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### **The History Of English Poetry**

From The Close of the Eleventh To The Commencement of the Eighteenth  
Century

**Warton, Thomas**

**London, 1774**

Section VIII. Pierce Plowman's Visions. Antient state and original institution  
of fairs. Donat explained. Antichrist.

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## S E C T. VIII.

THE next poet in succession is one who deserves more attention on various accounts. This is Robert Longland, author of the poem called the VISION OF PIERCE PLOWMAN, a secular priest, and a fellow of Oriel college, in Oxford. He flourished about the year 1350<sup>a</sup>. This poem contains a series of distinct visions, which the author imagines himself to have seen, while he was sleeping, after a long ramble on Malverne-hills in Worcestershire. It is a satire on the vices of almost every profession: but particularly on the corruptions of the clergy, and the absurdities of superstition. These are ridiculed with much humour and spirit, couched under a strong vein of allegorical invention. But instead of availing himself of the rising and rapid improvements of the English language, Longland prefers and adopts the style of the Anglo-Saxon poets. Nor did he make these writers the models of his language only: he likewise imitates their alliterative versification, which consisted in using an aggregate of words beginning with the same letter. He has therefore rejected rhyme, in the place of which he thinks it sufficient to substitute a perpetual alliteration. But this imposed constraint of seeking identical initials, and the affectation of obsolete English, by demanding a constant and necessary departure from the natural and obvious forms of expression, while it circumscribed the powers of our author's genius, contributed also to render his

<sup>a</sup> I have here followed a date commonly received. But it may be observed, that there is in this poem an allusion to the fall of Edward the second. The siege of Calais

is also mentioned as a recent fact; and *Bribery* accuses *Conscience* of obstructing the conquest of France. See more in *Observations on the Fairy Queen*, ii. §. xi. p. 281. manner



manner extremely perplexed, and to disgust the reader with obscurities. The satire is conducted by the agency of several allegorical personages, such as Avarice, Bribery, Simony, Theology, Conscience, &c. There is much imagination in the following picture, which is intended to represent human life, and its various occupations.

Then gan I to meten a mervelouſe ſweven,  
That I was in wildernes, I wyſt never where :  
As I beheld into theaſt, on highe to the ſunne  
I ſaw a tower on a loſt, rychlych ymaked,  
A depe dale beneth, a dungeon therein,  
With depe diches and darcke, and dreadfull of fyght :  
A fayre felde ful of folke found I ther betwene,  
Of all maner men, the meane and the riche,  
Working and wandring, as the world asketh ;  
Some put hem to the ploughe, pleiden full ſelde,  
In ſetting and ſowing ſwonken full harde :  
And ſome put hem to pryde<sup>b</sup>, &c.

The following extracts are not only striking specimens of our author's allegorical satire, but contain much sense and observation of life, with some strokes of poetry<sup>c</sup>.

Thus robed in ruſſet, I romed aboute  
All a ſomer ſeaſon, for to ſeke<sup>d</sup> DOWEL  
And freyned<sup>e</sup> full oft, of folke that I mette  
If any wight wiſt, wher DOWEL<sup>f</sup> was at inne,  
And what man he might be, of many man I asked,  
Was never wight as I went, that me wyſh<sup>g</sup> could

<sup>b</sup> Fol. i. a. edit. 1550. By Roberte Crowley. 4<sup>to</sup>. He printed three editions in this one year. Another was printed [with Pierce Plowman's CREDE annexed] by Owen Rogers, 1561. 4<sup>to</sup>. See Strype, Ann. Re-

format. i. 135. And Ames, Hist. Print. p. 270.

<sup>c</sup> F. 39. seq. Pass. viii. seq. edit. 1550.

<sup>d</sup> Do-well. <sup>e</sup> Enquired.

<sup>f</sup> Lived. <sup>g</sup> Inform me.



Where this ladde lenged <sup>b</sup>, lesse or more,  
 Tyll it befell on a Fryday, two fryers I mette  
 Maisters of the minours <sup>1</sup>, men of greate wytte  
 I halsted hem hendelye <sup>k</sup>, as I had learned  
 And prayed hem for charitie, or they passed furthur  
 If they knewe any courte or countrie as they went  
 Where that DOWELL dwelleth, do me to wytte <sup>l</sup>  
 For they be men on this mould, that most wide walke  
 And knowe contries and courts, and many kinnes <sup>m</sup> places  
 Both princes palaces, and pore menes cotes  
 And DOWEL and DOEVIL, where they dwell both,  
 Amongest us quoth the minours, that man is dwellinge  
 And ever hath as I hope, and ever shall hereafter,  
 Contra quod I, as a clarke, and cumfied to disputen  
 And sayde hym sothelye, Septies in die cadit justus,  
 Seven <sup>n</sup> sythes sayeth the boke, synneth the rightfull,  
 And who so synneth I say, doth evel as me thinketh,  
 And DOWEL and DOEVYL may not dwel together,  
 Ergo he is not alway among you fryers  
 He is other whyle els where, to wyshen the people.  
 I shal say the my sonne, sayde the frier than  
 Howe seven sithes the fadde <sup>o</sup> man on a day synneth,  
 By a forvisne <sup>p</sup> quod the fryer, I shal the faire shewe  
 Let bryng a man in a bote, amynd the brode water  
 The winde and the water, and the bote waggyng  
 Make a man many time, to fall and to stande  
 For stand he never so stiffe, he stumbleth if he move  
 And yet is he safe and sounde, and so hym behoveth,  
 For if he ne arise the rather, and raght to the stere,  
 The wind would with the water the boote overthrow.  
 And than were his life lost through latches <sup>q</sup> of himself.  
 And thus it falleth quod the frier, bi folk here on erth

<sup>a</sup> Lived.  
<sup>aa</sup> Sorts of.

<sup>b</sup> The friers minors.  
<sup>o</sup> Times.

