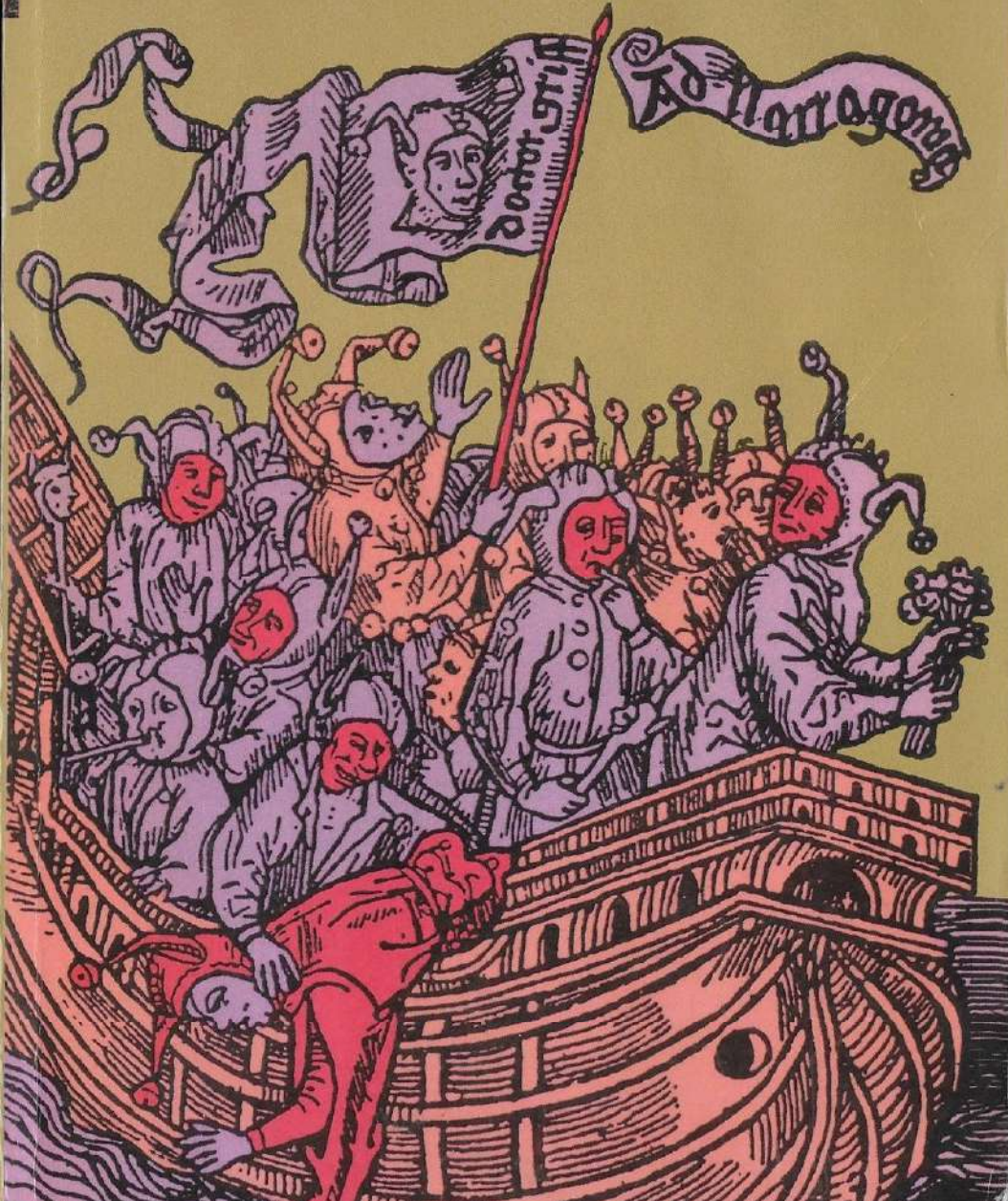


# The Ship of Fools

**SEBASTIAN BRANT**

Translated into rhyming couplets with introduction and commentary  
by Edwin H. Zeydel, with the original one hundred and fourteen woodcuts



# THE SHIP OF FOOLS

By SEBASTIAN BRANT

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WITH INTRODUCTION AND COMMENTARY

By EDWIN H. ZEYDEL

*with reproductions of the original woodcuts*



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## PREFACE

THE REASONS prompting the writer to make this translation of Sebastian Brant's fifteenth-century *Narrenschiff*, or Ship of Fools, in modern English in the verse form and rhyme scheme of the original may be summed up briefly.

