This alison. answerd who is there.
That knokketh so. j warant hit a thefe.
Why nay q\(^d\) he god wote my swete lefe
J. am thyn absolon. thy derlyng
Of gold q\(^d\) he j haue broght the ryng
My moder 3af hit me so god me save.
Full fyne hit is and yer-to wele ygraue.
This wole j 3if the. 3if yow me kysse.
This Nycholas. was rysen. for to pysse.
And thought he wolde amenden. all the jape.
he shuld kysse hys ers or that he scape.
And vp the wyndow. did he hastily
And out hys ers he putte pryuely
Ouer the buttok to the hanche-bone.
And ther-with spake. this clerk this absolon.
Speke swote bryd j. not where thow ert
This Nycholas lete flye a fert
As grete as hit as hit hadde. ben a thonder-dent
That with the stroke he was almost yblent
And he was redy with the yren. hoot
And Nycholas in the ers he smote.
Of goth the skyn an handbrede aboute
The hoote culter brenned so his toute.
And for hit smerte he went for to dye.
As he were wode for woo. he can to crye.
Help water water helpe for goddes hert
This carpenter oute of his slomber stert
And herd one crye water as he were woode
And thoght alas now commeth Noe floode
And sette hym vp with-out wordes mo
And with an axe. he smote the corde atwo.
And done goth all he fonde neither to selle
Ne brede ne ale tyll he come to the felle
Vp on the floure. and ther a-swayne he lay
Vp sterete hir alison. and Nycholay
And cried out harow in the strete
The neighbours both smale & grete.
Yronnen for to gauren. on this man.
That a-swayne lay both pale. & wan.
For with that falle he brosten hath his arme
But stonden he most vnto his owne. harms
For whan he spake he was anon borne. done.
With hend Nycholas and alison
Thei tolde euery man that he was wode
He was agast so of Noes floode.
Thurgh fantasie that of his vanyte.
He hadde. yboght hym knedyng tubbes thre.
And had hem hanged in the roof aboue.
And that he prayd hem for goddes loue.
To sett en in the roof par company
This folk gan laughen. at his fantasy
And to the roof thei kiken. and thei gape.
And turned hym harme vn-to a Jape
For what so this. carpenter ansuerde
hit was for noght no man. his reson herde.
With othes grete he was so sworne a-done.
That he was holden wode en all the toune.
For euery clerk a-noone-ry3t held with other
Thei seid the man is wood my lefe brother
And euery wight gan laghen. at his stryfe.
Thus chopped the carpenters wyfe
For all his kepyng and his ielousie
And absolon hath kyst her nether eye
And nycholas is scalded in the toute
This tale is done and god saue all the route
<fol. 59r>Whan folk hade laughen at this nyce caas
Of absolon . and hend Nycholas
Dyuerse folk dyuersly thei seyd .
But for the more part loughe and pleyd .
Ne at this tale . j saugh no man~ hym greue .
But hit were onely Oswold the Refe
Bycaus he was of the . carpenter crafte
A litell jre . in his herte lafte
he gan to grutch & blamede hit a lite
So theke qd he full wele . coude J 3ow quyte .
With bleryng of a . proude myller eye .
Yf that me lyst to speke of rybaldrye .
But ike am olde me lyst not pley for age
Grase tyme is done . my fodder is forage .
This white toppe . wryteth myn . olde 3eres
Myn herte also is movled as my heres
But yf J fare . as dothe an opyn-ers
That ilke fruyt is euer lenger the wers
Till hit be roten . in mullok or in stree
We olde men j drede so faire . we .
Till we be roten . kan we noght be rype .
We hopen . alwey while the worlde will pipe
For in oure will ther styketh euere a nayle .
To haue an hoore . hede & a grene taile .
As haith a leke . for yough oure myght be gone
Oure wille desireth euere an oone
For whan we may no3t done than will we speke .
3ef in oure asshen . olde is fire yreke .
Foure gledes han . we whiche j . shall deuyse
Auauntynge lying anger couetyse .
This foure sperketh longeth vn-to elde .
Oure olde lymes may wele ben~ vnwelde .
But wille ne shall not fayle . that is sothe .
<fol. 59v>And 3et haue J . all-weys a coltes toth
As many a 3eere . as hit is passed henne
Syn that my tappe of lyf began to renne
For sikerly whan . j was borne a-none .
Deth droth the tappe of lyf & letie hit gone
And euer sithen . haith so the tappe yronne
Till that almost all empty is the tonne
The streme of lyf now droppeth on the chynne .
The sely tonge may wele rynge & chymbe .
Of wretchednesse . that passyd is full 3ore .
With olde folk saue dotage . is the more .
Whan that oure ooste had herd this sermonyng
he gan to speken. as lordely as a kyng
he seid what amonteth all this wytte .
What shall we speke . all day of holy wrytte .
The deuell made a refe for to preche .
Or of a souter a shipman. or a leche .
Sey forth thi tale . and tarye not the tyme .
loo Depford . and hit is half-wey pryme .
loo Grenewich that many a shrew is Jn .
hit were all tyme . thy tale for to gynne .
Now sirs q\[i\] this oswold Refe .