<sup>o</sup> Sober. Good.

<sup>k</sup> Saluted them civilly.  
<sup>p</sup> Similitude.

<sup>l</sup> Know.  
<sup>q</sup> Lazines.



The water is likned to the world, that waneth and wexeth  
 The goods of this world ar likened to the gret waves  
 That as winds and wethers, walken a bout.  
 The boote is likende to our body, that brytil is of kynd  
 That through the fleshe, and the frayle worlde  
 Synneth the sadde man, a day seven tymes  
 And deadly synne doeth he not, for DOWEL him kepeth  
 And that is CHARITIE the chapion, chiefe helpe agayne sinne,  
 For he strengtheth man to stand, and stirreth mans soule  
 And though the thy bodi bowe, as bote doth in water,  
 Aye is thy soule safe, but if thou wylt thy self  
 Do a deadly sinne, and drenche so thy soule  
 God wyll suffer wel thy slouth, if thy selfe lyketh  
 For he gafe the two yeresgifts, to teme wel thy selfe  
 And that is witte and frewil, to every wight a portion  
 To flyng fowles, to fishes, and to beastes  
 And man hath moste therof, and most is to blame  
 But if he worch wel therwith, as DOWEL hym teacheth.  
 I have no kind knowyng quoth I, to coceive all your wordes  
 And if I may live and loke, I shal go learne better  
 I bikenne the Christ, that on the crosse dyed  
 And I said the same, save you from mischaunce  
 And give you grace on this ground good me to worth.  
 And thus I went wide wher, walking mine one  
 By a wyde weldernes, and by a woddes fyde,  
 Bliffe of the birdes, brought me on slepe,  
 And under a lynde<sup>r</sup> on a land, lened I a stounde<sup>s</sup>  
 To lyth the layes<sup>r</sup>, tho lovely fowles made,  
 Myrthe of her mouthes made me there to slepe  
 The marveloufest metelles, mette<sup>r</sup> me than  
 That ever dremed wyght, in world as I wente.  
 A much man as me thought, and like to my selfe,  
 Came and called me, by my kinde<sup>w</sup> name

<sup>r</sup> Lime tree.    <sup>s</sup> A while.    <sup>r</sup> Listen.    <sup>w</sup> Dremed:    <sup>w</sup> Own.

What



What art thou quod I tho, thou that my name knoweste  
 That thou wottest wel quod he, and no wight better  
 Wot I what thou art? THOUGHT sayd he than,  
 I have fued<sup>x</sup> the this seven yeres, fe ye me no rather?  
 Art thou THOUGHT quoth I tho, thou couldest me wyshe  
 Wher that DOWEL dwelleth, and do me that to knowe  
 DOWEL and DOBETTER, and DOBEST the thirde quod he  
 Are thre fayre vertues, and be not farre to finde,  
 Who so is true of hys tonge, and of hys two handes  
 And through his labor or his lod, his livedod wineth<sup>y</sup>  
 And is trusty of hys taylyng<sup>z</sup>, taketh but his owne  
 And is no drunkelewe<sup>a</sup> ne dedigious, DOWEL him followeth  
 DOBET doth ryght thus, and he doth much more  
 He is as lowe as a lamb, and lovely of speache  
 And helpeth al men, after that hem nedeth  
 The bagges and the bigirdles, he hath to brok<sup>b</sup> hem al,  
 That the erle avarous helde and hys heyres  
 And thus to mamons mony he hath made him frendes  
 And is runne to religion, and hath rendred<sup>c</sup> the bible  
 And preached to the people, saynte Pauls werdes.  
 Libenter suffertis insipientes cum fitis ipsi sapientes.  
 And suffereth the unwyse, wyth you for to lyve  
 And with glad wil doth he good, for so god you hoteth  
 DOBEST is above boeth, and beareth a bishops crosse  
 Is hoked on that one ende to halye<sup>d</sup> men from hell  
 A pyke is on the potent<sup>e</sup> to pull downe the wyked  
 That wayten anye wykednes, DOWELL to tene  
 And DOWELL and DOBET, amongest hem have ordeyned  
 To crowne one to be kynge, to rule hem boeth  
 That if DOWELL and DOBET, arne<sup>f</sup> agaynste DOBESTE  
 Then shall the kynge com, and cast hem in yrons  
 And but if DOBEST byd for hem, they be there for ever

<sup>x</sup> Sought. <sup>y</sup> Getts. <sup>z</sup> Dealing. Reckoning. <sup>a</sup> Drunkard. <sup>b</sup> Broke to pieces.  
<sup>c</sup> Translated. <sup>d</sup> Draw. <sup>e</sup> Staff. <sup>f</sup> Are.

Thus



Thus DOWELL and DOBET, and DOBESTE the thyrd  
 Crouned one to be king, to kepen hem al  
 And to rule the realme, by her <sup>e</sup> thre wyttes  
 And none other wise, but as they thre assentyd.  
 I thanked THOUGHT tho, that he me thus taught  
 And yet favoereth me not thy fucing, I covet to lerne,  
 How DOWEL DOBEST, and DOBETTER, done among the  
 people

But WYT can wish the <sup>b</sup> quoth THOUGHT, wer tho <sup>i</sup> iii dwell  
 Els wot I none that can tell, that nowe is alyve.  
 THOUGHT and I thus, thre dayes we yeden <sup>k</sup>  
 Disputynge upon DOWELL, daye after other.  
 And ere we were ware, with WYT gan we mete  
 He was longe and leane, lyke to none other  
 Was no pryde on hys apparell, nor poverty nether  
 Sadde of hys semblaunce, and of soft chere  
 I durste not move no matter, to make hym to laughe,  
 But as I bade THOUGHT tho be meane betwene  
 And put forth some purpose, to prevent his wyls  
 What was DOWELL fro DOBET, and DOBEST fro hem both.  
 Than THOUGHT in that tyme, sayd these wordes  
 Whether DOWELL DOBET, and DOBEST ben in land  
 Here is wyl wold wyt, if WIT could teach him  
 And whether he be man or woman, this man fain wold espy  
 And worch as they thre wold, this is his enten,  
 Here DOWELL dwelleth quod WIT, not a day hence  
 In a castel that kind <sup>l</sup> made, of four kins things  
 Of earth and ayre is it made, mingled toghthers  
 With wind and with water, witterly <sup>m</sup> enjoyned  
 KYNDE hath closed therein, craftely withall  
 A Lemman <sup>n</sup> that he loveth, like to him selfe  
 ANIMA she hyght, and Envye her hateth

<sup>e</sup> Their.  
<sup>m</sup> Cunningly.

