  
arayed with the sayd skynne / he ranne in to  
the forest / And whanne the wyld beestes sawe  
hym come / they were so ferdfull that they alle  
beganne

beganne to flee / For they wend / that it had be  
the lyon / And the mayster of the asse ferched and  
foughte his asse in euey place al aboute And  
as he had foughte longe / he thoughte that he  
wold go in to the forest for to see yf his asse  
were there / And as soone as he was entryd  
in to the forest / he mette with his asse arayed  
as before is sayd / but his mayster whiche had  
foughte hym longe sawe his erys / wherfore he  
knewe hym wel / and anone toke hym / and  
sayd in this manere / Ha a mayster asse / arte  
thow clothed with the skynne of the lyon / thow  
makest the bestes to be aferd / but yf they knewe  
the / as wel as I do / they shold haue no fere of  
the / but I ensure the / that wel I shalle bete the  
therfore / And thenne he toke fro hym the skynne  
of the lyon / and sayd to hym Lyon shalt thow be  
no more / but an asse shalt thow euer be / And  
his mayster tooke thenne a staf / and smote hym /  
foo that euer after he remembryd hym wel of  
hit / And therfore he whiche auaunceth hym  
felf of other mennes goodes is a very foole / For  
as men sayn comynly he is not wel arayed nor  
wel appoynted / whiche is clothed with others  
gowne / ne also it is not honeste to make large  
thonges of other mennes leder



**C** The v sable is of the frogge and of the Foxe



One ought to auance hym self to doo that whiche he he can not doo / As hit appiereth of a frogge / whiche somtyme yllued or came oute of a dyche / the whiche presumed to haue lepte vpon a hyghe mountayne / And whanne she was vpon the mountayne / she sayd to other beestes / I am a mayfrelle in medecyn / and canne gyue remedy to al manere of sekenes by myn arte / and subtylyte / and thalle rendre and brynge yow vp ageyne in good helthe / wherof some byleued her / And thenne the Foxe whiche perceyued the folyfthe byleue of the beestes / beganne to lawhe / and sayd to them / poure beestes / how may this fowle and venemous beest whiche is seke and pale of colour render and gyue to yow helthe / For the leche whiche wylle hele somme other / ought fyrste to hele hym self / For many one counterfayteth the leche / whiche can not a word of the scyence of medecyne / from the whiche god preferue and kepe vs

¶ The vij fable is of the two dogges



Hence that taketh within hym self vayne glorie of that thyng / by the whiche he shold humble hym self is a very fole / as hit appereth by this fable / of a fader of famylle / whiche had two dogges / of the whiche the one withoute any barkyng bote the folke / & the other dyd barke and bote not / And whan the fader of famyll perceyued the shrewdnes and malyce of the dogge that barkyd not he henge on his nek a belle / to the ende that men shold beware of hym / wherfore the dogge was ouer proud and fyers / and beganne to dyspreyse alle the other dogges / of the whiche one of the moost auncyent sayd to hym in this manere / O fole beest / now perceyue I wel thy folly and grete wodenesse to suppose / that this belle is gyuen to the for thyn owne deserte and meryte / but certaynly hit is not soo / For hit is taken to the for thy demerytes / and by cause of thy shrewdnesse / and grete treason / for to shewe / that thou arte fals and traytour / And therfore none oughte to be Joyeful and gladde of that thyng / wherof  
he

he oughte to be tryst and sorowful / as many soles  
done / whiche make Joye of theyr vyces and  
euyl dedes / for a moche sole were the thief  
whiche that men ledde for to be hanged / and  
that he had a cord of gold aboute his neck / yf  
he thold make Joye therof / how be hit that the  
corde were moche ryche and fayre

¶ The big fable is of the camel and of Jupiter



Uery creature ought to be content of that / that god hath gyuen to hym withoute to take their herytaunce of other / As reherceth this fable Of a camel whiche som tyme complayned hym to Jupiter of that the other beestes mocked hym / by cause that he was not of so grete beaute / as they were of / wherefore to Jupiter Instantly he prayd in fuche maner as foloweth / Fayr fyre and god / I requyre and praye that thou wylt gyue to me hornes / to thende that I maye be nomore mocked / Jupiter then beganne to lawhe / and in stede of hornes / he took fro hym his erys / and sayd / thou hast more good than hit behoueth thee to haue / And by cause that thou demaundest that / whiche thou oughtest not to haue I haue take fro the that whiche of ryght and kynd thou ouztest to haue / For none ought not to desyre more than he ought to haue / to the ende that he lese not that whiche he hath /

¶ The egypt fable is of the two felawes



En ought not to hold felawship with  
 hym / whiche is acustommed to  
 begyle other / As hit appiereth  
 by thys Fable / Of two felawes  
 whiche somtyme held felawship  
 to eche other for to goo bothe by montaynes and  
 valeyes And for to make better theyr vyage / they  
 were sworne eche one to the other / that none  
 of them bothe shold leue other vnto that the  
 tyme of dethe shold come and departe them /  
 And as they walked in a forest they mette with  
 a grete wyld bere / & bothe felaws ran sone away  
 for fere / of the whiche the one clymmed / vpon  
 a tree / And whan the other sawe that his felawe  
 had lefte hym leyd hym self on the erthe / and  
 fayned to be dede / And Incontynent the bere  
 came for to ete hym / but by cause the gallaunt  
 playd wel his game / the bere went forthe his  
 waye and touched hym not / And thēne his felawe  
 came doun fro the tree whiche sayd to hym / I  
 pray thee to telle me what the bere sayd to the /  
 For as me semeth he spake to the / and hath  
 shewed

shewed to the grete fygne or token of loue / And  
thenne his felawe sayd to hym / He taught me  
many fayre secretes / but emonge alle other  
thynges he sayd to me / that I shold neuer trust  
hym who ones hath deceyued me

¶ The ix fable maketh mencion of the two pottes



He poure ought not to take the Rychē as his felawe as it appiereth by this fable of two pottes / of the whiche the one was coper / and the other of erthe / the whiche pottes dyd mete to gyder within a Ryuer / ¶ & by cause that the erthen pot wente swyfter than dyd the coper potte / the pot of coper sayd to the pot of erthe / I praye the that we may goo to gyder / And the erthen potte answered and sayd to the coper pot / I wylle not go with the / For it shold happe to me as it happed to the glas and of the mortar For yf thou sholdest mete with me / thou sholdest breke and putte me in to pyeces / ¶ And therefore the poure is a fole that compareth and lykeneth hym self to the ryche and myghty / For better is to lyue in pouerte than to deye vylaynously and oppresyd of the ryche

**C** The x fable is of the lyon and of the boole



**I**T is not alweye tyme to auenge hym  
 felf of his enemye / As it appiereth  
 by this fable of a boole / whiche  
 somtyme fledde before a lyon /  
 And as the boole wold entre with-  
 in a cauerne for to saue hym / a gote wente  
 geynste hym for to kepe and lette hym that  
 he shold not entre in it / to whome the boole  
 sayd / It is not tyme now to auenge me on the /  
 for the lyon that chafeth me / but the tyme shalle  
 come that wel I shalle fynde the / For men  
 ought not to doo to hym self dommage for to  
 be auengyd of his enemy / but oughte to loke  
 for tyme and place couenable for to doo hit



**C** The xi fable is of the Ape and of his sone



o fowler a thyng is to the man / than  
 with his mouth to preyse hym self/  
 As this fable reherceth to vs / Of  
 Jupiter kynge of alle the world  
 whiche made alle the beestes and  
 alle the byrdes to be assembled to gyder for  
 to knowe theyr bounte / and also theyr kynd /  
 Emonge alle the whiche came the Ape / whiche  
 presented his sone to Jupiter / sayenge thus /  
 Fayre syre and myghty god / loke and see here  
 the fairest beest that euer thow createst in this  
 world / And Jupiter thenne beganne to lawhe /  
 and after sayd to hym / thow arte wel a fowle  
 beest to preyse soo thy self / For none oughte  
 to preyse hym self / but oughte to doo good  
 and vertuous werkes / wherof other may preyse  
 hym / for it is a shameful thyng to preyse hym  
 self

¶ The xij fable is of the crane and of the peacock



Or what vertue that any man hath /  
 none oughte to preysse hym self /  
 As hit apiereth by this fable / Of  
 a pecok / whiche somtyme made  
 a dyner to a crane / And And  
 whanne they had eten and dronken ynough /  
 they had grete wordes to gyder / wherfore the  
 pecok sayd to the crane / Thow hast not so fayre  
 a forme ne so fayre a fygyre as I haue / ne also  
 fayr fethers / ne soo resplendysshynge as I haue /  
 To whome the crane ansuerd / and sayd / It is  
 trouthe / Neuertheles thow hast not one good / ne  
 one so fayre a vertue as I haue / For how be hit  
 that I haue no so fayre fethers as thow hast /  
 yet can I flee better than thy self dost / For  
 with thy fayre fethers thow must euer abyde  
 on the erthe / and I may flee where someuer  
 hit pleaseth me / And thus euerychone ought to  
 haue suffysaunce and to be content of that / that  
 he hath / without auannycynge or praysynge of  
 hym self / and not to dyspreysse none other.

¶ The xiiij fable is of the hunter and of the tygre



Erse is the stroke of a tonge / than  
the stroke of a spere as hit ap-  
piereth by this fable / Of a hunter /  
whiche with his arowes hurted the  
wyld beeftes / in suche wyse that  
none scaped fro hym / to the whiche bestes a  
tygre fyers and hard sayd in this manere / Be  
not aserd / For I shalle kepe yow well / And as  
the Tygre came in to the wode / the hunter was  
hyd within a bushe / the whiche whan he sawe  
passe the tygre before the bushe / he shote at hym  
an arowe / and hytte hym on the thye / wher-  
fore the tygre was gretely abashed And wepyng  
and sore syghynge sayd to the other beeftes / I  
wote not from whens this cometh to me / ¶ And  
whanne the foxe sawe hym soo gretely abashed /  
al lawhyng sayd to hym / Ha a tygre / thow arte  
so myghty and so stronge / And thenne the tygre  
sayd to hym / My strengthe auaylled me not at  
that tyme / For none may kepe hym self fro  
treason And therefore some secrete is here / whiche  
I knewe not before But notwithstandynge this I  
maye wel conceyue / that there is no wors arowe /  
ne

ne that letteth more the man / than tharowe  
whiche is shotte fro the euyl tongue / For whanne  
som persone profereth or sayth som wordes in a  
felaufhip / of sommen a of honest & good lyf /  
alle the felaufhip supposeth that that whiche this  
euylle tongue hath sayd be trewe / be hit trewe  
or not / how be it that it be but lesynge / but  
notwithstandynge the good man shalle euer be  
wounded of that fame arowe / whiche wound  
shalle be Incurable / And yf hit were a stroke of  
a spere / hit myght be by the Cyrurgyen heled /  
but the stroke of an euylle tongue may not be  
heled / by cause that Incontinent as the word is  
profered or sayd / he that hath sayd hit / is no  
more mayster of hit / And for this cause the stroke  
of a tongue is Incurable and withoute guaryson

¶ The xiiij fable is of the four oxen



En oughte not to breke his feythe  
ageynste his good Frend / ne to  
leue his felawship / as hit appiereth  
by this fable / of four oxen whiche  
to gyder were in a fair medowe /

¶ And by cause that euer they were and kepte  
them to gyder / none other beest durste not assaile  
them / and also the lyon dradde them moche /  
the whiche lyon on a daye came to them / And  
by his deceyuable wordes thoughte for to begyle  
them / & to rause & take them the better /  
maade them to be separed eche one fro other /

¶ And whanne they were sepered / the lyon  
wente / and toke one of them / And whan the  
lyon wold haue strangled hym / the oxre sayd to  
hym / godsepe / He is a foole whiche byleueth  
fals and deceyuable wordes And leueth the felaw-  
ship of his good frende / For yf we had ben euer  
to gyder / thou haddest not taken me / And  
therfore he whiche is / and standeth wel sure /  
ought to kepe hym soo that he falle not / For  
to whiche is wel / meue not hym self

¶ The xv fable is of the busshē / and of the  
aubyer tree



One for his beaute ought not to  
despreyse some other / For som-  
tyme suche one is fayre that  
soone wexeth lothely and fowle /  
and to hyghe falleth vnto lowe /  
as it apperyth by this fable / Of a fayr tree  
whiche mocked and scorned a lytyl busshē /  
and sayd / ¶ Seest thou not / my fayre fourme  
and my fayre fygure / And that of me men  
and byldeth fayre edefyces as palays and castellis /  
galeyes & other shippes for to saylle on the see /  
And as he auauunced & preysed hym self thus /  
came there a labourer with his axe for to hewe  
and smyte hym to the ground / And as the  
labourer smote vpon the fayre tree / the busshē  
sayd / Certaynly my broder yf now thou were  
as lytel / as I am / men shold not hewe ne smyte  
the doune to the erthe / And therfore none  
oughte to reioyshe hym self of his worship /  
For suche is now in grete honour and worship /  
that hereafter shalle falle in to grete vytupere  
shame and dishonour

**C** The xvj fable is of the fyfther / and of the  
lytyl fyfthe



En ought not to leue that thyng  
whiche is sure & certayne / for  
hope to haue the vncertayn / as  
to vs reherceth this fable of a  
fyfther whiche with his lyne toke  
a lytyll fyfthe whiche sayd to hym / My frend I  
pray the / doo to me none euylle / ne putte  
me not to dethe / For now I am nought / for  
to be eten / but whanne I shalle be grete / yf  
thow come ageyne hyther / of me shalt thou  
mowe haue grete auaylle / For thenne I shalle  
goo with the good whyle / And the Fyfther  
sayd to the fyfthe . Syn I hold the now / thou  
shalt not scape fro me / For grete foly hit were  
to me for to seke the here another tyme / For  
men ought not to lete goo that / of what they  
be sure of / hopynge to haue afterwards that  
that they haue not and whiche is vncertayne.