This is actually the first English translation of Brant's masterpiece ever to appear. The two sixteenth-century versions of Barclay and Watson, both published in 1509, are not translations of Brant in any sense, but very free adaptations based upon Latin and French editions.

Brant's work was the most famous book of its time and exercised a tremendous influence in England as well as on the Continent, appearing between 1497 and 1548 in Latin, Low German, French, English, Flemish, and Dutch. With the *Narrenschiff* German literature entered for the first time into the stream of European letters and, indeed, helped to give that stream a new direction.

The *Narrenschiff* expresses the views of a noted forerunner of German humanism, but one who, not in sympathy with the ideas which were paving the way for the Reformation, wanted to conserve and strengthen the *status quo* throughout the Christian world. This phase of European thought at the dawn of the sixteenth century must be appreciated too if we desire a comprehensive picture of that all-important age.

Finally, the *Narrenschiff* is a work of truly popular appeal—aphoristic, quotable, humorous—and contains authentic comments and illuminating sidelights on the customs, activities, follies, and foibles of its day, with the earliest reference in literature to the discovery of America by Columbus.

This edition reproduces the approximately one hundred woodcuts of the original edition—among them some of the finest of their kind ever made. The work cannot be fully understood or appreciated without this integral component.



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The translation is based upon the first edition, which appeared in Basel in 1494; the Franz Schultz facsimile of 1913 was used. It was felt that the material added by Brant to the second and third editions contributes nothing essentially new or necessary to an understanding of the work. The Introduction aims to supply the necessary background, and the Commentary strives to explain such difficulties as a work now almost four and a half centuries old is bound to present. Both Introduction and Commentary are based upon independent research.

For many courtesies received, the writer would express his gratitude to the staffs of the various libraries which he has used, especially those of the University of Cincinnati, of Cornell University, and of the New York Public Library. He is indebted to the Charles Phelps Taft Memorial Fund of the University of Cincinnati for substantial financial aid in making his research possible and in publishing this handsome volume. He is deeply grateful to Professor Bayard Quincy Morgan of Stanford University for reading the translation with great care, giving it the benefit of his expert criticism, and making numerous suggestions for its improvement. He would also thank Professor Austin P. Evans, the general editor of the series in which this volume appears, Miss Elizabeth J. Sherwood, managing editor of the Columbia University Press, and Professor Robert Herndon Fife of Columbia University for trenchant criticism of the entire manuscript, and the Columbia University Press for undertaking its publication.

It is hoped that the friends of Brant everywhere will see in the present undertaking a modest tribute to his memory on the approaching four hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the first appearance of his epoch-making masterpiece.

EDWIN H. ZEYDEL

Cincinnati, Ohio,  
January 1, 1944

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## INTRODUCTION

### THE LIFE AND WORKS OF BRANT

THE AGE in which Sebastian Brant lived marks a period of imminent revolutionary changes in Germany as well as in Europe generally. It is the era immediately preceding and ushering in sixteenth-century German humanism and the Protestant Reformation. The date of the famous letter of the Mainz chancellor Martin Meyer to Aeneas Sylvius (1457) coincides almost exactly with that of Brant's birth. At the same time the first important books were coming from the printing press, and there had long been signs of the influence of Greek fugitives in Italy in favor of the Greek classical writers. When Brant was thirty-four, Columbus made his first crossing of the Atlantic and discovered the New World. When he was forty-four, Zwingli came to Basel. Five years later Martin Waldseemüller, in his *Cosmographiae Introductio* (1507), suggested the name "America" for the newly found continent. Ten years after this, in 1517, Martin Luther posted his ninety-five theses on the portals of the Wittenberg Schlosskirche. In 1519 Zwingli began spreading the doctrine of the Reformation from his pulpit in Zürich, and in the same year Luther engaged in the famous Leipzig disputations with Eck and Karlstadt, questioning the infallibility of the Council of Constance. A year later Luther's pamphlet, *An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation*, spread through the German-speaking countries like wildfire. In 1521 Luther refused to recant at Worms, and on May 4 of that year—six days before Brant's death—Luther was spirited away to the Wartburg.