<sup>b</sup> Thee.  
<sup>n</sup> Paramour.

<sup>i</sup> They.

<sup>k</sup> Went.

<sup>l</sup> Nature

A proude



A proude prickere of Fraunce, princeps hujus mundi  
 And woulde wyne her away with wiles and he myghte  
 And KIND knoweth thys well, and kepeth her the better:  
 And dothe her with fir DOWELL is duke of thys marches  
 DOBET is her damofell, fir DOWEL's daughter  
 To serue this lady lelly<sup>o</sup>, both late and rathe<sup>p</sup>.  
 DOBEST is above both a byshops pere,  
 That he byd moote be doo<sup>q</sup> he ruleth them all  
 ANIMA that lady, is led by his lerning,  
 And the constable of the castell, that kepeth al the watche,  
 Is a wyse knight withall, fir Inwit he hight  
 And hath fyve fayre sonnes by his fyrst wyfe  
 Syr Seewel and Saywel, and Hearwell the end  
 Syr Worchwel with thy hand, a wight man of strength  
 And Syr Godfray Gowel, great lordes forsoth  
 These fyve bene set, to save this lady Anima  
 Tyl KIND com or send, to save her for ever  
 What kins thing is KIND quod I, canst thou me telle  
 Kynd quod Witte is a creator, of al kinnis thinges  
 Father and former of all, that ever was makyd  
 And that is the great god that ginning had never  
 Lord of lyfe and of light, of blys and of payne  
 Angels and al thing arne at his wyl,  
 And man is him most like, of marke<sup>r</sup> and of shape,  
 For through the word that he spake, wexen forth bestes  
 And made Adam, likest to him selfe one  
 And Eve of his ribbe bone, without any meane  
 For he was singuler him selfe, and sayde faciamus  
 As who say more must hereto, then my worde one  
 My might must helpe now with my speche,  
 Even as a lord shuld make leters, and he lacked perchment  
 Though he could write never so wel, if he had no pen  
 The letters for al his lordship, I leve wer never imaked

<sup>o</sup> Fair lady.<sup>p</sup> Early.<sup>q</sup> Must be done.<sup>r</sup> Fashion. Similitude.

And



And so it semeth by him, as the bible telleth,  
 There he sayde, Dixit et facta sunt.  
 He must worch with hys word, and his wit shewe  
 And in this maner was man made, by might of God al-  
 mighty

With his word and his workmanship, and with life to last  
 And thus God gave him a goste<sup>s</sup>, of the godhed of heven  
 And of his great grace, graunted him blyffe  
 And that is life that aye shal last, to al our linage after  
 And that is the castel that KINDE made, Caro it hight  
 And is as much to meane, as man with a foule  
 And that he wrought with work, and with word both  
 Through might of the majesty, man was imaked  
 Inwyt and Alwyts, closed bene therin  
 For love of the ladie Anima, that life is nempned<sup>s</sup>  
 Over al in mans body, she walketh and wandreth  
 And in the herte is hir home, and hir most<sup>s</sup> rest  
 And Inwit is in the head, and to the herte loketh  
 What Anima is leef or loth<sup>s</sup>, he leadith hyr at his wil.—  
 Than had WIT a wife, was hote dame STUDY,  
 That leve was of lere, and of liche boeth.  
 She was wonderli wroght, Wit me so teched  
 And al staryng dame Study, sternely fayde.  
 Wel art you wise quoth she to Wyt, any wysdomes to tell  
 To flatterers or to foles, that frentyke be of wyttes  
 And blamed him and banned<sup>s</sup> him, and bade him be styl  
 Wyth such wyse wordes, to wysh any sottis  
 And sayde, Noli mittere man, Margarite Pearles  
 Amonge hogges, that have hawes at wyll.  
 They do but drivel theron, <sup>s</sup> drafte were hem lever<sup>s</sup>,  
 Than al precious pearles that in paradice waxeth<sup>s</sup>.  
 I say it by such, quod she, that shew it by her works,

<sup>s</sup> Spirit. <sup>t</sup> Named. <sup>u</sup> Greatest. <sup>w</sup> Willing. <sup>x</sup> Curfed. <sup>y</sup> See Draffe-  
 sack. Chauc. Urr. p. 33. v. 1098. <sup>z</sup> Rather. <sup>a</sup> Grow.