¶ The xviij fable is of phebus / of the Auaricious /  
and of the enuyous



One oughte to doo harme or damage to somme other for to receyue or doo his owne damage / As hit appereth by this fable / Of Jupiter whiche sent phebus in to therthe for to haue al the knowlege of the thougt of men ¶ This phebus thenne mette with two men / of whiche the one was moche enuyous / And the other ryght couetous / Phebus demaunded of them what theyr thought was / We thynke said they to demaunde and aske of the grete yestes / To the which phebus anfuerd / Now demaunde that ye wylle / For all that that ye shalle demaunde of me / I thalle graunte hit / And of that / that the fyrst of yow thalle aske / the second haue the dowble parte / or as moche more ageyne / And thenne the auaricious sayd / I wyl that my felawe aske what he wyl fyrst wherof the enuyous was wel content / whiche sayd to Phebus Fayre fyre I praye the that I maye lese one of myn eyen / to thende that my felawe may lese al bothe his eyen / wherfor  
phebus



phebus beganne to lawhe whiche departed and wente ageyne vnto Jupiter / and told hym the grete malyce of the enuyous / whiche was Joyeful and glad of the harme and domage of an other / & how he was wel content to fulfille payne for to haue adommaged somme other

**C** The xviij fable is of the theef / and of the  
child wiche wepte



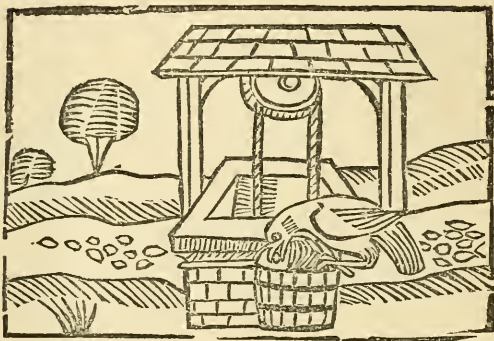
HE is a fole that putteth his good in jeopardy to lese it for to gete & haue som others good / as it appereth by this fable of a theef whiche fond a child wepyng be- syde a welle / of whom the theef dyde aske why he wepte / & the child answered to hym I wepe / by cause that I haue lete falle within this welle a loket of gold / & thenne the theef toke of his clothes / & sette them on the ground and wente doune in to the welle / And as he was doune the child toke his gowne & leste hym within the welle / And thus for couetyse to wyne / he lost his gowne / For suche supposen to wyne somtyme whiche lesen / And therefore none ought to wyshe that / that he hath not / to thende that he lefeth not that / that he hath / For of the thyng wrongfully and euylle gotten / the thyrd heyre shalle neuer be ppsseffour of hit.

**T**he xix fable is of the lyon and of the gote



He is wyse that can kepe hym self  
 from the wyly and fals / as hit  
 appereth by this fable / Of a lyon /  
 whiche ones mette with a gote /  
 whiche was vpon a montayne  
 And whanne the lyon sawe her / he sayd to her  
 in this manere / For to gyue to her occacion to  
 come doune fro the hylle / to thende that he  
 myght ete her / My suster why comest thou not  
 hyder on this fayre and grene medowe for to ete  
 of these fayre herbes or grasse / And the gote  
 ansuerd to hym / How be hit / that thou sayst  
 trouthe / Neuertheles thou sayst it not / neyther  
 for my wele ne for my prouffyte / but thou sayst  
 hit / by cause that thou woldest fayne ete and  
 deuoure me / but I truste not in thy fayre speche /  
 For many tymes I haue herd saye of my graut  
 moder / he that is wel / meue not hym self / For  
 he whiche is in a place wel sure / is wel a sole to  
 go fro hit / and to putte hym self in grete daunger  
 and perylle

¶ The xx fable was of the crowe whiche was a thurst



etter is crafte and subtylyte than  
force / As reherceth to vs this  
fable / Of a crowe whiche vpon  
a day came for to drynke oute  
of a boket / and by cause that she  
myght not reche to the water / she dyd fyll the  
boket ful of smal stones / in soo moche that the  
water came vpward / wherof she dranke thenne  
at her wylle / and playfye / And therefore hit  
appiereth wel / that wytte or fapyence is a moche  
fayr vertue For by fapyence or wytte / thou shalt  
mowe refyste to all faultes /

¶ The xxj fable is of the bylayne and of the  
yonge bole /



HE whiche is of euylle and shrewd  
kynd / with grete payne he may  
chasty h ym self / as it appereth by  
this fable / Of a vylayne / whiche  
had a yonge bole / the whiche he  
myght not bynd / by cause that euer he smote  
with his hornes / wherfore the vylayne cutte of  
his hornes / ¶ But yet whan he wold haue bound  
hym / the bole casted his fute fro hym / in suche  
wyse that he suffred noman to come nyghe hym /  
And whan the vylayne perceyued the malyce of  
the bole / he sayd to hym / I shalle chastyse the  
wel / For I shalle take the in to the bouchers  
handes / And thenne was the bole wel chastyfed /  
¶ And thus ought men to doo of the euylle /  
curlyd & rebelles / whiche doo no thyng but  
playe with dees and cardes and to ruffule / Such  
folke ought men to put in to the handes of the  
boucher for to lede them to the galhows / For  
better may no man chastyse them / For with  
grete payne may he be chastyfed / whiche fleeth  
alle good werkes ond alle good felauthip

¶ The xxiij fable is of the viator or palmer and  
of Satyre



En ought to beware & kepe hym  
self from hym whiche bereth both  
fyre and water / as reherceth to vs  
this Fable Of a pylgrym / whiche  
sontyme walked in the wynter /  
and wente thurgh a grete forest / ¶ And by  
cause that the snowe had couerd al the wayes /  
he wist ne knewe not whyther he wente /  
ageynste the whiche came a wodewose named  
Satyre by cause he sawe hym a cold / whiche  
aproched to the pylgrym and brought hym in  
to his pytte / And whan the pylgrym sawe  
hym / he hadde grete drede by cause that a  
wodewose is a monstre lyke to the man / as hit  
appiereth by his fygure / ¶ And as the wode-  
wose or Satyre ledde the pylgrym in to his  
pytte / the pylgrym dyd blowe within his handes  
for to chauffe them / For he was fore cold /  
And thenne the wodewose gaf to hym hote water  
to drynke / ¶ And whan the pylgrym wold  
haue dronken hit / he beganne to blowe in hit /  
And the wodewose demaunded of hym / why  
he

he dyd blowe in hit / And the pylgrym sayd to  
hym / I blowe in hit / for to haue it somewhat  
more cold than hit is / The wodewose thenne  
sayd to hym / Thy felauship is not good to me /  
by cause that thou bereft bothe the fyre and the  
water in thy mouthe / therefore go hens fro my  
pyt and neuer retorne ageyne / For the felauship  
of the man whiche hath two tongues is nought /  
And the man wiche is wyse ought to flee the  
felauship of flaterers / For by flaterynge & adu-  
lacion many haue ben begyled and deceyued

¶ The xxiij fable is of the oxe and of the rat



He lordes ought to loue their subgettis / For he whiche is hated of his tenaunts and subgets / is not lord of his land / as hit appereth by this Fable / Of an oxe / whiche somtyme was within a stable / and as the oxe on a tyme wold haue slepte fayne / a rat came / whiche bote the oxe by the thyes / And as the oxe wold haue smyten hym / he ran awaye into his hole / And thenne the oxe beganne to menace the rat / And the ratte sayd to hym / I am not aferd of the And yf thow arte grete / thy parentes ben cause therof and not thy self / And therefore the stronge ought not to despeyse the feble / but ought to loue hym as the chyef or hede ought to loue his lymmes / For he that loueth not / oughte not to be loued / And therefore the lord must loue his subgettys / yf of them he wylle be loued



¶ The xxiij fable is of the goos and of her lord



ME that ouer ladeth hym self/ is  
 euylle strayned/ As this fable  
 sayeth/ of a man/ whiche had  
 a goos/ that leyd euery day an  
 egge of gold/ The man of  
 auaryce or couetousnes commaunded and bad  
 to her/ that euery daye she shold leye two  
 egges/ And she sayd to hym/ Certaynly/ my  
 mayster I maye not/ wherfore the man was  
 wrothe with her/ and slewe her/ wherfore he  
 lost that same grete good/ of the whiche dede  
 he was moche sorowful and wrothe/ how be  
 it that it was not tyme to shette the stable  
 whan the horses ben losse/ & gone/ And he  
 is not wyse whiche does such a thyng/ wherof  
 he shalle repente hym after ward/ ne healso/  
 whiche doth his owne dommage for to auenge  
 hym self on somme other/ For by cause that  
 he supposeth to wyne al/ he leseth all that  
 he hath.

¶ The xxv fable is of the ape and of his two children



E that somtyme men despreyfen /  
 may wel helpe somme other / as  
 hit appereth by this Fable of an  
 Ape / whiche had two children /  
 of the whiche he hated the one /  
 & loued the other / whiche he toke in his armes /  
 and with hym fled before the dogges / And  
 whanne the other sawe / that his moder lefte  
 hym behynde / he ranne and lepte on her back /  
 And by cause that the lytyl ape whiche the she  
 ape held in her armes empeched her to flee /  
 she lete hit falle to the erthe / And the other  
 whiche the moder hated held fast and was  
 faued / the whiche from thens forthon kyssed  
 and embraced his moder / And And she thenne  
 beganne to loue hym wherfore many tymes  
 it happeth / that that thyng whiche is des-  
 preysed / is better than that thyng whiche is  
 loued and preysed / For somtyme the children  
 whiche ben preysed and loued / done lasse good  
 than they whiche ben despreysed and hated

**C** The xxvj Fable is of the wynd and of  
therthen pot



Me that ouer moche enhaunceth hym  
self/ sooner than he wold/ he  
falleth doune/ as hit appereth by  
this fable/ Of an erthen pot  
maker whiche made a grete pot  
of erthe/ the whiche he dyd sette in the sonne/  
by cause that more surely hit shold haue ben  
dried/ Ageynste the whiche came and blewe a  
grete wynd/ And whanne the wynd sawe the  
potte he demaunded of hym/ who arte thou/  
And the pot ansuerd to hym/ I am a potte the  
best made that men can fynde/ & none may  
lette ne empeche me/ And how sayd the  
wynde/ thou art yet al losse/ and hast neyther  
vertue ne none force/ and by cause I knowe wel  
thy ouer pryde/ I shall breke the/ and putte  
the in to pyeces/ to thende/ that thou of thy  
grete pryde mayst haue knowlege/ And therfore  
the feble ought to meke and humble hym self  
and obeye to his lord/ and not to enhance hym  
more than he ought/ to thende/ he falleth not  
from hyhe to lowe

**C** The xxviij fable is of the wulf and of the lambe



f two euyls men ought euer to  
eschewe and flee the worst of  
bothe / yf ony of them may be  
eschewed / as hit appiereth by  
this fable / of a wulf / whiche  
ranne after a lambe / the whiche lambe fled  
into the hows where as gotes were / And whan  
the wulf sawe that he myght in no wyse take  
the lambe / he sayd to hym by swete wordes /  
Leue thy felauship / and come with me into the  
feldes / for yf thow come not / thow shalt be  
take by them / and shalt be sacryfied to theyre  
goddess / And the lamb answered to the wulf /  
I haue leuer to shede al my blood for the loue  
of the goddess / and to be sacryfied / than to be  
eten and deuoured of the / And therefore he is  
ful of wysedome and of prudence / who of two  
grete euyls may and can escape the grettest of  
bothe /

**C** Here synniffhen the fables of Auian / And  
after followen the fables of Alfonse

¶ The fyrst fable maketh mencion of therhortacion of sapence or wysedome and of loue