Brant did not take an active part in any of these momentous events, although he warned urgently against religious differ-

ences and possessed reliable information about the first voyage of Columbus. All the available evidence concerning the date of his birth points to the year 1458, except his gravestone preserved in the municipal library of his native Strassburg. It records his death as occurring on May 10, 1521, but states that he lived to be sixty-four. This may be an error or may mean that he was in his sixty-fourth year; at any rate it has prompted some scholars to assign his birth to 1457. The Brant family was not prosperous, and when the father, an innkeeper, died in 1468, the mother, born Barbara Picker, struggled hard to maintain her home and educate her young children. She must have been a resolute and able but also a tender woman. Taking personal charge of young Sebastian's education, which she determined should be the best they could afford, she impressed her character indelibly upon him and influenced him to a marked degree. If Brant always revealed a tender, almost effeminate nature and the sensitivity of a mother's pet, this was a part of his heritage from his mother. This influence explains, too, his deep respect for good women, a trait which sets him apart from his contemporaries.

The schools in Strassburg were still inferior, and Barbara may have decided to send her eldest away to school. Possibly he had some of his preparatory education under the then noted educator Dringenberg in Schlettstadt in Lower Alsace, where Erasmus also studied not long after.

At any rate, by the autumn of 1475 he was ready for the university. He matriculated in the philosophical faculty of the recently founded University of Basel. This city, already famous as the seat of the great Council (1431-1448), was an important center of the young humanistic movement. Here Brant cultivated the friendship of the Realist Johann Heynlin von Stein, known as "a Lapide."<sup>1</sup> He was also on good terms with

<sup>1</sup> See Zeydel in *Modern Language Quarterly*, IV (1943), 209 ff.

Reuchlin, who took his baccalaureate degree in Basel the year of Brant's arrival and his master's degree two years later, when Brant was awarded the lower degree.

During his first two years at Basel Brant studied Aristotelian philosophy, logic, the rudiments of what was then styled physics, as well as rhetoric and a very little Greek. By the time he secured his baccalaureate he must have done considerable writing in the Latin language. Now he decided to transfer to the faculty of law. At this time Basel occupied a unique position in the field of legal studies, for unlike the average German university it offered not only canon but also civil law, the latter taught by Italian professors. In 1484 Brant secured his license to practice and teach canon law. He appears to have taken up teaching at the university immediately—not only law, but also humanities—and perhaps practiced also, for within a year he felt economically secure enough to marry Elisabeth Burg.

Once having become a licentiate, Brant was required by law to take the doctorate at the same university. He did so in 1489, becoming Doctor Utriusque Juris. His inclination was toward civil, or Roman, law and is explained in part by his enthusiasm for the Holy Roman Empire. The most important of his works at this time is the original historico-political pamphlet *De origine et conversatione bonorum regum et laude civitatis Hierosolymae*. The latter part of this has much in common with Chapter 99 of the *Narrenschiff*.

During the late eighties Brant became interested in another kind of literary activity, that of publication expert and adviser for the Basel book printers. Probably a Lapide recommended him for this work. It consisted of advising printers, editing manuscripts, reading proof, writing introductions or prefaces and what we would call "blurbs," in the form of dedicatory or epilogic Latin verse soliciting the readers' interest in newly published books. At least one-third of all the volumes printed in



Basel before 1490 show signs of his collaboration, whether they mention his name or not. Soon he became very skillful at turning out Latin verse, and he indulged this flair ever more freely, producing religious, political, and didactic poems, mostly of an occasional nature, which express the conservative views of a Lapide and his circle.