That hem were lever land <sup>b</sup>, and lordshyp on earth,  
 Or ryches or rentes, and rest at her wyll,  
 Than al the soth sawes, that Salomon sayde ever.  
 Wysedome and wytte, nowe is not worth a kerse <sup>c</sup>  
 But if it be carded with covetis <sup>d</sup>, as clothers kemb her  
 woule

Whoso can contryve deceites, and conspyre wrongs  
 And lead forth a love daye <sup>e</sup>, to let wyth truth  
 He that such craftes can, is oft cleped to counsell,  
 They lead lords with leasinges, and belieth truth  
 Job the gentel in his gestes, greatly wytnesseeth  
 That wicked men welden the wealth of this world  
 The psalter sayeth the same, by such as done evyl  
 Ecce ipsi peccatores habundantes in seculo obtinuerunt divitias.  
 Lo sayth holy lecture, which lords be these shrewes?  
 Thilke that god geveth most, lest good they dealeth  
 And most unkind be to that comen, that most catel weldeth <sup>f</sup>.  
 Que perfecisti destruxerunt, justus autem &c.  
 Harlots for her harlotrye, maye have of her goodes  
 And japers and judgelers <sup>g</sup>, and jangelers of jestes  
 And he that hath holy wryte, aye in his mouth  
 And can tell of Tobie, and of the twelve apostles  
 Or preache of the penaunce, that Pilate falsely wrought  
 To Jesu the gentle, that Jewes to drawe:  
 Lyttle is he loved, that suche a lesson sheweth  
 Or daunten or drawe forth, I do it on god him selfe  
 But tho <sup>h</sup> that faine hem soles, and with fayting <sup>i</sup> liveth  
 Againe the lawe of our lorde, and lien on hem selfe  
 Spitten and spuen, and speake foule wordes  
 Drynken and drivelen, and do men for to gape  
 Lyken men, and lye on hem, and leneth hem no giftes  
 They can <sup>k</sup> no more minstrelsy ne musyke men to glad

<sup>b</sup> They had rather.    <sup>c</sup> Not worth a straw.    <sup>d</sup> Covetousness.    <sup>e</sup> Lady.  
<sup>f</sup> Commands.    <sup>g</sup> Jugglers.    <sup>h</sup> They.    <sup>i</sup> Deceiving.    <sup>k</sup> Know.

Than



Than Mundie the milner, of multa fecit deus.  
 Ne were hir vyle harlotry, have god my trowth  
 Shoulde never kyng ne knyght, ne canon of Poules  
 Gyve hem to her yeres gyfte, ne gyft of a grote,  
 And myrth and minstrelsy amongest men is nought  
 Lechery, losenchery<sup>1</sup>, and losels tales,  
 Glotony and greate othes, this mirthe they loveth,  
 And if thei carpen<sup>m</sup> of Christ, these clerkes and these lewed.  
 And they meet in her mirth, whan mynstrels ben styll  
 Whan telleth they of the trinitie, a tale or twaine  
 And bringeth forth a blade reason, and take Bernard<sup>n</sup> to  
 witnes

And put forth a presumption to preve the soth  
 Thus they dreveil at her dayse<sup>o</sup> the deitie to scorn  
 And gnawen God to hyr gorge<sup>p</sup> whan hyr guts fallen  
 And the carfull<sup>q</sup> may crye, and carpen at the gate  
 Both a fyngerd and a furste, and for chel<sup>r</sup> quake  
 Is none to nyemen hem nere, his noye<sup>s</sup> to amend  
 But hunten hym as a hounde, and hoten hym go hence,  
 Litle loveth he that lorde that lent hym all that blisse,  
 That thus parteth withe pore, a percel whan him nedeth  
 Ne were mercy in mean men, more than in rich  
 Mendynauntes meatles<sup>t</sup>, myght go to bedde.  
 God is much in the gorge of these greate maisters,  
 And amonges meane men, his mercy and hys worckes  
 And so sayeth the psalter, I have sene it oft.  
 Clarkes and other kinnes men, carpen of god fast  
 And have him much in the mouth, and meane men in hert  
 Friers and fayters, have founden such questions  
 To plese wyth the proud men, sith the pestilence time  
 And preachen at S. Paules, for pure envi of clarks  
 That folke is not firmid in the faythe, ne fre of her goodes

<sup>1</sup> Lying.    <sup>m</sup> Speak.    <sup>n</sup> S. Bernard.    <sup>o</sup> Their table.    <sup>p</sup> Throat.    <sup>q</sup> Poor.  
<sup>r</sup> Cold.    <sup>s</sup> Trouble.    <sup>t</sup> Beggars supperless.



Ne fory for her fynnes, so is pryde waxen,  
 In religion, and in al the realme, amongest rich and pore  
 That prayers have no pore, the pestilence to lette  
 And yet the wretches of this worlde, are none ware by other  
 Ne for drede of the death, withdraw not her prid  
 Ne ben plentuous to the pore, as pure charitie wold  
 But in gaines and in glotony, forgote goods hem felse  
 And breketh not to the begger, as the boke teacheth.  
 And the more he wynneth, and wexeth welthy in riches  
 And lordeth in landes, the lesse good he dealeth  
 Tobie telleth ye not so, takehede ye ryche  
 Howe the byble boke of hym beareth wytnes,  
 Who so hath much spend manly, so meaneth Tobit  
 And who so lytle weldeth, rule hym thereafter,  
 For we have no letter of our life, how long it shal endure  
 Suche lessons lordes, shoulde love to heare  
 And how he myght most meyny, manlych fynde  
 Not to fare as a fideler, or a frier to seke feastes,  
 Homely at other mens houses, and haten her owne.  
 Elenge<sup>a</sup> is the hal every day in the weke  
 There the lorde ne the lady lyketh not to fyte  
 Nowe hath eche ryche a rule<sup>b</sup>, to eaten by hem felse  
 In a privie parler, for poore mens sake  
 Or in chambre wyth a chymney, and leave the chiefe hal  
 That was made for meales, men to eate in.—  
 And whan that Wytte was ware, what dame Studie told  
 He became so confuse he cunneth not loke  
 And as dombe as death, and drew him arere<sup>c</sup>  
 And for no carping I cold after, ne kneling to therth  
 I myght get no grayne, of his grete wyttis  
 But al laughynge he louted, and loked upon Study  
 In fygne that I shulde, besechen hyr of grace

<sup>a</sup> Strange, deserted. Henry the eighth in a letter to Anne Bullen, speaks of his  
*Ellengues* since her departure. Hearne's Avelb. p. 260.      <sup>b</sup> Custom.      <sup>c</sup> Back.