Rabe of Lucanye sayd to his sone in this maner / My sone beware & loke that the formyce be not more prudent or wyser / than thy self / the whiche gadreth & assembleth to gyder in the somer all that to her nedeth to haue in the wynter / and beware that thow slepe no lenger / than the Cocke doth the whiche watcheth and waketh atte matyns tyme / and that he be not wyser and more sage than thy self / the whiche rewleth and gouerneth wel ix hennes / but hit suffyseth wel / that thow rewle and gouerne one wel / And also that the dogge be not more noble than thy self / the whiche forgeteth neuer the good whiche is done to hym / but euer he remembryth it / ¶ Item my sone suppose it not a lytyll thyng to haue a good Frend but doubte not to haue a thousand frendes / ¶ And whanne A rabe wold deye / he demaunded of his sone / My sone how many good frendes hast thow / And his sone answerd to hym / My fader I haue as I suppose an honderd frendes /  
And

And the fader anfuerd to hym / beware and loke  
wel that thou fuppose none to be thy frendes  
without that thou haft affayed & proued hym /  
For I haue lyued lenger than thy felf hafte /  
& vnnethe I haue gete half a frend / wherefore  
I meruaylle moche how thou haft gotten fo  
many frendes / And thenne the fone feynge the  
admyracion or wonder of his fader / demaunded  
of hym / My fader . I praye yow that ye wylle  
gyue to me counceyl how I fhalle mowe preue  
and effaye my frend / And his fader fayd to hym  
/ goo thou and kylle a calf / and putte it in a fak  
al bloody / and bere hit to thy fyrft frend / and  
faye to hym that hit is a man whiche thou haft  
flayne / And that for the loue of whiche he  
loueth the / that he wylle kepe thy myfdede  
fecretely and burye hit / to thende that he may  
faue the / the which counceylle his fone dyd / to  
whome his frend fayd / retorne ageyne to thy  
hows / For yf thou haft done euylle / I wylle  
not bere the payne for the / For within my hows  
thou fhalt not entre / And thus one after other  
he affayed alle his frendes / and euery of them  
made to hym fuche an anfuere as the fyrft dyd /  
wherof gretely he was abafhed / And thenne  
he returned ageyn to his fader / and told hym /  
how he had done / And his fader anfuerd to  
hym / Many one ben frendes of wordes only /  
but

but fewe ben in fayth or dede / but I thalle telle  
to the what thou shalt doo / Goo thou to my  
half frende / and bere to hym thy calf / and  
thow shalt here and see what he thalle saye to  
the / And whanne the sone came to the half  
frende of his fader / he sayd to hym as he dyd  
to the other / And whanne the half frende vn-  
derstode his fayt or dede / he anone toke hym  
secreteley in to his hows / and ledde hym in to  
a sure and obscure place / where he dyd burye  
his dede calf / wherof the sone knewe the trouthe  
of the half frendes loue / Thenne the sone of  
Arabe turned ageyne toward his fader / and told  
to hym all that his half frende had done to  
hym / And thenne the fader sayd to his sone /  
that the philospher saith that the very and  
trewe frend is fond in the xtreme nede / Thenne  
asked the sone of his fader / sawest thou neuer  
man whiche in his lyf gate a hole frend / &  
his fader said to hym / I sawe neuer none / but  
wel haue I herd it say / And the sone answered /  
My fader I praye the that thou wylt reherce hit  
to me / to thende / that by aduenture I maye  
gete suche one / And the fader sayd to hym /  
My sone / som tyme haue I herd of two mar-  
chaunts whiche neuer had sene eche other / the  
one was of Egypte / and the other was of Baldak  
but they had knowleche eche of other by theyr  
lettres /

lettres / whiche they fente and wrote frendly one  
to the other / hit befelle thenne that the mer-  
chaunt of Baldak came in to egypte for to chepe  
& bye somme ware or marchaundyse / wherof  
his frend was moche gladde / and wente to mete  
hym and brought him benyngly in to his hows /  
And after that he had chered and festyed hym  
by the space of xiiij dayes / the same marchaunt  
of baldak waxed and became feke / wherof his  
frend was sorowfull and ful heuy / and Incon-  
tynent fente for phisycyens or leches thurgh  
alle egypte for to recouere his helthe / And whan  
the medecyns had sene and vyfytet hym / and  
his vryne also / they sayd that he had no bodyly  
sekeness / but that he was rauyshed by loue / And  
whan his Frend herd these wordes / he came  
to hym / and sayd / My frende I pray the / that  
thou wilt shewe and telle to me thy sekenes /  
And his frend said to hym I praye the / that thou  
wylt make to come hyder alle the wymmen  
and maydens whiche ben in thy hows / for to  
see / yf she whiche my herte desyreth is emonge  
them / And anone his Frend made to come be-  
fore hym bothe his owne doughters & seruants  
Emonge the whiche was a yonge mayde / whiche  
he had nouryshed for his playfye / And whan  
the pacyent or feke man sawe her / he sayd to  
his frend / the same is she whiche maye be cause  
of



of my lyf or my deth / the whiche his frend gaf  
to hym for to be his wyf with alle fuche goodes  
as he had of her / the whiche he wedded / and  
retorned with her in to baldak with grete Joye /  
but within a whyle after it happed and fortun-ed  
fo that this marchaunt of egypte fylle in pouerte /  
and for to haue fomme consolacion and comforte  
he tooke his way toward baldak / and fupposed  
to goo and fee his frend / And aboute one euen  
he arryued to the Cyte / And for as moche that  
he was not well arayed ne clothed / he had  
fhame by daye lyzt to go in to the hows of his  
Freind / but wente and lodged hym withynne a  
Temple nyghe to a Frendes hows

¶ It happed thenne that on that fame nyght  
that he laye there a man flewe another man  
before the yate or entre of the fayd Temple /  
wherfore the neyghbours were fore troubled /  
And thenne all the peple moeued therof came  
in to the Temple / wherin they fond no body  
fauf only thegypcyen / the whiche they toke /  
and lyke a murderer Interroged hym why he  
had flayne that man whiche lay dede before the  
portall or gate of the temple / He thenne fcyng  
his Infortune and pouerte / confessed / that he  
had kyllled hym / For by caufe of his cuyll fortune  
he wold rather deye than lyue any more / wher-  
fore he was had before the Juge / and was con-  
dempned

dempned to be hanged / And whan men ledde hym toward the galhows / his frend sawe and knewe hym / and beganne to wepe fore / remembryng the bienfayttes whiche he had done to hym / wherfore he went to the Justyce and fayd / My lordes this man dyd not the homycyde / For hit was my self that dyd hit / And therfore ye shold dogrete synne yf ye dyd put this Innocent and gyltles to dethe / And anone he was take for be had vnto the galhows / And thenne the Egypcyen fayd / My lordes / he dyd hit not / And therfore euylle shold ye doo to put him to dethe / And as the two frendes wold haue been hanged eche one for other / he whiche had done the homycyde came and knewe and confesyd there his synne / and adressed hym self before the Justyce and fayd / My lordes / none of them bothe hath done the dede / And therfore punyssh the not ye these Innocents / For I allone ought to bere the payne / whereof all the Justyse was gretely meruaylled / And for the doubte whiche therin was grete / the Justyce toke them al thre / & ledde them before the kyng And when they had reherced to the kyng all the maner / after enquest theupon made / and he knewe the very trouthe of hit / graunted his grace to the murderer / and so alle thre were delyuerd / And the frend brought his frend in to hys hows / and receyued hym Joyously /  
and

and after he gaf to hym bothe gold and fyluer /  
And the egypcyen torned ageyne in to his hows /  
And whan the fader had fayd and reherced all  
this to his sone / his sone fayd to hym / My fader  
I knowe now wel that he whiche may gete a  
good frende is wel happy / And with grete labour  
as I suppose I shal gete fuche one.

**¶** The second fable is of the commysſion of perung  
or money



Spaynard arryued ſomtyme in to  
the lande of egipte and by cauſe  
that he doubted to be robbed  
within the deſertys of Arabe / he  
purpoſed and bethought in hym  
ſelf that it were wyſely done to take his money  
to ſomme trewe man for to kepe hit vnto his re-  
torne ageyne / And by cauſe that he herd ſomme  
ſaye / that within the Cyte was a trewe man / he  
anone wente to hym / and toke to hym his ſyluer /  
for to kepe hit / And whan he had done his  
vyage he came ageyne to hym / and demaunded  
of hym his ſyluer / whiche anſuerd to hym in this  
manere / My frend / I ne wote who thow arte /  
for I ſawe the neuer that I wote of / And yf  
thou ſayeſt or ſpekeſt ony more wordes / I ſhalle  
make the to be wel bete / Thenne was the  
ſpaynard ſorowful and wroth / and therof he  
wold haue made a playnte to his neyghbours /  
as he dyde / & the neyghbours ſayd to hym /  
Certaynly / we be wel abaffhed of that / that  
ye telle to vs / for he is emonge vs alle reputed  
and

and holden for a good man and trewe / And  
therfore retorne ageyne to hym / and by swete  
wordes telle hym that he wyl rendre to the thy  
good ageyne / the whiche thyng he dyd / and  
the old man answerd to hym more sharply and  
wonderly than he had done before / wherof the  
spaynard was wonderly wrothe / And as he de-  
parted oute of the old mans hows / he mette with  
an old woman / the whiche demaunded of hym /  
wherfore he was soo troubled and heuy / And  
after that he had told to her the cause why /  
thold woman sayd to hym / make good chere /  
For yf hit is so as thou sayst / I shalle counceylle  
the how thou shalt recouere thy syluer / And  
thenne he demaunded of her / how hit myght be  
done / And she sayd to hym bryng hyther to me  
a man of thy country whome thou trustest / and  
doo to be made four fayre chestes / and fylle  
them alle with stones / and by thy felawes thou  
shalt make them to be borne / in to his hows /  
and to hym they shalle say / that the marchaunts  
of spayne send them to hym for to kepe surely /  
And whan the chestes shalle be within his hows /  
thou shalt go and demaunde of hym thy syluer /  
whiche thyng he dyd / And as the sayd chestes  
were borne within his hows / the spaynard  
wente with them / that bare them / the whiche  
straungers sayd to the old mā My lord / these  
four

four chestes ben al ful of gold / of fyluer and of  
precious stones / whiche we brynge to yow / as to  
the trewest man and feythful that we knowe for  
to kepe them surely by cause that we fere and  
doubte the theues / whiche ben within the desert /  
After the whiche wordes sayd / came he / whiche  
the old woman had counceyllled / and demaunded  
of hym his fyluer And by that cause the old man  
doubted / that the spanynard wold haue de-  
preyed hym / he sayd thus to hym / Thow arte  
Welcome / I merueylled how thow taryest soo  
longe for to come / And Incontynent he restored  
to hym his fyluer / And thus by the counceylle  
of the woman whiche he gretely thanked / he  
had his good ageyn / and retourned ageyne in to  
his countrey /

**T**he thyrd fable speketh of a subtile Enuencion of a sentence gguen upon a derke and obscure cause.



It befelle somtyme that a good man labourer wente fro lyf to deth / the whiche labourer leste nothyng to his sone / but only a hows / the whiche sone lyued by the laboure of his handes pourely / This yong man had a neyghbour whiche was made ryche whiche demaūded of the sayd yong man yf he wold felle his hows / but he wold not felle it / by cause that it was come to hym by inherytaūce and by patrymony wherfore the ryche man his neyghbour conuerfyd & was ful oft with hym for to deceyue hym / but the yong man fled his company as moche as he myght / & whan the ryche man perceyued that the yong man fled from hym / he bethought hym self of a grete decepcion & falshede / & demaūded of the poure yong man that he wold hyre to hym a parte of his hows for to delue & make a celer / the whiche he shold hold of hym payeng to hym yerely rent / & the poure yong man hyred it to hym / & whan  
the

the celer was made / the ryche man did do bryng  
therin x tones of oylle of the which the v were  
ful of of oylle / & the the other v were but half  
full / & dyd do make a grete pytte in the erthe /  
& dyd do put the fyue tonnes whiche were half  
ful in hit / & the other fyue aboue them / And  
thenne he shytte the dore of the celer / and de-  
lyuerd the keye to the poure yonge man / and  
prayd hym frawdelyntly to kepe wel his oylle /  
but the poure yonge man knewe not the malyce  
and falshede of his neyghboure / wherfore he  
was contente to kepe the keye / And within a  
whyle after as the oylle became dere / the ryche  
came to the poure / and asked hym his good / and  
the yong man toke to hym the keye / this Ryche  
man thenne fold his oylle to the marchaunts /  
and waraunted eche tonne al ful / And when the  
marchaunts mesured theyr oylle / they fond but  
fyue of the x tonnes full / wherof the ryche man  
demaunded of the poure yonge man restitu-  
cion / and for to haue his hows he maade hym to  
come before the Juge / ¶ And whanne the poure  
man was before the Juge / he demaunded terme  
and fpace for to answere / For hym thought and  
femed that he had kepte well his oylle / and the  
Juge gaf and graūted to hym day of aduys / &  
thēne he went to a philosophre which was pro-  
curatour of the poure peple / & prayd hym for  
charyte /



charyte/ that he wold gyue to hym good cōſeylle  
of his grete nede / & he reherced and told to hym  
al his cauſe & ſwore vpon the holy euangely that  
he toke none of the ryche mans oylle / And  
thenne the philoſopher anſuerd to hym in this  
manere / My ſone / haue no fere / for the trouthe  
may not faylle / And the next morowe after / the  
philoſopher wente with the poure man in to  
Jugement / the whiche philoſopher was conſti-  
tued by the kyng for to gyue the Juſt ſentence  
of hit / And after that the cauſe had be wel  
deffended and pleted by bothe partyes / the  
philoſophre ſayd / the ſame ryche man is of good  
renommee / and I ſuppoſe not that he demaunded  
more than he ſhould haue / And alſo I bylene  
not that this poure may be maculed ne gyly of  
the blame / which he putteth on hym / but not-  
withſtondyng for to knowe the trouthe of hit / I  
ordeyne and gyue ſentence / that the oylle pure  
and clene of the v tonnes whiche are ful to be  
meſured / and alſo the lye therof / And after that  
the pure and clene oylle of the fyue which been  
but half ful to be alſo meaſured / and with the lye  
thereof / and that men loke yf the lye of the fyue  
Tonnes half ful is egal and lyke to the lye of the  
fyue Tonnes / whiche ben fulle / And yf hit be  
not ſoo / that as moche lye be ſond within the  
veſſels whiche ben but half full as in the other /  
he

he shalle thenne be suffysauntly & ryghteously  
proued / that none oyle hath be taken oute of  
them / but yf ther be fond as moche lye in the  
one as in the other / the poure shall be con-  
dempned / and of this sentence the poure was  
contente / & the trouthe was knowen / wherfore  
the poure man went quyte / and the ryche was  
condempned / For his grete malyce and falsheed  
was knowen and manifested / For there is no  
synne or mysdede done / but that ones it shalle be  
knowen and manifested.