J pryze 3ow all that 3e no3t 3o\[u\] grefe .
yogh j . ansuere . and somdele sette his houwe .
For leuefull hit is with force . of shouwe .
This dronken myller hath ytold vs here .
how that begyled was a carpenter
perauenture . in scorn . for J . am one .
And by youre . lefe . J shall hym quyte anone
Right in his cherles termes will . J . speke .
J pryz to god his nekke mote to-breke .
he can . wele in myn eye see a stalke .
But [in] his owne . he can no3t seen . a balke
<fol. 60r>At Trumpyngton~ noght fer fro cambryge .
Ther gothe . a broke and ouer that a bryge
Vppon . the whiche broke ther stant a mylle
And this is verray soth that J . 3ow telle .
A myller was ther duellying many a day
As any pecok he was proude & gay
Pipen he couth and fisshen and nettys knete
And torne coppes and wele wrastell & shete
And by his belt he bare a long panade .
And of a swerde . full trenchant was the blade .
A ioly popper bare he in his pouche .
Ther was no man~ for parell durst hym hym touche .
A shefeld Twytell bare he in his hose .
Rounde was his face and camys was his nose .
As piled as an hape was his sculle
he was a market-beter at the fulle
Ther was no wight that durst hand on hym legge
But if he swore. he shuld anoone a-begge.
A Thef he was for sothe of corne & myle.
And that a sleigh and vsant for to stele
his name was hoten. deynous symken.
A wyf he had commen of a noble kyn
The person. of ye towne. her fader was
With her he 3af full many a pane of bras
For that symkyn shuld in his bloode allye
She was yfostered in a Nonnerye.
For symkyn wold no wyf as he seide.
But she were. wele. ynorysshed & a mayde.
To sauen his astate of 3omanry
And she was proude. & pert as is a pye.
A full fair sight was hit vppon hem two
On haly-daies aforne her wold he go.
With his typet wonden. about his heede.
<fol. 60v>And she come after in a gyte of reede
And symken had hosen of the same
Ther durst no wight clepen hir but dame
Was noon so hardy that went by the wey
That with hir durst ones rage or pley
But 3if he wolde. ben slayn of Symkyn
With panade or with knyf or bodekyn
For ielous folk ben perelous euermo.
Algte thei wolde. ther wyfes wenden so.
And ek for she was somdele smoterlich
She was as deigne. as water in the dich

<Tranche 2>

<fol. 222r>The hye god forbarreith sweryng at all
Wittenes of mathev. but in espesiale.
O sweryng the holy ieromye
Thou shalt swere soth yin othes & not lye
And swere in dome. & eke in ri3twissenes
But ydell swareng is a cursidnes
Behold & see y' in ye first table
Of hye goddis hestes honorable.
how y' two hestes of hym is yis
Take no3t my tale in idelines amys
lo rather he forbedith such swareng
Than homicide . or any other thyng
J say as thris by ordre . it stondith
This knoweth yat his hestes vnderstandeth
how . y' ye secound heste . of god is that
And forther ouer j will the telle . alle platte.
That vengeaunce shall not parte from his hous
That of his othes is so outerageous
By goddis precious hert & his nayles
And by his bloode yat is in hailles
Seuen is my chaunce & his fyfe & three
By goddis armes 3if yu falsely pley me
This dagger shall yorgh thyn hert goo .
This fruyte cometh or yilke bones twoo
For-sweryng jre falsenes homicide .
Now for ye loue of criste y' for hus deyde .
leuyth 3our~ othes both grete & smale .
For j shall telle 30u a mervelous tale .
These ryotours of which . j . 30u telle
long erst or pryme rong any belle .
Wer~ sette in a tauerne to drynke .
And as yei . satte yei seid yei herd a belle clynke .
Byfore . a corps was caried to his grave
That one of hem . gane calle to his knave .
<fol. 222v>Go bet quod he . and aske redyly
What corps is yat passith forth by
And loke yow reporte his name wele
Sir q' yis knave it nedith neuer a+dele .
hit was me told er 3e come here two owres
he was parde an olde . felawe of youres
Al sodenly was he slayn .to-ny3t
For-dronken as he sat vppon~ his bench vp-right
Ther come a prevy thefe . men~ clepith deith
That in yis contrey all ye peple sleigh
And with his spere he smote his hert atwo  
And wente his wey w\-outen wordes mo  
he hath a yosand slayn yis pestilence .  
And maister er 3e come in his presence .  
Me thinketh yat it were necessarie .  
For to be ware . of such an aduersarie .  
Beth redy for to mete hym euermore  
Thus taught me my dame j. say nomore  
By seint Marie said yis tauerner~  
The child seith soth for he haith slayn to 3er~  
hens but a myle . w\in a grete village .  
Both man & womman childe & page .  
J . trowe his habitacion~ be there .  
To ben avised grete wisdome . it were .  
Or yat he did a man~ dishonour~  
3e goddes armes q\d this ryotour~  
Js it such peril . w\ hym for to mete  
J shal hym sech by stye & by strete  
J make avow . by goddes dign\e bones  
herkeneth felawes we three . bene al ones  
lete ych of hus hold vp hond to other  
And eche of hus bycome other brother  
And we wil sle yis fals traytour deth .  