And



And when I was war of his wil, to his wife I loutid  
 And fayde mercie madame, your man shal I worth  
 As longe as I live both late and earlie  
 For to worchen your wil, the while mi life endureth  
 With this that ye ken me kindlye, to know to what is Dowel  
 For thi mekenes man quod she, and for thi milde spech  
 I shal ken the to my cofen, that Clergye is hoten <sup>y</sup>  
 He hath weddyd a wyfe, within these fyx moneths  
 Is fyb <sup>z</sup> to the seven artes, Scripture is hyr name  
 They two as I hope, after my teachinge  
 Shal wifhen the Dowel, I dare under take.  
 Than was I as fayne <sup>a</sup>, as foule <sup>b</sup> of fayr morow  
 And glader then the gleman <sup>c</sup> that golde hath to gyfte  
 And asked hir the high way where that Clergie <sup>d</sup> dwelt  
 And tellme some token quod I, for tyme is that I wend  
 Aske the hygh waye quod she, hence to suffer  
 Both wel and woo, if that thou wylt learne  
 And ryde forthe by riches, and rest thou not therin,  
 For if thou couplest ye therwith to clergie comest thou never,  
 And also the licores lande that lechery hight  
 Leave it on thy left half, a large mile and more,  
 Tyll thou come to a courte, kepe well thy tonge  
 Fro leasinges and lyther speach <sup>e</sup>, and licorous drinckes  
 Than shalt thou se Sobrietie, and Simplicitie of speche  
 That ech might be in his wyll, hys wytte to shewe  
 And thus shalt ye come to Cleargye that can mani thinges  
 Saye hym thys signe, I sette him to schole  
 And that I grete wel his wife, for I wrot her many bokes  
 And fet hir to Sapience, and to the psalter glose  
 Logike I learned her, and manye other lawes,  
 And all the unisons to musike, I made hir to know,  
 Plato the poete, I put hem firste to boke,

<sup>y</sup> Named.    <sup>z</sup> Mother.    <sup>a</sup> Chearful.    <sup>b</sup> Bird.    <sup>c</sup> Harper.    <sup>d</sup> Learning.

<sup>e</sup> Wanton.

Aristotle



Aristotle and other moe, to argue I taught  
 Grammer for gyrles, I garde firste to wryte  
 And beat hem with a bales, but if they would learne  
 Of all kinnes craftes, I contrived tooles  
 Of carpentre of carvers, and compassed mafons  
 And learned hem level and line, though I loke dimme  
 And Theologie hath tened me, seven score times,  
 The more I muse therin, the mistier it semeth  
 And the deper I devine, the darker me it thyneketh.

The artifices and persuasions of the monks to procure donations to their convents, are thus humorously ridiculed, in a strain which seems to have given rise to Chaucer's *SOMPNOUR'S TALE*.

Than he affoyled her sone, and sithen he sayde :  
 We have a windowe in working, wil fet us ful high,  
 Woudst thou glase the gable, and grave therin thy name,  
 Scher shoulde thy soule be heven to have <sup>f</sup>, &c.

COVETISE or Covetousness, is thus drawn in the true colours of fatirical painting.

<sup>f</sup> fol. xii. a. b. These, and the following lines, are plainly copied by Chaucer, viz.

And I shall cover your kyrke, and your cloisture do maken.

Chaucer, *Sompn. T.* p. 93. v. 835. edit. Urr. But with new strokes of humour.

Yeve me then of thy golde to make our cloyster,

Quod he, for many a muscle and many an oyster,

Whan othir men have been full well at ease,  
 Have ben our fode our cloyster for to reyse.  
 And yet, god wote, unneth the fundament  
 Parfourmid is, ne of our pavement  
 Thar is not yet a tile within our wones,  
 Bigod, we owe fourtie pound for stons.

So also in the *PLOUGHMAN'S CREDE*, hereafter mentioned. Sign. B. iii. A friar says,

So that thou mow amende our house with money other els  
 With som catal, other corn or cuppes of sylvere.

And again, Sign. A. iii. *ibid.*

And mightest on amenden as with money of thine own,

Thou sholdest knely bifore Christ in compass of gold,  
 In the wide wyndowe westward, wel nigh in the midel.

That is, " your figure shall be painted in glass, in the middle of the west window, &c." But of this passage hereafter.

And



And then came COVETIS, can I him no discrive,  
 So hungerly and hollowe, so sternely he loked,  
 He was bittle-browed and baberypped also ;  
 Wyth two blered eyen as a blinde hagge,  
 And as a lethren purse lollid his chekes,  
 Well syder than his chyn they shevered for colde :  
 And as a bound man of his bacon his berd was bidrauled,  
 With a hode on his heade, and a lousfy hatte above.  
 And in a tawny taberde <sup>e</sup>, of twelve winter age,  
 Alle torne and baudye, and full of lyce creepinge ;  
 But that yf a louse could have lepen the better,  
 She had not walked on the welte, so was it thredbare.  
 I have been Covetise, quoth this catife,  
 For sometime I servid Symme at style,  
 And was hys prentice plight, his profyt to wate.  
 Fyrst I lernid to lye, a leef other twayne  
 Wychedly to way, was my first lesson :  
 To Wy and to Winchester <sup>h</sup> I went to the fayre

<sup>e</sup> Tabard. A coat.