**C** The fourthe fable maketh mencion of the sentence gūen bp the peeuny or money whiche was found.



Ryche man somtyme wente by a Cyte / And as he walked fro one syde to that other / fylle fro hym a grete purse / wherein were a thousand Crownes / the whiche a poure man fond / and toke them for to kepe to his wyf / wherof she was ful gladde / and sayd / thanked be god of al the goodes whiche he sendeth to vs / yf he sendeth now this grete somme kepe we hit wel / And on the next morne after folowyng / the Ryche man made to be cryed thurgh the cyte / that who someuer had fond a thowfand Crownes in a purse / he shold restitue / and brynge them to hym ageyne / and that he shold haue for his reward an honderd of them / And after that the poure man had herd this crye / he ranne Incontynent to his wyf / & sayd to her / My wyf / that / that we haue fond must be rendred or yolden ageyne / For hit is better to haue a C crownes withoute synne than a thowfand with synne & wrongfully / And how  
be

be hit that the woman wold haue refyfted /  
Neuertheles in thende ſhe was content / And thus  
the poure man reſtored the thowſand crownes to  
the Ryche / and demaunded of hym the honderd  
crownes / And the ryche full of frawde or falſ-  
hede ſayd to the poure / thow rendreſt not to  
me al my gold / whiche thow fondeſt / For of  
hit I lack four honderd pyeces of gold And  
whanne thow ſhalt rendre and brynge to me  
ageyn the ſayd four hondred pyeces of gold /  
thow ſhalt haue of me the C crownes too whiche  
I promyſed to the / And thenne the poure anſuerd  
to hym / I haue take and brought to the al that  
I haue found / wherfore they fylle in a grete  
dyfferent or ſtryf / in ſo moche that the cauſe  
came before the kyng / to be decyded and pletyd /  
of the whiche the kyng made to be callyd before  
hym a grete philoſopher whiche was procuratour  
of the poures / And whanne the cauſe was wel  
diſputed / the philoſopher moued with pyte /  
called to hym the poure man / and to hym ſeyd  
in this maner / Come hyther my frend / by thy  
feythe haſt thow reſtored alle that good whiche  
thou fondeſt in the purſe / and the poure anſuerd  
to hym / ye fyre by my feythe / And thenne the  
philophre ſayd before thaſſiſtantes / Syth this  
ryche man is trewe and feythfull / and that hit  
is not to byleue / that he ſhould demaunde more  
than

than he ought to doo / he ought to be byleued /  
And as to the other parte men muste byleue that  
this poure man is of good renomme and knowen  
for a trewe man wherfore the philosopher sayd  
to the kyng / Syre I gyue by my sentence / that  
thow take these thousand crownes / and that an  
C thow take of them / the whiche honderd thow  
shalt delyuere to this poure man whiche fond  
them / And after whan he that hath lost them  
shall come / thow restore them to hym / And yf  
it happeth that another persone fynde the thousand  
& four C crownes / they shal be rendryd  
and taken ageyne to the same good man whiche  
is here present whiche sayth that he hath lost  
them / the whiche sentence was moche agreable  
and plesaunt to al the companye / And when the  
ryche man sawe that he was deceyued / he de-  
maunded myserycorde and grace of the kyng  
sayenge in this manere / Syre this poure man  
that hath fond my purse / trewely he hath re-  
stored it to me all that I ouȝt to haue / but  
certainly I wold haue deceyued hym / wherfore  
I praye the that thou wylt haue pyte and mysery-  
corde on me And thenne the kyng had mysery-  
corde on hym / And the poure man was wel  
contented and payd / and al the malyce of the  
ryche man was knowen and manifested

¶ The v fable is of the feythe of the thre felawes.



Fte it happeth that the euylliche is procured to other cometh to hym which procureth it / as hit apperyth by the felawes / of the which tweyn were burgeys / & the thyrd a labourer / the which assembled them to gydre for to go to the holy sepulcre / This thre felawes made so grete prouysyon of flour for to make theyr pylgremage / in iuche wyse / that it was all chauffed / and consumed / excepte only for to make one loef only / And whan the Burgeis sawe thende of theyre floure they sayd to gyder / yf we fynde not the maner and cautele for to begyle this vylayn / by cause that he is a rygt grete gallaunt / we shalle deye for hongre / wherfore we must fynde the maner and facyone that we may haue the loof which shall be maad of alle oure flour / And therefore they concluded to gyder and sayd / whanne the loof shalle be putte within the ouen we shalle go and lye vs for to slepe / and he that shalle dreme best / the loof shall

shall be his / And by cause that we bothe ben  
 subtyle and wyse / he shalle not mowe dreme  
 as wel as we shalle / wherof the loof be ours /  
 wherof alle they thre were wel content / and al  
 byganne to slepe /

¶ But whanne the labourer or vylayne knewe  
 and perceyued all theyre fallace / and sawe that  
 his two felawes were a sleep / he wente and  
 drewe the loof oute of the ouen and ete hit /

¶ And after he feyned to be a slepe / and thene  
 one of the burgeys rose vp / and sayd to hys felawes /  
 I haue dremed a wonder dreme / For two Angels  
 haue taken & borne me with grete Joye before  
 the dyuyn mageste / And the other burgeys his  
 felawe awoke and sayd / Thy dreme is merueyl-  
 lous and wonderfull / but I suppose that the myn  
 is fayrer / than thyn is / For I haue dremed that  
 two Angels drewe me on hard ground for to  
 lede me in to helle / And after they dyd awake  
 the vylayne whiche as dredeful sayd / who is  
 there / and they answered / we be thy felawes /  
 And he sayd to them / how be ye soo soone  
 retourned / And they answered to hym / how  
 retourned / we departed not yet fro hens / And he  
 sayd to them by my feythe / I haue dremed that  
 the Angels had led one of yow in to paradys or  
 heuen / and the other in to helle / wherfor I  
 supposed / that ye shold neuer have comen  
 ageyne /

ageyne / And therfore I aroos me fro fleep / and  
by cause I was hongry / I wente and drewe oute  
of the ouen the loef and ete hit / For ofte hit  
happeth that he whiche supposeth to begyle  
fomme other / is hym self begyled.



¶ The by fable is of the labourer and of the  
nyghtyngale



Omtyme there was a labourer /  
whiche had a gardeyn wel play-  
faunt and moche delycious / in to  
the whiche he ofte wente for to  
take his desporte and playfure /  
And on a day at euen when he was wery and  
had trauaylled fore / for to take his recreacion he  
entryd in to his gardyn and sette himself doune  
vnder a tree / where as he herd the songe of a  
nyghtyngale / And for the grete plesyre and Joye  
whiche he took therof / he sought and at the last  
foud the meanes for to take the nyghtyngale / to  
thende / that yet gretter joye and playsaunce he  
myght haue of hit / And whan the nyghtyn-  
gale was take / he demaunded of the labourer /  
wherfore hast thou take so grete payne for to  
take me / For wel thou knowest that of me  
thou mayst not haue grete prouffyte / And the  
vylayne answered thus to the nyghtyngale / For to  
here the songe of the I haue taken the / And the  
nyghtyngale answered Certaynly in vayne thou  
hast payned and laboured / For / for no good I  
wylle

wylle fynge whyle that I am in pryfon / And  
thenne the labourer or vylayne anſuerd / yf thou  
fyngeſt not wel / I ſhalle ete the / And thenne  
the nyghtyngale ſayd to hym / yf thou putte me  
within a potte for to be ſoden / lytyl mete ſhalt  
thou thenne make of my body / and yf thou ſetteſt  
me for to be roſted / leſſe mete ſhalle be thenne  
made of me / And therfor neyther boyled ne  
roſted ſhalle not be thy grete bely fylled of me /  
but yf thou lete me flee / hit ſhall be to the a  
grete good prouffyte / For thre doctrynes I ſhall  
teche the whiche thou ſhalt loue better than  
thre fat kyne / and thene the labourer lete the  
nyghtyngale flee / And whan he was oute of his  
handes / and that he was vpon a tree / he ſayd to  
the vylayne in this maner / My Frend I haue  
promyſed to the / that I ſhall gyue to the thre  
doctrynes / wherof the fyrſt is this that thou  
byleue no thyng whiche is Impoſſyble / The  
ſecond is that thou kepe wel that thyn is / And  
the thyrd is / that thou take no ſorowe of the  
thyng loſt whiche may not be recouererd / And  
ſoone after the nyghtyngale beganne to ſygne /  
& in his ſonge ſayd thus / bleſſyd be god / whiche  
hath delyuerd me oute of the handes of this  
vylayne or chorle / whiche hath not knowen /  
ſene / ne touched the precious dyamond whiche  
I haue within my bely / For yf he had foude  
hit /

hit / he had be moche ryche / And fro his handes  
I had not scaped / And thenne the vylayne whiche  
herd this songe / beganne to complayne and to  
make grete sorowe . and after sayd I am wel  
vnhappy / that haue lost so fayre a tresour /  
whiche I had wonne / and now I haue lost hit /  
And the nyghtyngale seyde thenne to the chorle /  
Now knowe I wel that thou arte a fool / For  
thou takest sorowe of that wherof thou sholdest  
haue none / and sone thou hast forgotten my  
doctryne / by cause that thou weneest that within  
my bely shold be a precious stone more of weyght  
than I am / And I told and taught to the / that  
thou sholdest neuer byleue that thyng / which  
is Impossyble / And yf that stone was thyn / why  
hast thou lost hit / And yf thou hast lost hit and  
mayst not recouere hit / why takest thou sorowe  
for hit / And therefore hit is foly to chastyse or to  
teche a fole / whiche neuer byleueth the lernynge  
and doctryne whiche is gyuen to hym.