At first he had difficulty in finding appropriate subjects for his worldly poems. For Brant represents a comparatively new type of poetry in German literature, that of the bourgeoisie, or the upper middle class. This new poetry, in its infancy in Brant's time, knew little of, and cared less for, the medieval folk and chivalric literature of the thirteenth century. It was therefore forced to cast about for novel subjects of contemporaneous interest. When Maximilian became Roman king in 1486, this problem was solved for Brant. He became the unofficial panegyrist of the monarch of the Holy Roman Empire, lauding him to the skies in well-rounded Latin hexameters or elegiac distichs.

Brant wanted to cooperate with the Pope in effecting reforms in the Church, pleaded for a revival of the Empire in the East and action against the Turks, and prayed God to guide the ship of state well and to bring unity to the dismembered and impotent body politic. The collection of his Latin poems was issued three times in 1498 under the title *Varia carmina*.<sup>2</sup>

Believing that not only the scholars who could read Latin, but also the more intelligent burghers who knew the vernacular, should be reached and influenced by his verse, he began translating his own and others' Latin poetry into German. While many of these translations have been lost, some have come down to us. The first efforts are written in a stiff, almost

<sup>2</sup> The writer has examined the copy in the Cornell University Library, Petrarch Collection. Prior to this, Brant had already published a shorter collection of his Latin verse.

unintelligible German. But as Brant became more adept in using his native tongue, his verse technique improved. By way of a severe schooling in Latin, Brant gradually acquired the ability to write a German which for that day was remarkable for its purity and neatness of form.

Many of Brant's earlier writings are satiric broadsides or lampoons published as popular pamphlets or "fliegende Blätter," often in journalistic fashion, describing some recent event, but always espousing Brant's own philosophy of life.<sup>3</sup> Here he delighted in exploiting natural phenomena and in attaching to them political significance favorable to Maximilian's cause.

One of Brant's closest friends in Basel was his former fellow student, Johann Bergmann von Olpe of Westphalia, who had become an archdeacon in Switzerland. Early in the nineties Bergmann spent much of his time in Basel. Interested in the new trade of printing, he took it up as an avocation in order more readily to disseminate the ideas of his circle of friends. A well-to-do Maecenas, he was not impelled by motives of gain. He learned the trade in the shop of Michael Furter and in 1493 assisted him in publishing the *Ritter vom Turn* (a collection of moralizing tales translated and adapted by Marquart vom Stein from the original French of the Chevalier de la Tour Landry), one of the most beautiful volumes of Basel craftsmanship, illustrated with exquisite woodcuts. Then Bergmann established a press of his own, and Brant's *Narrenschiff*, the *editio princeps* of which came out in 1494, was perhaps the first product of his shop—a magnificent piece of bookmaking. In publishing Brant's masterpiece and providing it with some of the finest woodcuts of the fifteenth century, Bergmann identified himself with one of the truly remarkable books of the age.

In addition to the works already mentioned, Brant published an illustrated redaction of Freidank's *Bescheidenheit* (1508),

<sup>3</sup> See P. Heitz (ed.), *Des Sebastian Brant Flugblätter* (Strassburg, 1915).

the first edition and expansion of this work to appear in print and the only edition before Wilhelm Grimm's (1834), and practically the sole evidence of Brant's later interest in early German literature. This, together with German versions of the jest book *Facetus* (1496) and of *Moretus* (1499), bears some kinship to the *Narrenschiff*.<sup>4</sup>

Practically all of Brant's more important writings, characterized throughout by stern religious conservatism, appeared during his Basel period. In Strassburg, whither he returned early in 1501 as municipal syndic, official duties prevented him from devoting much time to literary pursuits. Two years later he secured the key position of "Stadtschreiber," or chancellor, and as such played a very distinguished role in the public life of the Alsatian capital for the rest of his days. He became a prominent member of the Strassburg literary society, which had been founded by Wimpheling. When in 1514 Erasmus, on his journey from England to Basel, stopped at Strassburg, he was tendered a dinner by the society and was received like a prince. Deeply impressed, the great Dutch humanist praised the "incomparable Brant" and expressed his satisfaction at having got to know and embrace him;<sup>5</sup> in a subsequent poem he honored Brant, saying that while others bask in the glory of their environment, Brant has added new luster to his native town. Later Erasmus himself founded a similar society in Basel.