<sup>h</sup> Antiently, before many flourishing towns were established, and the necessaries or ornaments of life, from the convenience of communication and the encrease of provincial civility, could be procured in various places, goods and commodities of every kind, were chiefly sold at fairs; to which, as to one universal mart, the people resorted periodically, and supplied most of their wants for the ensuing year. The display of merchandise, and the conflux of customers, at these principal and almost only emporia of domestic commerce, was prodigious: and they were therefore often held on open and extensive plains. One of the chief of them seems to have been that of St. Giles's hill or down near Winchester, to which our poet here refers. It was instituted and given as a kind of revenue to the bishop of Winchester, by William the conqueror; who by his charter permitted it to continue for three days. But in consequence of new royal grants,

Henry the third prolonged its continuance to sixteen days. Its jurisdiction extended seven miles round, and comprehended even Southampton, then a capital trading town: and all merchants who sold wares within that circuit, forfeited them to the bishop. Officers were placed at a considerable distance, at bridges and other avenues of access to the fair, to exact toll of all merchandise passing that way. In the mean time, all shops in the city of Winchester were shut. In the fair was a court called the pavilion, at which the bishop's justices and other officers assisted, with power to try causes of various sorts for seven miles round: nor among other singular claims could any lord of a manor hold a court-baron within the said circuit, without licence from the pavilion. During this time, the bishop was empowered to take toll of every load or parcel of goods passing through the gates of the city. On Saint Giles's eve, the mayor, bailiffs, and citizens of the city of Winchester, delivered the keys of the

four



With mani manner merchandise, as mi master me hight.---

four city gates to the bishop's officers; who, during the said sixteen days, appointed a mayor and bailiff of their own to govern the city, and also a coroner to act within the said city. Tenants of the bishop, who held lands by doing service at the pavilion, attended the same with horses and armour, not only to do suit at the court there, but to be ready to assist the bishop's officers in the execution of writs and other services. But I cannot here enumerate the many extraordinary privileges granted to the bishop on this occasion; all tending to obstruct trade, and to oppress the people. Numerous foreign merchants frequented this fair: and it appears, that the julkiciaries of the pavilion, and the treasurer of the bishop's palace of Wolvesey, received annually for a fee, according to ancient custom, four basons and ewers, of those foreign merchants who sold brazen vessels in the fair, and were called *mercatores diaunteres*. In the fair several streets were formed, assigned to the sale of different commodities; and called the *Drapery*, the *Pottery*, the *Spicery*, &c. Many monasteries, in and about Winchester, had shops, or houses, in these streets, used only at the fair, which they held under the bishop, and often lett by lease for a term of years. One place in the fair was called *Specerarium Sancti Swithini*, or the *Spicery of Saint Swithin's monastery*. In the revenue-rolls of the ancient bishops of Winchester, this fair makes a grand and separate article of reception, under this title. *PERIA. Computus ferie sancti Egidii*. But in the revenue-roll of bishop Will. of Waynflete, [an. 1471.] it appears to have greatly decayed: in which, among other proofs, I find mention made of a district in the fair being unoccupied, "*Ubi homines Cornubiæ stare solebant*." From whence it likewise appears that different counties had their different stations. The whole reception to the bishop this year from the fair, amounted only to 45 *l.* 18 *s.* 5 *d.* Yet this sum, small as it may seem, was worth upwards of 400 *l.* Edward the first sent a precept to the sheriff of Hampshire, to relet to the bishop this fair; which his escheator Malcolm de Harlegh had seized into the

king's hands, without command of the treasurer and barons of the exchequer, in the year 1292. *Registr. Joh. de Pontifara, Episc. Wint. fol. 195.* After the charter of Henry the third, many kings by charter confirmed this fair, with all its privileges, to the bishops of Winchester. The last charter was of Henry the eighth to bishop Richard Fox and his successors, in the year 1511. But it was followed by the usual confirmation-charter of Charles the second. In the year 1144, when Brian Fitz-count, lord of Wallingford in Berkshire, maintained Wallingford castle, one of the strongest garrisons belonging to Maud the empress, and consequently sent out numerous parties for contributions and provisions, Henry de Blois bishop of Winchester enjoined him not to molest any passengers that were coming to his fair at Winchester, under pain of excommunication. *Omnibus ad FERIAM MEAM venturibus, &c. MSS. Dodsworth. vol. 89. f. 76. Bibl. Bodl.* This was in king Stephen's reign. In that of Richard the first, in the year 1194, the king grants to Portsmouth a fair lasting for fifteen days, with all the privileges of Saint Giles's fair at Winchester. *Anderf. Hist. Com. i. 197.* In the year 1234, the eighteenth of Henry the second, the fermier of the city of Winchester paid twenty pounds to Ailward chamberlain of Winchester castle, to buy a robe at this fair for the king's son, and divers silver implements for a chapel in the castle. *Madox, Exch. p. 251.* It appears from a curious record now remaining, containing *The Establishment and Expenses of the household of Henry Percy, fifth earl of Northumberland*, in the year 1512, and printed by doctor Percy, that the stores of his lordship's house at Wresfle, for the whole year, were laid in from fairs. "He that standes charged with my lordes house for the houll yeir, if he may possible, shall be at all FAIRES where the groice emptions shall be boughte for the house for the houille yeire, as wine, wax, beiffes, multons, wheite, and maltie." p. 407. This last quotation is a proof, that fairs still continued to be the principal marts for purchasing necessities



Than drave I me among drapers my donet<sup>1</sup> to lerne.  
To drawe the lyfer along, the longer it semed  
Among the rich rayes, &c.<sup>k</sup>

Our author, who probably could not get preferment, thus inveighs against the luxury and diversions of the prelates of his age.

faries in large quantities, which now are supplied by frequent trading towns: and the mention of *beiffes* and *multons*, which were salted oxen and sheep, shews that at so late a period they knew but little of breeding cattle. Their ignorance of so important an article of husbandry, is also an evidence, that in the reign of Henry the eighth the state of population was much lower among us than we may imagine.