¶ The vij fable is of a Rethorician and of a  
crowk backed /



Philosopher sayd ones to his sone /  
that whan he were falle by fortune  
in to somme damage or perylle /  
the sooner that he myght he shold  
delyuere hym of hit / to thende /  
that afterward he shold no more be vexed ne  
greued of hit / As hit appiereth by this fable of a  
rethoryque man or fayr speker / whiche ones  
demaunded of a kynge / that of alle them whiche  
shold entre in to the cyte / hauynge somme faulte  
of . kynde on theyr bodyes / as crouked or coun-  
terfayted / he myght haue and take of them at  
thentre of the yate a peny / the whiche demaunde  
the kynge graunted to hym / and made his lettres  
to be sealed and wreton vnder his fygnet / And  
thus he kepte hym styll at the yate / And of  
euery lame / scabbed / & of alle fuche that had  
ony counterfaytour on theyr bodyes / he tooke a  
peny / ¶ It happed thene on a day that a  
croukbacked and counterfayted man wold haue  
entryd within the Cyte withoute gyuyng of ony  
peny / and bethought hym self / that he shold  
take

take and put on hym a fayre mantel / and thus  
arayed came to the yate / ¶ And thenne whan  
the porter byheld hym / he perceyued that he  
was goglyed / and sayd to hym pay me of my  
dewte / And the goglyed wold paye nought /  
wherfore he toke from hym his mantel / And  
thenne he sawe that he was crowkbacked and  
sayd to hym / thou woldest not to fore paye a  
peny / but now thou shalt paye tweyne / ¶ And  
whyle that they stryued to gyder / the hat and  
the bonet felle from his hede to the erthe / And  
the porter whiche sawe his scabbed hede / sayd to  
hym / Now shalt thou paye to me thre pens /  
and thenne the porter yet ageyne fetted his  
handes on hym / and felte / that his body was al  
scabbed / And as they were thus wraſtlynge to  
gyder / the crowkbacked fylle to the ground /  
and hurted hym self fore on the legge / And the  
porter sayd thenne to hym / Now shalt thou  
paye v pens / For thy body is al counterfayted /  
wherfore thou shalt leue here thy mantele / And  
yf thou haddeſt payd a peny / thou haddeſt gone  
on thy waye free and quyte / wherfore he is wyſe  
that payeth that / that he oweth of ryght / to  
thende that therof come not to hym gretter  
dommage

¶ The egght fable is of the discyple / and of  
the sheep /



Discyple was somtyme / whiche  
toke his playfyre to reherce and  
telle many fables / the whiche  
prayd to his mayster / that he  
wold reherce vnto hym a long  
fable / To whome the mayster anfuerd / kepe and  
beware wel that hit happe not to vs / as it happed  
to a kyng and to his fabulatur And the discyple  
anfuerd / My mayster I pray the to telle to me  
how it befelle / And thenne the mayster sayd to  
his descyple / ¶ Somtyme was a kynge whiche  
hadde a fabulatur / the whiche reherced to  
hym at euery tyme / that he wold sleep fyue  
fables for to reioyshe the kynge / and for to  
make hym falle in to a slepe / It befelle thenne  
on a daye / that the kynge was moche sorowful  
and so heuy / that he coude in no wyse falle a  
slepe / And after that the sayd fabulatur had  
told and reherced his fyue fables / the kynge  
desyred to here more / And thenne the sayd  
fabulatur recyted vnto hym thre fables wel  
thorte / And the kynge thenne sayd to hym / I  
wold

wold fayne here one wel longe / And thenne  
shalle I leue wel the flepe / The fabulatur  
thenne reherced vnto hym fuche a fable / Of a  
ryche man whiche wente to the market or feyre  
for to bye sheep / the which man bought a  
thowfand sheep / And as he was retornynge fro  
the feyre / he cam vnto a Ryuer / and by cause  
of the grete waiues of the water he coude not  
passe ouer the brydge / Neuertheles he wente  
foo longe to and fro on the Ryuage of the sayd  
Ryuier / that at the last he fonde a narowe way /  
vpon the whiche myght passe scant ynough thre  
sheep attones / And thus he passed and had them  
ouer one after another / And hyderto reherced  
of this fable / the fabulatur felle on flepe / And  
anon after the kynge awoke the fabulatur / and  
sayd to hym in this manere / I pray the that  
thow wylt make an ende of thy fable / And the  
fabulatur ansuerd to hym in this manere Syre  
this Ryuer is ryght grete / and the ship is lytyl /  
wherfore late the marzhaunt doo pass ouer his  
sheep / And after I shalle make an ende of my  
fable / And thenne was the kynge wel appeased  
and pacyfied / ¶ And therefore be thow content  
of that I haue reherced vnto the / For there is  
folke superstitious or capaxe / that they may not  
be contented with fewe wordes

¶ The ix fable is of the wulf / of the labourer /  
of the fore / & of the chefe



Omtyme was a labourer wgiche vn-  
nethe myght gouerne and lede his  
oxen by cause that they smote with  
theyr feet / wherfore the labourer  
sayd to them / I pray to god that  
the wulf may ete yow / the whiche wordes the  
wulf herd / wherfore he hyd hym self nyghe  
them vnto the nyght / And thenne came for to  
ete them / ¶ And whanne the nyght was come /  
the labourer vnbonde his oxen / and lete them  
goo to his hows / ¶ And thenne whanne the  
wulf sawe them comynge homeward / he sayd /  
O thow labourer many tymes on this day thow  
dydest gyue to me thyn oxen / and therfore hold  
thy promesse to me / ¶ And the labourer sayd  
to the wulf / I promysed to the nought at al / in  
the presence of whome I am oblyged or bound /  
I swore not neyther to paye the / and the wulf  
ansuerd / I shalle not leue the goo / withoute  
that thow hold to me that / that thow promysed  
and gauest to me / ¶ And as they had soo grete  
stryf and descencion to gyder / they remytted  
the



the cause to be discuted or pleted before the  
 Juge / And as they were sechynge a Juge / they  
 mette with the foxe / to whome they recounted  
 or told alle theyr dyfferent and siryf / ¶ Thenne  
 sayd the Foxe vnto them / I shalle accorde yow  
 bothe wel / and I shalle gyue on your cause or  
 plee a good sentence / But I must speke with  
 eche one of yow bothe a part or allone / And  
 they were content / ¶ And the Foxe wente and  
 told to the labourer / thow shalt gyue to me a  
 good henne / And another to my wyf / And I  
 shalle hit soo make / that thow with alle thyn  
 oxen shalt frely goo vnto thy hows / wherof the  
 labourer was wel content / ¶ And after the  
 foxe wente and sayd to the wulf / I haue wel  
 laboured and wrought for the / For the labourer  
 shall gyue to the therfore a grete chese / and lete  
 hym goo home wyth his oxen / And the wulf  
 was wel content /

¶ And after the Foxe sayd to the wulf / come  
 thow wyth me / and I shalle lede the / where  
 as the chese is / ¶ And thenne he ledde hym  
 to and fro / here and there vnto the tyme that  
 the mone shyned ful bryghtly / And that they  
 came to a welle / vpon the whiche the Foxe  
 lepte / and shewed to the wulf the shadowe of the  
 mone / whiche reluced in the well / & sayd to  
 hym / loke now godsep / how that chese is fayre /  
 grete

grete and brode / hye the now and goo doune  
& after take that cheſe / ¶ And the wulf ſayd  
to the Foxe / thou muſt be the fyrſte of vs  
bothe / that ſhalle goo doune / And yf thou  
mayſt not brynge hit with the / by cauſe of his  
gretenefſe / I ſhalle thenne goo doune for to  
helpe the / And the Foxe was content / by cauſe  
two bokettys were there / of whiche as the one  
came vpward / the other wente downward / and  
the foxe entryd in to one of the ſame bokettis /  
and wente doune in to the Welle / And whanne  
he was doune / he ſayd to the wulf / godſep come  
hyther and helpe me / For the cheſe is ſo moche  
and ſoo grete that I maye not bere hit vp / and  
thenne the wulf was aferd of that the Foxe ſhold  
ete hit / entryd wythynne the other boket / and  
as faſte as he wente downward / the Foxe came  
vpward / and whan the wulf ſawe the Foxe  
comynge vpward / he ſayd to hym / My godſep  
ye goo hens / thou ſayſt trewe ſayd the Fox /  
For thus hit is of the world / For when one  
cometh doune / the other goth vpward / and thus  
the foxe wente away / and lefte the wulf within  
the welle / And thus the wulf loſt bothe the oxen  
and the cheſe / wherfore hit is not good to leue that  
whiche is ſure and certayne / For to take that  
whiche is vncertayne / For many one ben therof  
deceyued by the falſheed and decepcion of the  
Aduocate and of the Juges

¶ The x fable is of the husbond and of the  
moder & of hys wyf



Somtyme was a merchaunt whiche  
maryed hym to a yonge woman/  
the whiche had yet her moder on  
lyue/ It happed that this Mar-  
chaunt wold ones haue gone som-  
where in to ferre country for to by some ware or  
marchaundyse/ And as he was goyng/ he betoke  
his wyf to her moder for to kepe and rewle  
her honestly tyll he come ageyne/ ¶ His wyf  
thenne . by the owne consentynge and wyll of  
her moder/ enamoured her self of a ryght gen-  
tyl/ fayre and yong man whiche fournyshed to  
thappoyntement/ And ones as they thre made  
good chere the husbond came ageyne fro the  
feyre and knocked at the dore of the hows/  
wherfore they were wel abashed/ Thenne sayd  
the old moder thus to them/ haue no fere/ but  
doo as I shalle telle to yow/ and care yow not/  
And thenne she sayd to the yonge man/ hold  
this swerd/ and goo thow to the yate/ and be-  
ware thy self that thow saye no word to hym/  
but lete me doo/ And as the husbond wold haue  
entyrd

entryd his hows / and that he sawe the yong  
man holdynge a naked swerd in his handes / he  
was gretely aferd / And thenne the old woman  
sayd to hym / My sone thow arte ryght welcome /  
be not aferd of this man / For thre men ranne  
ryght now after hym for to haue slayne hym /  
and by aventure he fond the yate open / and this  
is the cause why he came here for to save his  
lyf / And thenne the husband said to them / ye  
haue done wel / And I can yow grete thanke /  
And thus the yonge amorous wente his waye  
surely by the subtylte of the moder / of his wyf /  
to the whiche truste thy self not / and thow shalt  
doo as sage and wyse

¶ The xj fable is of an old harlotte or bawde



Noble man was somtyme / whiche  
 had a wyf moche chaste and was  
 wonder fayr / This noble man  
 wold haue go on pylgrimage to  
 Rome / and lefte his wyf at home /  
 by cause that he knewe her for a chaste and a  
 good woman / ¶ It happed on a daye as she  
 wente in to the toun A fayre yonge man was  
 espyed of her loue / and took on hym hardynes /  
 and requyred her of loue / and promysed to her  
 many grete yestes / But she whiche was good had  
 leuer deye than to consente her therto / wherfore  
 the yonge man deyde almooste for sorowe / to  
 the whiche felawe came an old woman / whiche  
 demaunded of hym the cause of his sekenesse /  
 And the yonge man manifested or discovered  
 vnto her alle his courage and herte / atkyng help  
 and counceylle of her / And the old woman  
 wyly and malycious sayd to hym / Be thow  
 gladde and Joyous / and take good courage / For  
 wel I shalle doo / and bryng aboute thy saytte /  
 in soo moche thow shalt haue thy wyll fulfilled /  
 And after thys the old bawde wente to her hows /  
 and

and maade a lytyl catte which she hadde at  
homme to faste thre dayes one after another /  
And after she took somme breed with a grete  
dele or quantite of mostard vpon hit / and gaf hit  
to thys yonge Catte for to ete hit / ¶ And  
whanne the Catte smelled hit / she beganne to  
wepe and crye / ¶ And the old woman or  
Bawde wente vnto the hows of the sayd yonge  
woman / and bare her lytyl Catte with her / the  
whiche yonge and good woman receyued and  
welcomed her moch honestly / by cause that alle  
the world held her for a holy woman / ¶ And  
as they were talkynge to gyder / the yong woman  
hadde pyte of the catte whiche wepte / And  
demaunded of the old woman / what the cat  
eyled / And the old woman sayd to her / Ha a  
my fayr doughter & my fayre Frend / renewe  
not my sorowe / And sayinge these wordes she  
beganne to wepe / and sayd / My frend for no  
good I wyl tell the cause why my catte wepeth /  
And thenn / the yonge woman sayd to her / My  
good Moder I praye yow that ye wyll telle me  
the cause & wherfor your catte wepeth / And  
thenne the old woman sayd to her / My Frend  
I wyll wel / yf thou wilt swere that thou shalt  
neuer reherce it to no body / to the whiche pro-  
messe the good and trewe yonge woman accorded  
her self / supposyng / that hit had ben all good  
and

and sayd / I wyll wel / And thenne the old woman sayd to her in this manere / My frend this fame catte whiche thou seest yonder was my daughter / the whiche was wonder fayre gracious and chaste / whiche a yonge man loued moche / and was so moche espyred of her loue / that by cause that she refused hym / he deyde for her loue / wherfore the goddes hauyng pyte on hym / haue torned my daughter in to this catte / And the yonge woman whiche supposed that the old woman had sayd trouthe sayd to her in this manere / Allas my fayr moder / I ne wote what I shalle doo / For suche a caas myght wel happe to me / For in this Towne is a yonge man / whiche deyeth almost for the loue of me / But for loue of my husband / to whome I oughte to kepe chastyte / I haue not wylle graunte hym / Neuertheles I shall doo that / that thou shalt counceyll to me / And thenne the old woman sayd to her / My frend haue thou pyte on hym as soone as thou mayst / soo that hit befall not to the lyke as it dyd to my daughter /

¶ The yonge woman thenne answered to her / and sayd / yf he requyre me ony more / I shalle accorde me with hym / And yf he requyre me no more / yet shalle I profere me to hym / ¶ And to thende / that I offende not the goddes / I shalle doo and accomplyshe hit / as soone as I maye /

¶ The

¶ The old woman thene took leue of her / and wente forthwith to the yong man / And to hym she reherced and told all these tydynges / wherof hys herte was fylled with Joye / the whiche anone wente toward the yonge woman / and with her he fulfylled his wylle / ¶ And thus ye maye knowe the euyls / whiche ben done by bawdes and old harlottes / that wold to god / that they were al brente



