

**POETICAL WORKS  
OF GEOFFREY  
CHAUCER, VOL. III**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649109500

Poetical works of Geoffrey Chaucer, Vol. III by Geoffrey Chaucer & Robert Bell

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**GEOFFREY CHAUCER & ROBERT BELL**

**POETICAL WORKS  
OF GEOFFREY  
CHAUCER, VOL. III**



~~111524~~

POETICAL WORKS  
OF  
GEOFFREY CHAUCER

EDITED WITH A MEMOIR  
BY  
ROBERT BELL

VOLUME III.

111524  
22/5/11

LONDON  
CHARLES GRIFFIN AND CO.  
STATIONERS' HALL COURT.

## CONTENTS OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

---

### *The Canterbury Tales.*

	PAGE
THE SECONDE NONNES TALE . . . . .	5
THE PROLOGE OF THE CHANOUNES YEMAN . . . . .	24
THE CHANOUNES YEMANNES TALE . . . . .	39
THE DOCTOURES PROLOGE . . . . .	56
THE TALE OF THE DOCTOR OF PHISIK . . . . .	56
THE PROLOGE OF THE PARDONER . . . . .	66
THE PARDONERES TALE . . . . .	73
THE SCHIPMANNES PROLOGE . . . . .	90
THE SCHIPMANNES TALE . . . . .	91
THE PRIORESSES PROLOGE . . . . .	106
THE PRIORESSES TALE . . . . .	107
PROLOGE TO SIRE THOPAS . . . . .	115
THE TALE OF SIR THOPAS . . . . .	116
PROLOGE TO MELIBEUS . . . . .	127
THE TALE OF MELIBEUS . . . . .	129
THE PROLOGE OF THE MONKES TALE . . . . .	181
THE MONKES TALE . . . . .	186
THE PROLOGE OF THE NONNE PRESTES TALE . . . . .	213
THE NONNE PREST HIS TALE . . . . .	215
THE PROLOGE OF THE MAUNCIPLES TALE . . . . .	236
THE MAUNCIPLES TALE . . . . .	240



P O E M S  
OF  
GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

---

The Canterbury Tales.

---

THE SECONDE NONNES TALE.

[THIS tale, except the opening address to the Blessed Virgin, is literally translated from the *Legenda Aurea*, a collection of treatises on the festivals of the Church, written by Jacobus à Voragine, Archbishop of Genoa, in the latter end of the thirteenth century. The custom of collecting the *Acts* of the Martyrs—that is, the accounts of their martyrdom,—and reading them aloud in the Church on the anniversary of their death, for the encouragement of the faithful, was very early introduced. The *Acts of the Martyrdom of Polycarp*, Bishop of Ephesus, and a Disciple of the Apostle John, who suffered A.D. 168, have come down to us in this shape, and are much esteemed by divines of the Church of England, as the earliest authentic ecclesiastical record after the *Acts of the Apostles*. See Bingham's *Antiquities*, book xiii. c. 9. Saint Cecilia probably suffered in the reign of Alexander Severus, in the third century, as stated in her life. The acts of her martyrdom bear many internal evidences of authenticity, though disfigured by the false taste of the ecclesiastical rhetoricians of the fourth and fifth centuries, who probably introduced the miraculous circumstances and the dialogue between her and the prætor, just as Sallust and Robertson put imaginary speeches into the mouths of Catiline and Columbus.



Of Chaucer's accuracy in the delineation of the condition and habits of the early Christians, the catacombs still remain unimpeachable witnesses. These subterranean sepulchres, or 'seyntes buriels,' as they are called in the tale, were the refuge of the early Church of Rome, with its chief Bishop Urban. Here, among the refuse of the people, the *far Romuli*, was concocted that mighty conspiracy against the established religion, which the philosophers and statesmen of Rome hardly knew whether to scorn or to fear. From its ghastly dwelling among the bones of the dead it occasionally emerged to gather its proselytes from the slave-gang, the senate, and the palace of Cæsar; until at length the patriots, the upholders of the political religion, under whose auspices Rome had gathered her laurels both in literature and arms, found themselves in a small but respectable minority; while the despised conspiracy had literally, as well as metaphorically, cut the ground from under their feet. From the moment when Christianity became a moving power in the state, the Roman nationality crumbled to pieces, superseded by the more comprehensive bond of Christian brotherhood. Of this tale, the language and versification, the only elements that properly belong to Chaucer, are marked with his usual force and pathos.]