In the statutes of Saint Mary Otery's college in Devonshire, given by bishop Grandison the founder, the stewards and sacrist are ordered to purchase annually two hundred pounds of wax for the choir of the college, at this fair. "Cap. lxvii. — Pro luminaribus vero omnibus supradictis inveniendis, etiam statumus, quod senescalli scaccarii per visum et auxilium sacriste, omni anno, in *NUNDINIS WYNTON*, vel alibi apud Torington et in partibus Barnstapol, ceram sufficientem, quam ad ducentas libras aestimamus pro uno anno ad minus, faciant provideri." These statutes were granted in the year 1338. MS. apud Registr. Priorat. S. Swithin. Winton. In Archiv. Wolves. In the accounts of the Priors of Maxtoke in Warwickshire, and of Bicester in Oxfordshire, under the reign of Henry the sixth, the monks appear to have laid in yearly stores of various yet common necessaries, at the fair of Sturbridge in Cambridgeshire, at least one hundred miles distant from either monastery. It may seem surprising, that their own neighbourhood, including the cities of Oxford and Coventry, could not supply them with commodities neither rare nor costly, which they thus fetched at a considerable expence of

carriage. It is a rubric in some of the monastic rules, *De Euntibus ad Nundinas*. See Dugd. Mon. Angl. ii. p. 746. It is hoped the reader will excuse this tedious note, which at least develops ancient manners and customs.

<sup>1</sup> Lesson. Properly a *Grammar*, from *Aelius Donatus* the grammarian. Chaucer, Testam. L. p. 504. b. edit. Urr. "No pafset to vertues of this Margarite, but therein al my donet can I lerne." In the statutes of Winchester-college, [written about 1386,] grammar is called "*Antiquus donatus*," i. e. the *old donat*, or the name of a system of grammar at that time in vogue, and long before. The French have a book entitled "*LE DONNET, traité de grammaire, baillé a feu roi Charles viii.*" Among Rawlinson's manuscripts at Oxford, I have seen *Donatus optimus noviter compilatus*, a manuscript on vellum, given to Saint Alban's, by John Stoke, abbot, in 1450. In the introduction, or *lytell Prohemie*, to Dean Colet's *GRAMMATICES RUDIMENTA*, we find mention made of "*certayne introducyons into latyn speche called Donates, &c.*" Among the books written by bishop Pecock, there is the *DONAT into christian religion*, and the *Folower to the DONAT*. Lewis's *PECOCK*, p. 317. I think I have before observed, that John of Basing, who flourished in the year 1240, calls his Greek Grammar *DONATUS GRÆCORUM*. Pegge's *WESSEHAM*, p. 51. Wynkyn de Worde printed *DONATUS ad Anglicanarum scholarum usum*. Cotgrave (in V.) quotes an old French proverb, "*Les diables estoient encores a leur DONAT*," "*The devils were but yet in their grammar.*" \* fol. xxiii. a. b.

O o

And



And now is religion a rider, a romer by the streete,  
 A leader of lovedayes <sup>1</sup> and a loude <sup>m</sup> beggar,  
 A pricker on a palfrey from maner to maner,  
 An heape of houndes at his arse as he a lord were <sup>n</sup>.  
 And yf but his knave knele, that shall hys cope bryng,  
 He loured on hym, and asked who taught hym curtesye <sup>o</sup>.

There is great picturesque humour in the following lines.

HUNGER in heft tho hent waftour by the maw,  
 And wrong him so by the wombe that both his eies watered:

<sup>1</sup> Levadies. Ladies. <sup>m</sup> Lewd.

<sup>n</sup> Walter de Suffield, bishop of Norwich, bequeathes by will his pack of hounds to the king, in 1256. Blomesfield's Norf. ii. 347. See Chaucer's Monke, Prol. v. 165. This was a common topic of satire. It occurs again, fol. xxvii. a. See Chaucer's TESTAMENT OF LOVE, p. 492. col. ii. Urr. The archdeacon of Richmond, on his visitation, comes to the priory of Bridlington in Yorkshire, in 1216, with ninety-seven horses, twenty-one dogs, and three hawks, Dugd. Mon. ii. 65.

<sup>o</sup> Fol. l. a. The following prediction, although a probable conclusion, concerning a king, who after a time would suppress the religious houses, is remarkable. I imagined it was foisted into the copies, in the reign of king Henry the eighth. But it is in manuscripts of this poem older than the year 1400. fol. l. a. b.

And **THE** SHALL COME A KING, and  
 confesse your religions,  
 And bete you as the bible telleth, for brek-  
 ing of your rule:  
 And amende moniales, monkes and chan-  
 oines.—  
 And then friers in her freytor shall fynd a  
 key  
 Of Constantynes coffers, in which is the  
 catal  
 That Gregories godchylidren had it dis-  
 pended.

And than shall the abot of Abingdon, and  
 all his issue for ever,  
 HAVE A KNOCKE OF A KING, and IN-  
 CURABLE THE WOUND.

Again, fol. lxxxv. a. Where he alludes to  
 the knights-templars, lately suppressed.

—Men of holie kirke  
 Shall turne as templars did, *the tyme ap-  
 procebeth nere.*

This, I suppose, was a favourite doctrine  
 in Wickliffe's discourses. I cannot help tak-  
 ing notice of a passage in Piers Plowman,  
 which shews how the reigning passion for  
 chivalry infected the ideas and expressions  
 of the writers of this period. The poet is  
 describing the crucifixion, and speaking of  
 the person who pierced our Saviour's side  
 with a spear. This person our author calls a  
*knight*, and says that he came forth, "with  
 " *his speere in hand, and justed with Jesus.*"  
 Afterwards for doing so base an act as that  
 of wounding a dead body, he is pronounced  
 a disgrace to *knighthood*: and our "*Cham-  
 " pion chevaler chyefe knyght*" is ordered  
 to *yield himself recreant*. fol. lxxxviii. b.  
 This knight's name is Longis, and he is  
 blind: but receives his sight from the blood  
 which springs from our Saviour's side.  
 This miracle is recorded in the GOLDEN  
 LEGENDE. He is called Longias, "A  
 " blinde knight men ycallid Longias,"  
 in Chaucer, *Lam. Mar. Magd.* v. 177.

He



He buffeted the breton about the chekes  
That he loked lyke a lanterne al his life after<sup>p</sup>.