**T**he xij fable is of a blynd man and of  
his wyf /



Here was somtyme a blynd man  
whiche had a fayre wyf / of the  
whiche he was moche Jalous / He  
kepte her so that she myght not  
goo nowher / For ewer he had her  
by the hand / And after that she was enamoured  
of a gentil felawe / they coude not fynde the  
maner ne no place for to fulfyll theiyr wyll / but  
notwithstandyng the woman whiche was subtile  
and Ingenyous counceyllled to her frende that he  
shold come in to her hows / and that he shold  
entre in the gardyn and that there he shold  
clymme vpon a pere tree / And he did as she  
told hym / and when they had made theiyr enter-  
pryse / the woman came ageyne in to the hows /  
and sayd to her hufbond / My frend I praye yow  
that ye wyll go in to our gardyn for to despoise  
us a lytel whyle there / of the whiche prayer the  
blynd man was wel content / and sayd to his  
wyf / wel my good frend I will wel / lete vs go  
thyder / And as they were vnder the pere tree /  
she sayd to her hufbond / My frende I praye the

to

to lete me goo vpon the pere tre / And I shalle  
gader for vs bothe some fayre peres / wel my  
frend sayd the blynd man / I wylle wel & graūt  
therto / And when she was vpon the tree / the  
yong man begann to shake the pere tree at  
one fyde / and the yonge woman at the other  
fyde / And And as the blynd man herd thus hard  
shake the pere tree / And the noyse whiche they  
made / he sayd to them / Ha a euyelle woman /  
how be it that I see hit not / Neuertheles I fele  
and vnderstande hit well / But I praye to the  
goddess / that they vouchesaf to sende me my  
fyght ageyne / And as soone as he had made his  
prayer Jupiter rendryd to hym his fyght ageyn  
¶ And whanne he sawe that pagent vpon the  
pere tree / he sayd to his wyf Ha vnhappy  
woman / I shalle neuer haue no Joye with the /  
And by cause that the yonge woman was redy  
in speche and malycious / she ansuerd forth with  
to her husbond / My frend thow arte wel be-  
holden and bounden to me / For by cause and  
for the loue the goddess haue restored to the thy  
fyght / wherof I thanke alle the goddess and  
godeesses whiche haue enhaunced and herd my  
prayer / For I desyryng moche that thow myght  
see me / cessed neuer day ne nyght to pray them /  
that theye wold rendre to the thy fyghte / wher-  
fore the goddesse Venus vyfybly shewed her self  
to

to me / and fayd / that yf I wold somme play-  
fyre to the fayd yonge man the shold reftore to  
the thy fyght / And thus I am caufe of it And  
thenne the good man fayd to her / My ryght  
dere wyf & good frende / I remerceye and thanke  
yow gretely / For ryght ye haue and I grete  
wronge.

¶ The xiiij fable is of the Tayller / of a kynge /  
and of his seruaunts



Men ought not to doo some other /  
that whiche he wold not that it  
were done to hym / As it appiereth  
by this present fable / of a kynge  
whiche had a tayller whiche was  
as good a workman of his craft / as ony was at  
that tyme in alle the world / the whiche tayller  
had with hym many good seruauntes / wherof  
the one was called Medius / whiche furmounted  
alle the other in shapyng or sewyng / wher-  
fore the kyng commaunded to his styward that  
the sayd tayllers shold fare wel / and haue of the  
best metes and of delycious drynke / ¶ It happed  
on a daye that the mayster Styward gaf to them  
ryght good and delycious mete in the whiche  
was some hony / And by cause that Medius was  
not atte that feste / the styward sayd to the other /  
that they shold kepe for hym somme of their  
mete / And thenne the mayster tayller ansuerd /  
he must none haue / For yf he were here / he  
shold

shold not ete of hit / For he ete neuer no hony /  
And as they had done / Medius came / and de-  
maunded of his felawes / why kepte you not  
parte of this mete for me / And the styward  
ansuerd and sayd to hym / By cause that thy  
mayster sayd to me / that thou ete neuer no  
hony / no parte of the mete was kepte for the  
And Medius ansuerd thenne neuer one word /  
but beganne to thynke / how he myght paye his  
mayster / And on a day as the styward was allone  
with Medius / he demaunded of Medius / yf he  
knewe no man that coude werke as wel as his  
mayster / And Medius sayd nay / And that it  
was grete domage of a sekeneſs that he had /  
And the styward demaunded what sekeneſs hit  
was / And thenne Medius ansuerd to hym / My  
lord whan he is entryd in to his franſy or  
wodenes / there cometh vpon hym a rage / And  
how ſhalle I knowe hit sayd the styward / Cer-  
taynly my lord sayd Medius / whan ye ſhall ſee  
that he ſhalle ſette at his werke / and that he  
ſhalle loke here and there / and ſhal ſmyte vpon  
his borde with his fyſt / theñe may ye know  
that his ſekeneſſe cometh on hym / And thene  
withoute ye take and bynde hym and alſo bete  
hym wel / he ſhalle doo grete harme and dom-  
mage / And the styward sayd to hym / Care not  
therof my frend / For wel I ſhalle beware my  
ſelf

self of hym / And on the mornynge next folowynge the styward came for to see the tayllers / And whan Medius whiche knewe wel the cause of his comynge / tooke awaye secretly his maysters sheres / and hydde them / And anone his mayster beganne for to loke after them / and sawe and serched al aboute here and there / and beganne to smyte his fyfte vpon the borde / And thenne the mayster styward beganne to loke on his maners / and sodenly made hym to be take and holde by his seruants / And after made hym to be bond and wel beten / Thenne was the mayster tayller al abashed / and demaunded of them / My lordes wherfor doo ye bete me soo outrageously / what offense haue I done / wherfore I must be bound and thus be bete / And thenne the Styward sayd to hym in thys maner / by cause that Medius told me / that thou art frantyk And yf thou be not wel bete / thou sholdest doo grete harme and damage / And thene the mayster came to his seruant Medius and rygorously sayd to hym / Ha a euyl boye fylled whan [with] euylle wordes / whan sawest thou me madde / And his seruant proudly answered to hym / My mayster whan dydest thou see that I ete no hony / And therefore I threwe to the one bole for another / And the mayster styward / and alle his seruants beganne thenne to lawhe

lawhe / and fayd al that he hadde wel done /  
¶ And therfore men ought not to doo to ony  
other that thyng whiche they wylle not that  
men dyd to them /

¶ Here enden the fables of Alfonse

¶ And folowen other fables of Doge the Floren-  
tyn

**¶** The fyrst fable is of the subtyle of the woman  
for to deceyue her husband



He cautele or falshede of the woman  
is wonder merueyllous / as it ap-  
piereth by this fable / Of a mar-  
chaūt whiche was wedded of newe  
vnto a fayre and yong woman /  
the whiche marchaunt wente ouer the see for to  
bye & felle / and for to gete somwhat for to lyue  
honestly / And by cause that he dwellyd to longe/  
his wyf supposed that he was dede / And ther-  
fore she enamoured her self with another man /  
whiche dyd to her mykle good / as for to haue  
doo make and bylde vp his hows of newe the  
whiche had grete nede of reparacion / and also he  
gaf to her all new utensyles to kepe household /  
And within a long tyme after the departyng of  
the marchaunt he came ageyne in to his hows  
whiche he sawe newe bylded / & sawe dyffhes  
pottes / pannes / and suche other household / wher-  
fore he demaunded of his wyf how and in what  
maner she had foude the facion and the mean  
for to haue repayred so honestly his hows / And  
she answered that it was by the grace of god / And  
he



he anfuerd / Bleſſyd be god of hit / And when he  
was within the chambre / he ſawe the bedde  
rychely couerd / & the walles wel hanged / and  
demaunded of his wyf he had done before / And  
ſhe thenne anfuerd to hym in lyke maner as ſhe  
dyd before / And therfore he thanked god as he  
had done to fore / And as he wold ſette hym at  
his dyner / there was brought before hym vnto  
his wyf a child of thre yere of age / or there  
aboute / wherfore he demaunded of his wyf /  
My frend to whome belongeth this fayre child /  
And ſhe anfuerd / My Frend the holy ghooſt of  
his grace hath ſente hit to me / Thene anfuerd  
the merchaunt to his wyf in this manere / I  
rendre not graces ne thankes not to the holy  
ghooſt of this / For he hath taken to moche  
payne and labour for to haue it made up myn  
owne werke / And I wyll that in no maner wyſe  
he medle no more therwith / For ſuche thyng  
belongeth to me for to doo hit / and not to the  
holy ghooſt.

¶ The second fable is of the woman and of  
the ypocryte



He generacion or byrth of the ypocryte is moche dampnable and euylle / As it appiereth by this fable / and as poge reherceth to vs whiche sayth / that somtyme he fond hym self in a good felauship / where he herd a fable / whiche was there reherced / Of the whiche the tenour foloweth / and seyth the sayd poge / that of alle the goodes of this world / the ypocrytes ben possessours / For how be hit / that an ypocryte haue somtyme wyll for to helpe somme poure and Indygent / Neuertheles he hath a condycyon within hym self / that is to wete / that he shold rather see a man at the poynt of dethe than for to saue his lyf of an halfpeny / And this presumption is called ypocrysy / as ye shal here hereafter by the fable folowyng the whiche sayth that one beyng in the felauship of Poge reherced / that somtyme the customme of alle the poure was that they wente before the folkes dores withoute sayenge ony word It happed thenne on that tyme that a poure man moche

moche faire and of good lyf wente to fercelh  
his lyf fro one dore to another / And vpon a  
day emonge other he wente and sette hym self  
vpon a grete stone before the yate of a wydowe /  
whiche wydowe was acustommed to gyue hym  
euer somwhat / ¶ And whan the good woman  
knewe that he was at hir dore she dyd brynge  
to hym his porcion as she was custommed for to  
doo / And as she gaf to hym the mete she loked  
on hym / and seyng hym soo fayre / and wel  
made of body / she thenne fylled of carnal con-  
cupiscence / and brennyng in the fyre of loue /  
requered and Instantly prayd hym that he wold  
retorne thyder within thre dayes / and promysed  
to him that she shold gyue to hym a ryght good  
dyner / And the poure man sayd to her that he  
shold doo soo / and whanne he came ageyne / he  
sette hym self as before / atte dore of the wydowes  
hows / which the woman knewe well whanne  
he shold come / wherfore she came to the yate  
and sayd / Come within good man / For now we  
shalle dyne / to the whiche prayer the poure  
man assented / & entred within the hows / the  
whiche wydowe gaf to hym good mete / and  
good drynke / And whanne they had wel dyned /  
the sayd wydowe preffyd the good man strongly  
and after she kyssed hym / requyryng hym / that  
the might haue the cople of his loue / And thēne  
the

the poure man al afhamed & vergoynous know-  
 ynge her thoughte and her wylle / anſuerd thus  
 to her Certaynly my good lady I dare not / but  
 neuertheles he wold fayne haue done hit / And  
 the wydowe al embraced with loue befeched and  
 prayd hym more and more / And thenne whan  
 the poure man ſawe that he myght not excuſe  
 hym ſelf / he ſayd to the wydowe in this manere /  
 My frend ſyth that thou deſyreſt it for to doo  
 ſoo moche and ſoo grete an euylle / I take god  
 to my wytnes / that thou arte cauſer of hit / For  
 I am not conſentyng to the faytte or dede / but  
 ſayenge theſe wordes he conſented to her wylle

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**C** The thyrde fable is of a yonge woman whiche  
 accused her huſbond of coulpe or blame

[Omitted. Cf. Poggio *Facetiæ* 45.]