By goddis dignite er it be nyght  
To-gedre han yes three her hertes plight  
To lyfe & dye . ilke of hem w\ other  
As yough he were . his owne borne brother  
And vp yei sterten . and dronken~ in this rage .  
And forth thei gone towar\d that village .  
Of which ye tauern\er hath spoken~ byforne  
And mony a grisely othe yen . han yei sworne  
And cristes blissed body yei to-rent  
That deith shall be ded 3if y\ we may hym hente  
Whan yei han gone not fully a myle .  
Right as yei wole haue troden . on a stile .  
And olde & a pour~ man~ with hem mette  
This olde man~ ful mekely hem grette  
And seid yus now lordes god yo\ see .  
The proudest of this ryotours thre
Ansuerde a3en . what cherle w\ harde grace
Why art you , all for-wrapped save yi face .
Why lyvest you so long in so gret age .
This old man~ gan loke in his visage
And seid thus for j can~ not fynde .
A man~ yough j wolde . in-to jnde .
Neither in cite ne in no village .
That will chaungn his 3outhe for myn age .
And therfore mote j . haue myn . age stille .
As long tyme as it is goddis wille .
Ne deth alas nyl not haue my lyfe .
Thus walke j . lyke a restles caytyfe
And on~ ye grounde which is my moder gate .
J knocke w\ my staf erly and late .
And say leve moder latte me jn .
Iow how j vanessh flessh blode & skynne
Alas whal j my bones bene at reste .
Moder with 3ow wole j change my chest
That in my chambre . long tyme hath be
3e for an hyer clote . to wrappe me
But 3it to me . she wole not do y\ grace
For which full welkyd is my face
But sirs to 3o\ it is no curtesie .
To speke to an olde . man~ vilanye .
But he trespas in worde or ellis in dede .
In holy writte . 3e may 3our~ self wele rede .
A3ens an old man~ hoore vppon his heed
3e shuld arysse . therfore j 3if 3o\ rede .
Ne doth vn-to an olde man~ harme as now .
Nomore . yan 3e wold a man did 3o\ .
In age . 3if yat 3e so long abyde .
And god be with 3o\ whethir 3e go or ryde .
J mote go thider as . j haue to go .
Nay old churle . by god you shalt not soo .
Saide yis other hasardours anone .
Thou partest not so lightely by seint John
Thou speake ri3t now of thilk traytour deth
That in this contrey all our~ frendeth sleeth
haue+here my trouth as you ert his aspye.
Telle wher~ he is . or ellis yª shalt dye .
By god & by ye holy sacrament
For sothely you . arte of his assent
To slean hus 3ong folke . you fals theefe .
Now . sirs 3if it be . to 3ow so leefe .
To fynde . deth turne yp yis croked way
For in yat grove . j . lefte hym by my fay
Vndyr a tree . and ther he wole abyde .
Ne for your~ boste . he nyl hym no thyng hyde .
See 3e yª oke . ri3t there . 3e shuld hym fynde .
God save 3oª yat boght a3ayn mankynde .
And 3ow . amend yus sayd this old man~
<Tol. 224r>& euery of these ryotours ran
Til yei come to ye tree . & yere yei fonde .
Floreyns of gold fyne ycoyned ronde
Wele nygh a seven . bussheles as hem yought
No lenger yan after deth yei soght
But yche of hem . so glad was of yª syght
For yat ye florens so fair~ be & bright
That doun~ yei sette . hem by ye precious horde .
The worst of hem he spake . ye first worde
Bretheren qª he . take heede what j . say
My wytte . is grette . yough j. borde . & play
This tresour~ hath fortune . to vs 3even
Jn myrth & iolyte . our~ lyfe . to lyven .
And lightly so as it commeth so will we spend
Eie precious goddes hert who wende .
Today yª we . shuld haue so fair~ a grace
But myght this gold be caried fro this place .
home to myn hous or ellis to 3oures .
For wele j . wote . yª all this gold is oures
Than wer~ we in hye felicite .
But truly by day it may not be .
Men wold sayn . yª we weren . theefes strong
And for our~ owne tresour~ done vs honge .
As wysely and as so sleighly as it myght
This tresour~ most ycaried be by nyght
Wherfore . j rede . lete loke among vs alle .
To drawe . and let . see . where . ye cut will falle .
he yat hath ye cutte . with hert blith
Shall renne . to town~ and yat full swyth
To bryng vs brede . & drynk full priuely
And two of vs shall kepen full subtilly
This tresoure . wele . and 3if he will not tarye .
Whan it is nyght we will yis tressour~ carie .
By oone assent where as hus lyketh best
<fol. 224v>That oone of hem . brought gresse in his fyste
And badde hem drawe & loke on whome it will falle .
And it fell on ye 3ongest of hem alle
And forth toward ye toun~ he went anone .
And also sone as he was gone
That on of hem spake vn-to yat other
Thou waste wele you art myn~ owne sworne brother
Thyn . profite will . j . profite . telle ye anone
Thou waste wele yat our~ felaw is gone .