And in the following, where the Vices are represented as converted and coming to confession, among which is the figure of Envy.

Of a freres froke were the fore fleves,  
And as a leke that hath lied long in the funne  
So looked he with leane chekes, lowering foule<sup>q</sup>.

It would be tedious to transcribe other strokes of humour with which this poem abounds. Before one of the Visions the poet falls asleep while he is bidding his beads. In another he describes Antichrist, whose banner is borne by Pride, as welcomed into a monastery with ringing of bells, and a solemn congratulatory procession of all the monks marching out to meet and receive him<sup>r</sup>.

These images of mercy and truth are in a different strain.

Out of the west coast, a wenche as me thought,  
Come walking in the way, to hevnward she loked;  
Mercy hight that mayde, a meke thyng withall,  
A full benigne byrde, and buxome of speech;  
Hyr fyfter, as yt seemed, came worthily walking,  
Even out of theste, and westward she loked,  
A ful comely creature, Truth she hyght,  
For the vertue that her folowed afered was she never.  
When these maydens mette, Mercy and Truth,  
Eyther asked other of this gret marvel,  
Of the din and of the darknes, &c<sup>s</sup>.

<sup>p</sup> fol. xxiii. b.

<sup>q</sup> fol. xlii. a.

<sup>r</sup> fol. cxii. a.

<sup>s</sup> fol. lxxxviii. b.



The imagery of Nature, or KYNDE, sending forth his diseases from the planets, at the command of CONSCIENCE, and of his attendants AGE and DEATH, is conceived with sublimity.

KYNDE CONSCIENCE then heard, and came out of the planetts,  
 And sent forth his forriours Fevers, and Fluxes,  
 Coughes, and Cardiacles, Crampes, and Toth-aches,  
 Reumes, and Radgondes, and raynous Scalles,  
 Byles, and Botches, and burnynge Agues,  
 Freneses and foule Evill, foragers of KYNDE!  
 Ther was "Harowe! and Helpe! here cometh KYNDE!  
 "With Death that is dreadfull, to undo us all!"  
 The lord that lyveth after lust tho aloud cried.---

*Age the boore, he was in the vaw-ward,  
 And bare the banner before Death: by ryght he it claimed.*

KYNDE came after, with many kene fores,  
 As Pockes and Pestilences, and much people shent.  
 So KYNDE through corruptions, kylled full many:  
 DEATH came dryvynge after, and all to dust pashed  
 Kyngs and Kayfers, knightes and popes.  
 Many a lovely lady, and lemman of knightes,  
 Swoned and swelted for sorowe of DEATH's dyntes.  
 CONSCIENCE, of his curtesye, to KYNDE he besoght  
 To cease and sufire, and se where they wolde  
 Leave Pride prively, and be perfite christen,  
 And KYNDE ceased tho, to see the people amende<sup>s</sup>.

These lines at least put us in mind of Milton's Lazar-house<sup>s</sup>.

..... Immediately a place  
 Before his eyes appeared, sad, noisome, dark:  
 A lazar-house it seem'd, wherein were laid  
 Numbers of all diseas'd: all maladies

<sup>s</sup>fol. cxiii. a.

<sup>s</sup>Par. L. ii. 475.



Of gasty spasm, or racking torture, qualms  
 Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds,  
 Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs,  
 Intestine stone, and ulcer, cholic pangs,  
 Demoniac phrenzy, moping melancholy,  
 And moon-struck madness, pining atrophy,  
 Marasmus, and wide-wasting Pestilence :  
 Dropsies and asthma, and joint-racking rheum.  
 Dire was the Tossing ! Deep the groans ! *DESPAIR*  
 Tended the sick, busy from couch to couch ;  
 And over them triumphant *DEATH* his dart  
 Shook, but delay'd to strike, &c.

At length *FORTUNE* or *PRIDE* sends forth a numerous army  
 led by *LUST*, to attack *CONSCIENCE*.

And gadered a greate hoste, all agayne *CONSCIENCE* :  
 This *LECHERY* led on, with a laughyng chere,  
 And with a privye speeche, and paynted wordes,  
 And armed him in idleness and in high bearyng.  
 He bare a bowe in his hand, and many bloody arrowes,  
 Were fethered with faire behest, and many a false truth \*.

Afterwards *CONSCIENCE* is besieged by Antichrist, and seven  
 great giants, who are the seven capital or deadly sins : and  
 the assault is made by *SLOTH*, who conducts an army of more  
 than a thousand prelates.

It is not improbable, that Longland here had his eye on  
 the old French *ROMAN D' ANTECHRIST*, a poem written by  
 Huon de Meri, about the year 1228. The author of this  
 piece supposes that Antichrist is on earth, that he visits  
 every profession and order of life, and finds numerous par-  
 tisans. The *VICES* arrange themselves under the banner of  
*ANTECHRIST*, and the *VIRTUES* under that of *CHRIST*.

\* Ibid.

These



These two armies at length come to an engagement, and the battle ends to the honour of the Virtues, and the total defeat of the Vices. The BANNER OF ANTICHRIST has before occurred in our quotations from Longland. The title of Huon de Meri's poem deserves notice. It is *TURNOYEMENT DE L'ANTECHRIST*. These are the concluding lines.

Par son droit nom a peau cet livre  
Qui tresbien s'avorde a l'escrit  
*Le Tournoiment de l'Antechrist.*

The author appears to have been a monk of St. Germain des Pres, near Paris. This allegory is much like that which we find in the old dramatic *MORALITIES*. The theology of the middle ages abounded with conjectures and controversies concerning Antichrist, who at a very early period was commonly believed to be the Roman pontiff \*.

\* See this topic discussed with singular penetration and perspicuity, by doctor Hurd, in *TWELVE SERMONS INTRODUCTORY TO THE STUDY OF THE PROPHECIES*. Lond. 1772. p. 206. seq.

S E C T.