¶ The fourth fable is of the huntynge and  
hawkyng



Poge Florentyn reherceth to vs / how  
ones he was in a selauship where  
men spak of the superflue cure of  
them whiche gouerne the dogges  
and hawkes / wherof a mylannoys  
named Paulus beganne to lawhe / and lawhyng  
requyred of Poge that he wold reherce somme  
fable of the sayd hawkes / And for loue of alle  
the selauship he sayd in thys manere / Somtyme  
was a medecyn whiche was a Mylannoys This  
medecyn heled al soles of al maner of foly / and  
how & in what manere he dyd hele them / I  
shall telle hit to you This medycyn or leche had  
within his hows a grete gardyn And in the  
myddes of hit was a depe and a brode pytte /  
whiche was ful of styntyng and Infected water /  
And within the same pytte the sayd medycyn  
put the soles after the quantyte of theyr folysh-  
nes / somme vnto the knes / and the other vnto  
the bely / And there he bonde them fast at a  
post / but none he putte depper / than vnto the  
stomack for doubte of gretter Inconuenient / It  
happed

happed thenne that emonge other was one brought to hym / whiche he putte in to the fayd water vnto the thyes / And whan he had be by the fpace of xv dayes within the fayd water / he beganne to be peafyble and gate his wytte ageyne / And for to haue take fomme difporte and confolacion he prayd to hym whiche had the keypyng of hym that he wold take hym oute of the water / and promyfed to hym that he fhould not departe fro the gardyn / And thenne the kepar that kepte hym vnbounde hym fro the ftake / and had hym oute of the water / And whanne he had be many dayes oute of the pytte / he wente wel vnto the yate of the gardyn / but he durft not go oute / leffe that he fhould be put ageyne within the fayd pytte / And on a tyme he went aboue vpon the yate / and as he loked al aboute / he fawe a fayr yong man on a horfbak / whiche bare a fperehawk on his fyfte / and had with hym two fayre fpaynels / whereof the fayd fole was al abafhed / And in dede as by caas of nouelte / he callyd the fayd yong man / and after he fayd to hym benyngly / My frend I praye the that thou wilt telle me what is that wherupon thow arte fette / And thenne the yonge fone fayd to hym / that it was a hors whiche prouffited to hym to the chace / and bare hym where he wold / And after the fole demaunded of hym / And what is that  
whiche

whiche thou bereſt on thy fyſle / and wher to is  
it good / and the yong man anſuerd to hym / It  
is a ſperchawke whiche is good for to take par-  
tryches and quaylles / And yet ageyne the ſole  
demaunded of hym / My frend what are thoos  
that folowe the / & wherto ben they good / And  
the yonge man anſuerd to hym / they be dogges  
whiche are good for to ſerche and fynde partryches  
& quaylles / And whan they haue reytied them/  
my ſperchawke taketh them / wherof procedeth  
to me grete ſolas and playſyre / And the ſole  
demaunded ageyne / To your aduys the takyng  
that ye doo by them in a hole yere / how moche  
is hit / ſhalle hit bere to the grete proutſyte /  
And the yong man anſuerd to hym four or fyue  
crownes or ther aboute / And no more ſayd the  
ſole / And to your aduys how moche ſhalle they  
diſpende in a yere / And the yong man anſuerd  
xl or l crownes / ¶ And whanne the ſole herd  
theſe wordes / he ſayd to the ſayd yonge man / O  
my frend I pray the that ſoone thou wylt departe  
fro hens / For yf our fyſicien come / he ſhalle  
putte the within the ſayd pytte by cauſe that  
thow arte a ſole / I was put in it vnto the thyes /  
but therin he ſhold putte the vnto the chynne /  
for thou doſt the gretteſt ſoly that euer I herd  
ſpeke of / ¶ And therefore the ſtudy of the  
hunyng and hawkyng is a ſlouful cure / And  
none

none ought to doo hit withoute he be moche  
ryche and man of lyuelode / And yet hit ought  
not to be done ful ofte / but somtyme for to take  
disporte and solas / and to dryue away melan-  
cholye.



¶ The v sable is of the recytacion of somme  
monstres



Poge of Florence recyteth how in his  
tyme one named Hugh prynce  
of the medycyns/ sawe a catte  
whiche had two hedes and a  
calf whiche also had two hedes

And his legges bothe before and behynde were  
double/ as they had be Joyned al to gyder/  
as many folke sawe/ Jtem about the marches  
of ytalye withynne a medowe was somtyme a  
Cowe/ the whiche Cowe maade and delyuerd  
her of a serpent of wonder and Ryght merueyl-  
lous grettenesse/ Ryghte hydous and ferdful/

¶ For fyrste he hadde the heede gretter than the  
hede of a calf/ ¶ Secondly/ he had a necke of  
the lengthe of an Ayle/ And his body made after  
the lykenesse of a dogge/ and his taylle was  
wonder grete/ thycke and longe withoute com-  
paryson to ony other .

¶ And whanne the Cowe sawe that she hadde  
maade suche a byrthe/ And that within her  
bely she had borne soo ryght horryble a beeste/  
she was al ferdful/ and lyfte her self up/ and  
supposed

supposed to haue fledde awaye / but the Serpent with his wonder longe taylle enlaced her two hynder legges / And the Serpent thenne beganne to souke the Cow / And in dede soo moche / and soo longe he souked tyll that he fond somme mylke / ¶ And whanne the Cowe myght escape fro hym / she fledde vnto the other kyne / ¶ And Incontynent her pappes and her behynder legges and all that the Serpent touched was all black a grete space of tyme ¶ And soone after the sayd Cowe maade a fayre calf / The whiche merueylle was announced or sayd to the sayd Pope he beyng atte Ferrare /

¶ And yet ageyne soone after that / ther was fond within a grete Ryuer a monstre maryn / or of the see of the forme or lyknesse whiche foloweth /

¶ Fyrste he hadde from the nauylle vpward the symplytude or lykenesse of a man / And fro the nauylle downward / he had the fourme or makynge of a Fyssh / the whiche parte was iumelle that is to wete double / ¶ Secondly he hadde a grete berd / and he hadde two wonder grete hornys aboue his eres / ¶ Also he hadde grete pappes / and a wonder grete and horryble mouthe / and his handes retched unto his entraylles or bowellys / And at the bothe his elbowes he hadde wynges ryght brode and grete  
of

of fyfhes mayles / wherwith he fwymmed / and  
only he hadde but the hede oute of the water /  
¶ It happed thenne as many wymmen bouked  
and wefshed at the porte or hauen of the fayd  
Ryuer / that thys horryble and ferdfull beeste  
was / for lacke and defaulte of mete cam &  
fwymmyng toward the fayd wymen / Of the  
which he toke one by the hand / and fupposed  
to haue drawe her in to the water / but fhe was  
ftronge / and wel auysed and refyfted ageynfte  
the fayd monftre / And as fhe deffended her  
felf / fhe beganne to crye with a hyhe voys / help  
help / to the whiche came rennyng fyue wym-  
men / whiche by hurlyng and drawyng of  
ftones kyld and flewe the fayd monftre / For he  
was come to ferre within the fonde / wherfore he  
myght not retorne in the depe water / And after  
whanne he rendryd his fpyryte / he made a ryght  
lytyl crye / fayenge wo that he was fo deformed  
and foo moche cruel / For he was of grete corpu-  
lence more than ony man's body / And yet fayth  
Poge in this manere / that he beyng at Ferrare he  
fawe the fayd monftre / And faith yet / that the  
yonge children were cufstomed for to go bathe  
and wefhe them within the fayd Ryuer / but  
they came not all ageyne / wherfore the wymen  
wefshed ne bouked nomore theyr clothes at the  
faid porte / For the folke prefumed and fupposed  
that

that the monſtre kyld the yonge children / whiche were drowned / ¶ Jtem alſo within a lytyl whyle after hit befelle aboute the marches of ytaly that a child of fourme humayne whiche hadde two hedes and two vyſages or faces beholdynge one vpon the other / & the armes of eche other embraced the body / the whiche body fro the nauyl vpward was Joyned fauf the two hedes / and from the nauyll downward the lymmes were all ſepared one fro other in ſuche wyſe that the lymmes of generacion were ſhewed manyfeſtly / Of the whiche child the tydynges came vnto the perſone of the pope of Rome

**C** The fyrthe fable is of the parson / of his  
dogge / And of the Biffhop



Yluer dothe and causeth alle thyng  
to be done vnto the halowyng  
ageyne of a place whiche is pro-  
phane or Interdicte / As ye shalle  
mowe here by thys presente Fable /

**C** Of a preest dwellynge in the countrey whiche  
somtyme had a dogge / whiche he loued moche /  
the whiche preest was moche ryche / The sayd  
dogge by proceffe of tyme deyde / & whan he was  
dede / he entered and buryed hit in the chirche  
yerd for cause of the grete loue whiche he loued  
hym / it happed thenne on a day his bisskop  
knewe hit by thaduertyfement of somme other /  
wherfore he sente for the sayd preest / and sup-  
posed to haue of hym a grete somme of gold /  
or els he shold make hym to be straitly punysshed /  
And thenne he wrote a lettre vnto the sayd preest  
of whiche the tenour conteyned only that he  
shold come and speke with hym / And whan the  
preest had redde the lettres / he vnderstood wel  
alle the caas / and presupposed or bethought in  
his courage / that he wold haue of hym somme  
syluer /

fyluer / For he knewe wel ynough the condicions of his biffhop / & forth with he toke his breuyarye / & an C crownes with hym / the prelate beganne to remembre and to fhewe to hym the enormyte of his myfdede / And to hym anwerd the preeft whiche was ryght wyfe fayenge in this manere / O my ryght reuerende fader / yf ye knewe the fouerayne prudence of whiche the fayd dogge was fylled / ye shold not be merueylled yf he hath wel defernyd for to be buried honeftly and worshipfully amonge the men / he was al fylled with humayn wytte as wel in his lyf / as in thartycle of the dethe / And thenne the biffhop fayd / how may that be / reherce to me thenne al his lyf / Certaynly ryght reuerende fader ye ought wel to knowe that whanne he was atte thartycle and at the poynt of dethe / he wold make his testament / And the dogge knowyng your grete nede and Indygence / he bequethed to yow an C crownes of gold / the whiche I brynge now vnto yow / And thenne the Biffhop for loue of the money he affoylled the preft And alfo graunted the fayd fepulture / And therfore fyluer caufeth alle thynges to be graunted or done.

¶ The vij fable is of the Foxe of the Cock and of  
the dogges



¶ All the fallary or payment of them  
that mokken other is for to be  
mocqued at the last / as hit ap-  
piereth by this present Fable / of  
a Cock whiche somtyme sawe a  
foxe comynge toward hym fore hongry and  
famyshed / whiche Cock supposed Wel that he  
came not toward hym / but for to ete somme  
henne / for whiche cause the Cock maade al his  
hennes to flee vpon a tree / And whan the foxe  
beganne tapproche to the said tree / he began to  
crye toward the cock good tydynges good tyd-  
ynges / And after he salewed the cok ryght  
reuerently / & demaunded of hym thus / O god-  
sep / what dost thou ther soo hyghe / And thy  
hennes with the / hast not thou herd the good  
tydynges worthy and prouffitable for vs ¶ And  
thenne the Cok ful of malyce ansuerd to hym /  
Nay veryly godsep / but I praye the / telle and  
reherce them vnto vs / Thenne sayd the foxe to  
the cok / Certaynly godsep / they be the best  
that euer ye herd / For ye may goo and come /  
talke

talke and communnyque emong alle beestes withoute any harme or dommage / And they shalle doo to yow bothe pleasyr and alle seruyse to them possible / for thus it is concluded and accorded / and also confermed by the grete counceyll of all bestes / And yet they haue made commaundement that none be so hardy to vexe ne lette in no wyse any other / be it neuer so lytyll a beest / For the whiche good tydynges I praye the / that thou wylt come doune / to thende / that we may goo and synge / Te deum laudamus / for Joye / And the cok whiche knewe wel the fallaces or falskede of the foxe answered to hym in this manere / Certaynly my broder and my good Frend thou hast brought to me ryght good tydynges / wherof more than C tymes I shalle thanke the / And sayenge these wordes the Cock lyfte vp his neck / and his feet / and loked farre fro hym / And the foxe sayd to hym / what godsep / where aboute lokest thou / And the Cok answered to hym / Certaynly my broder I see two dogges strongly and lightly rennyng hytherward with open mouthes / whiche as I suppose come for to bryng to vs the tydynges whiche thou hast told to vs / And thenne the Foxe whiche shoke for fere of the two dogges sayd to the Cock / god be with you my frend / It is tyme that I departe fro hens / or  
these



these two dogges come nerer / And sayinge these  
wordes toke his waye / & ranne as fast as he  
myght / And thenne the cock demaunded and  
cryed after hym / godsep / why rennest thou  
thus / yf the sayd pacte is accorded / thou oughtest  
not to doubt no thyng. Ha a godsep sayd the  
Foxe from ferre / I doubt that these two dogges  
haue not herd the decreet of the pees / And  
thus whanne a begyler is begyled / he receyued  
the fallary or payement / whiche he ought to  
haue / wherfore lete euery man kepe hym self  
ther fro



Ogius reherceth that there were two  
wymmen in Rome / whiche he  
knewe of dyuerse age and forme /  
which came to a Curteyzan by  
cause to haue and wyne somwhat  
wyth theyr bodyes / whome he receyued and  
happed that he knewe the fayrest of bothe twyes /  
and that other ones / and soo departed / And  
afterward whanne they shold departe / he gaf to  
them a pyece of linnen clothe / not decernynge  
how moche eche of them shold haue to her  
parte and porcion / And in the partynge of the  
sayd clothe fylle bitwene the wymmen a fyrst by  
cause

cause one of them demaunded two partes after thexygence of her werke / And that other the half after theyre perfoncs / eche of them shewynge dyuerfly theyr refons / that one fayeng that she hadde suffred hym twyes to doo his pleasyr / and that other pretended / that she was redy and in her was no defawte And soo fro wordes they came to stokes and cratchyng with naylys / and drawynge theyr here / in so moche that theyr neyghbours came to this batayll for to departe them / And also of theyr owne and propre husbondes / not knowynge the cause of theyr stryf and debate / eche of them defendynge his wyues cause / And fro the fyghtynge of the wymmen hit aroos and came to theyr husbondes with buffettis and castynge of stones / soo longe that men ranne bytwene them / And after the customme of Rome bothe the husbondes were brought to pryson berynge enemyte eche to other / & knewe no thyng the cause wherfore / The sayd cloth is sette in the handes of the wymen secretely yet not departed / but is secretely argued amonge the wymmen in what wyse that this mater shal be denyded / And I demaunde of doctoures what the lawe is of it