THE minister and the norice unto vices,  
 Which that men clepe in Englisch ydelnesse,  
 The porter at the gates is of deliciois;  
 To eschiewe, and by her contrary hire oppresse,  
 That is to say, by leful besynesse,  
 Wel oughte we to do al oure entente,  
 Lest that the fend thurgh ydelnesse us hente.<sup>1</sup>  
 For he that with his thousand cordes slye  
 Continuelly us wayteth to byclappe,  
 Whan he may man in ydelnes espye,

<sup>1</sup> The opening stanzas against idleness are taken from Jehan de Vignay's introduction to his French translation of the *Legenda Aurea*, which was probably Chaucer's original throughout.

He can so lightly cacche him in his trappe,  
 Til that a man be hent right by the lappe,  
 He is nought ware the fend hath him in honde;  
 Wel oughte we wirche, and ydelnes withstonde.

And though men dredde never for to deye,  
 Yet seen men wel by resoun douteles,  
 That ydelnes is rote of sloggardiye,  
 Of which ther cometh never good ences;  
 And sin that slouth hem<sup>1</sup> holdeth in a lees,  
 Oonly to sleep, and for to ete and drynke,  
 And to deuoure al that other swynke.

And for to put us from such ydelnes,  
 That cause is of so gret confusioun,  
 I have her doon my faithful busynes  
 After the legende in translacioun  
 Right of this glorious lif and passioun.  
 Thou with thi garlond, wrought with rose and lylye,<sup>2</sup>  
 The mene I, mayde and martir Cecilie;

And thou, that flour of virgines art alle,  
 Of whom that Bernard<sup>3</sup> lust so wel to write,  
 To the at my bygynnyng first I calle;  
 Thou comfort of us wrecches, do me endite  
 Thy maydenes deth, that wan thurgh hire merite

<sup>1</sup> *Hem* is adopted from Tyrwhitt as better than *he*, the reading of the Harl. MS.

<sup>2</sup> Symbolical of her bloody martyrdom and virgin purity. Thus in the metrical *Life of St. Werburgh*, by Bradshawe, a Benedictine of the sixteenth century:—

<sup>3</sup> *Vyrgyns them folowed, crowned with the lily,  
 Among whom our Lady chefe president was;  
 Some crowned with roses for their great victory.*

<sup>3</sup> Saint Bernard's great work is a series of eloquent discourses on the Song of Solomon, which he interprets as prophetic of the incarnation of God the Son, the Bride being the blessed Virgin. She is said to have appeared to him in a vision, while he was engaged in the composition of these discourses, and, in answer to his prayer, *Monstra te esse matrem*, to have refreshed his emaciated frame with nourishment drawn from her bosom. This allegory forms the subject of a very beautiful woodcut prefixed to his *Life* in Jehan de Vignay's *Legende Dorée*, and of Murillo's celebrated picture.

Theternal lif, and of the feend victorie,  
As man may after reden in hir storie.

Thou mayde and moder, doughter of thi sone,  
Thow welle of mercy, synful soules cure,  
In whom that God of bountes chees to wone;  
Thou humble and heyh over every creature,  
Thow nobelest so ferforth oure nature,  
That no disdeyn the maker had of kynde  
His sone in blood and fleissch to clothe and wynde.<sup>1</sup>

Withinne the cloyster of thi blisful sydes,  
Took mannes schap the eternal love and pees,  
That of the trine compas lord and guyde is,  
Whom erthe, and see, and heven out of relees<sup>2</sup>  
Ay herien; and thou, virgine wemmeles,  
Bar of thy body, and dwellest mayden pure,  
The creatour of every creature.

<sup>3</sup> Assembled is in the magnificence  
With mercy, goodnes, and with such pitee,  
That thou, that art the sounne of excellence,  
Not oonly helpist hem that prayen the,  
But often tyme of thy benignite  
Ful frely, er that men thin help biseche.  
Thou gost biforn, and art her lyfes leche.

Now help, thou meke and blisful faire mayde,  
Me flemed wrecche, in this desert of galle;  
Think on the womman Cananee,<sup>4</sup> that sayde  
That whelpes ete some of the crommes alle  
That from her lordes table ben i-falle;

<sup>1</sup> The same thought occurs in the hymn of St. Ambrose, called the *Te Deum*. 'When thou tookest upon thee to deliver man, thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb.'

<sup>2</sup> All the best MSS. concur in this reading, and therefore I have followed them, though I confess that I do not clearly understand the phrase: unless perhaps it mean, *without release*; without being ever released from their duty.—T. *Without relees* would seem to signify *without ceasing, sans relâch*.

<sup>3</sup> Tyrwhitt remarks a similarity between this stanza and the fourth stanza of *The Prioresses Tale*.

<sup>4</sup> Harl. MS., *Canace*. Matt. xv.