¶ He sayeth also that a marchaunt of Florence bought an hors of a man / and made his couenaunt  
with

with the fellar for xxv ducattes for to paye forth-  
 with in hande xv ducattes / And as for the rest  
 he shold abyde dettour and owe / And the fellar  
 was content / and therupon delyuerd the hors and  
 receyued the xv ducattes / After this a certayne  
 terme the fellar demaunded of the byar the  
 resydue / And he denyed the payment / & had  
 hym hold his couenant / For the byer sayd we  
 were accorded that I shold be thy debtour / And  
 yf I shold sattyfye and paye the I shold nomore  
 be thy dettour / et cetera / and soo he abode  
 dettour



Helleth also that ther was a carryk  
 of Jene hyred in to fraunce for to  
 make warre ayenst englysshmen /  
 of the whiche caarrick the patrone  
 bare in his sheld painted an oxe  
 hede / whiche a noble man of fraunce beheld and  
 sawe / & fayd he wold auenge hym on hym that  
 bare tho armes / wherupon aroos an altercacion  
 so moche / that the frenshman prouoked the  
 Janueye to bataylle and fyght therfore / The  
 Januey acceptyd the prouocacion / & came at  
 the day assigned in to the felde withoute ony  
 araye or habyllements of warre / And that other  
 frenshe man came in moche noble apparayll in  
 to the feld that was ordeyned / & thēne the  
 patrone of the carrik said wherfore is it that  
 we two shold this day fyght & make bataill fore  
 I saye said that other that thyn armes ben myn /  
 & bylonged to me to fore that thou haddest  
 them / Thenne the Januey said It is no nede to  
 make ony bataylle therfore / For the armes that  
 I bere is not the hede of an oxe but it is the hede  
 of a cowe whiche thyng so spoken the noble  
 Frenshe man was abashed and so departed half  
 mocqued



Also he saith that ther was a phisycyen  
 dwellyng in a Cyte / whiche was  
 a grete & a connyng man in that  
 seyence / & he had a seruaūt a  
 yong man whiche made pyllles  
 after a certayne forme that he shewed to hym /  
 & whan this yong man / had dwellid long with  
 hym / & coude parfytly make the pyllles / he  
 departed fro his mayster / and went in to straūge  
 countre where as he was knowen / and lete men  
 there to vnderstonde that he was a connyng  
 phisycyen / and coude gyue medycynes for al  
 maner maladyes and sekeneesses / and mynistryed  
 alwey his pyllles to euery man that came to hym  
 for ony remedy / And hit was soo that a poure  
 man of that place where he was came to hym / and  
 complayned how he had losse his asse / and prayd  
 hym to gyue to hym a medycyne for to fynde  
 his asse ageyne / And he gaf to hym the sayd  
 pyllles / & badde hym to receyue and take them /  
 And he shold fynde his asse / And this poure  
 man dyd soo / and after wente in to the feldes  
 and pastures to seke and loke after his asse / And  
 soo doynge the pylleys wrongth soo in his bely /  
 that he must nedes go purge hym / and went  
 amonge

amonge the reed and there eafyd hym / And anonet here he fonde his afle / wherof he beyng moche Joyeful ranne in to the toune / and told and proclamed / that by the medecyn that he had receyued of the phifycyen he had found his afle / whiche thyng knowne alle the fymple peple reputed hym for a moche connyng man / whiche coude no thyng doo but maké pyllyes / And thus many fooles are ofte taken for wyfe and connyng / For he was reputed to hele all maner fekenesses / and also to fynde asses.



Here was in a certayne towne a wydower wowed a wydowe for to haue and Wedde her to his wyf / And at the last they were agreed and fured to gyder / ¶ And whan a yonge woman beyng seruauant with the wydowe herd therof / she came to her maystresse / and fayd to her / Allas maystresse what haue ye doo / why fayd she / I haue herd say fayd the mayde / that ye be affured and shalle wedde fuche a man / And what thenne fayd the wydowe / Allas fayd the mayde I am fory for yow / by cause I haue herd saye that he is a peryllous man / For he laye so ofte and knewe  
so

ſo moch his other wyf that ſhe deyde therof /  
 And I am ſory therof / that yf ye ſhold falle in  
 lyke caas / to whome the wydowe anſwerd and  
 ſayd / Forſothe I wold be dede / For ther is but  
 ſorowe and care in this world / This was a  
 curteys excuſe of a wydowe



Ow thenne I wylle fyniſhe alle  
 theſe fables wyth this tale that  
 ſoloweth whiche a worſhipful  
 preeſt and a parſone told me late /  
 he ſayd / that there were duel-  
 lyng in Oxenford two preſtes bothe mayſires of  
 arte / of whome that one was quyeck and coude  
 putte hym ſelf forth / And that other was a good  
 ſymple preeſt / And ſoo it happed that the  
 mayſter that was perte and quyeck was anone  
 promoted to a benefyce or tweyne / and after to  
 prebendys / and for to be a Dene of a grete  
 prynces chappel / ſuppoſyng and wenyng that  
 his ſelaw the ſymple preeſt ſhold neuer haue be  
 promoted but be alwaye an Annuel / or at the  
 moſt a paryſhe preeſt / So after longe tyme that  
 this worſhipful man this dene came rydyng in  
 to a good paryſh with a x or xij horſes / lyke a  
 prelate / and came in to the chirche of the ſayd  
 paryſhe / and ſond there this good ſymple man  
 ſomtyme

somtyme his felawe / whiche cam and welcomed  
hym lowely / And that other badde hym good  
morowe mayster Johan / and toke hym fleyghtly  
by the hand / and axyd hym where he dwellyd /  
And the good man sayd in this parysh / how  
sayd he / are ye here a fowle preeft or a parysh  
preste / nay fyr said he / for lack of a better  
though I be not able ne worthy I am parson  
and curate of this paryshe / and thenne that  
other aualed his bonet and said mayster par-  
son I praye yow to be not despleasyd / I had  
supposed ye had not be benefyced / But mayster  
sayd he / I pray yow what is this benfyce worth  
to yow a yere / Forsothe sayd the good symple  
man / I wote neuer / for I make neuer accomptes  
thereof / how wel I haue had hit four or fyue  
yere / And knowe ye not said he what it is  
worth / it shold seme a good benefyce / no For-  
sothe sayd he / But I wote wel what it shalle be  
worth to me / Why sayd he / what shalle hit be  
worth / Forsothe sayd he / yf I doo my trewe  
dylygēce in the cure of my paryshēs in prechyng  
and techynge / and doo my parte longynge to  
my cure / I shalle haue heuen therfore / And yf  
theyre fowles ben lost or ony of them by my  
defawte / I shall be punysshed therfore / And  
herof am I sure / And with that word the ryche  
dene was abasshed And thought he shold be the  
better /



better / And take more hede to his cures and  
benefyces than he had done / This was a good  
anſwere of a good preest and an honest /

And here with I synysshē this book / translated  
& empynted by me William Caxton at  
Westmynster in thabbey / and synysshed  
the xxvj daye of Marche the yere  
of oure lord M CCCC lxxiiij /  
And the fyrst yere of the  
regne of King Ryche-  
ard the thyrde.

# ERRATA.

Those in Gothic are in the original Caxton.

Page.	Line.		
6	11	Tcceth/ Theunc,	teeth / Thenne.
22	4	audacyte,	audacyte.
29	12	gunnes,	gynnes.
35	7	nygt,	ny3t.
47	12	conenaunces,	conuenauces.
54	20	double,	doubte.
58	9	rygte,	ry3te.
74	1	Seventb,	vj.
92	8	grede,	grete.
102	17	eyylle,	euylle.
103	10	folowith,	foloweth.
105	18	beaulte,	beaute.
111		No heading.	
112	20	enhanced,	enhaunced.
115	16	afo,	also.
„	21	monc,	
116	17	ypocytes,	ypoerytes.
117	13	vysyded,	vysyted.
119	2	eyyle,	euylle.
120	3	behodeth,	behoueth.
120	12	thyn conuenynt,	thynconuenyent.
128	22	uf,	yf.
138	1	knyggt,	knyght.
„	25	fend,	and.
145	5	raynfull,	raynfall.
198	7	thexcafacions,	thexcufacions.
204	15	eyylle,	euylle.
215	15	than dyd.	then hyt dyd.
221	3	he he,	he.
232	4	sommen of a,	som men of a.
234	12	and byldeth,	omit and.
238	24	ppsscscour,	poffessour.
241	21	ond,	and.
246	17	And And,	And.
„	22	lasse,	lesse.
247	22	inhance,	enhaunce.
248	16	sacryfyed,	facryfyed.
251	13	Arabe,	a Rabe.
266	5	the,	thre.
276	3	wgiche,	whiche.
277	2	sechynge,	seckyng.
286	9	euylle,	euylle.
313	8	parfily,	parfily.
„	23	wrongtb,	wrought.

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*cf.* Chaucer, *Cant. Tales*,  
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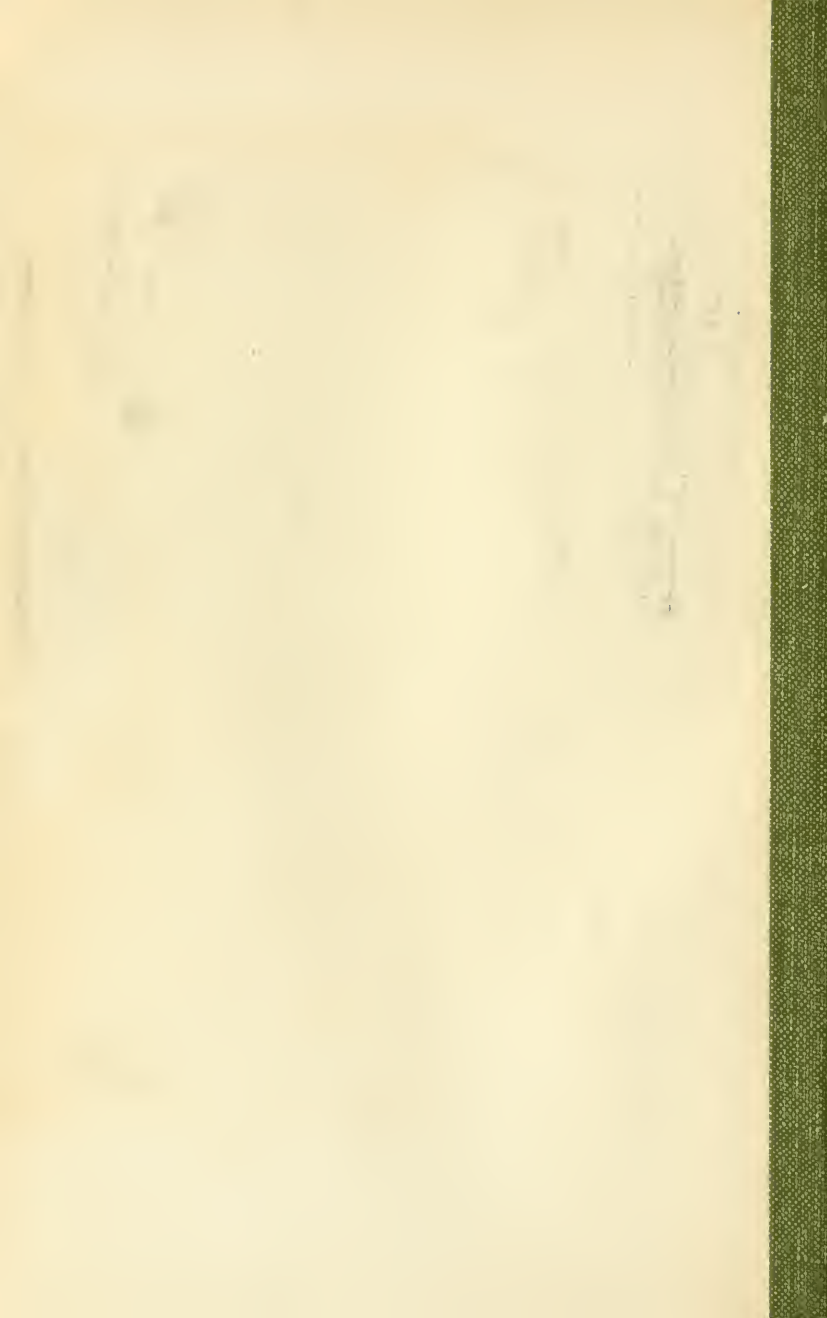
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