Brant headed several missions to the Emperor Maximilian and was honored when the Pope sided with him in a controversy. Because of its disparaging remarks about the Emperor Maximilian, Brant prevented the publication in Strassburg of *Gäuchmatt* by Thomas Murner, the opponent of Luther and the imitator of the *Narrenschiff*. After the death of his beloved

<sup>4</sup> F. W. Chandler in *The Literature of Roguery* (Boston and New York, 1907), I, 27, goes so far as to say that the jest books gave birth to satirical fool literature.

<sup>5</sup> In a letter to Wimpheling of October, 1514.

emperor in 1519 Brant headed an official Strassburg mission to Ghent, to do homage to Charles V, by whom he was graciously received. In Antwerp he may have met Erasmus a second time. Here, too, Dürer made a portrait of him.<sup>6</sup>

Brant's last years were clouded by ill health and evil forebodings. Recognizing abuses and vicious practices which had become rife in the Church, sensing the threat of rising Lutheranism and Zwinglianism against the hierarchy, and convinced that the bonds of the Empire were loosening because of internal disunity and the alarming progress of the Turkish invaders—a conviction which he had already expressed in Chapter 99 of the *Narrenschiff* almost thirty years before—Brant feared a dreadful catastrophe for the Holy Roman Empire and could see no way of averting it.

Brant was a man of deep religious convictions and of stern morality, even to the point of prudishness. His motives were of the highest. He wanted to elevate his generation, and dreamed too of improving its political condition through moral regeneration. He was a typical fifteenth-century savant, a typical South German, and a typical upper-class burgher, proud of his civic rights. He admired the common people, though chiding the peasants severely for many excesses, and acquired the ability to express himself in the vernacular so popularly and sentimentiously that even the humblest could understand him.

Yet he was also nervous and irritable, positive and dogmatic, a carping satirist of the very follies of which he himself may often have been guilty. His tendency to seek weaknesses and flaws in others was congenital. His morality was philistine. What was bad, in his eyes, was not bad *per se*, but because the authorities—the Bible, the canonical writers, the ancients—said so. And sins like adultery seemed to him to be on the same level

<sup>6</sup> See J. Janitsch, *Das Bildnis Sebastian Brants von Albrecht Dürer* (Strassburg, 1906).



with vices like drinking, or even with foibles like slavery to fashion. While Luther, Zwingli, Erasmus, Reuchlin, and Hutten sought to dethrone existing authority and to establish new standards, Brant revered and defended the accepted traditions.

If Brant encouraged and promoted humanism, he did so unwittingly by setting certain examples—through his pure, clear Latin style; his not infrequent references to Homer, Xenophon, and Plutarch (whom he probably could not read in the original), to Terence, Catullus, Ovid, Vergil, Juvenal, and Seneca; his interest in old manuscripts; his friendship with the Basel printers; his concern for the fate of the individual; and his skill as a metricist. But he kept aloof from most of the controversies of the day. His interest in literature, whether ancient or modern, was not a poet's; it was always colored and conditioned by his concern for morality or for Church dogma. He regarded the sale of indulgences as proper and deemed absolution good for the soul. Lacking historical perspective, he had no notion of the development and progress of civilization. In his philosophy, which may be summed up in the thought that it is foolish to sacrifice eternal salvation for the sake of passing pleasures, he considered himself a preacher in the wilderness.

#### ANTECEDENTS AND GENESIS OF THE "NARRENSCHIFF"

It is possible that separate chapters of the *Narrenschiff* came out at first as separate handbills, or at least were initially planned for individual publication. Originality was not Brant's forte, and his book may be called a compilation of "fliegende Blätter" and a piecing together of authorities—the Bible, the *Corpus juris canonici*, and ancient writers. In literature the distinction between fools and wise men is at least as old as the Bible and can be found in ancient Greek and Roman literatures as well. In the German, as early as the twelfth century, the erring are

referred to as fools. In Hans Vintler's *Pluemen der Tugend* (1411), translated and adapted from the fourteenth-century Italian of Tomaso Leoni and printed in Basel in 1486, could be found portraits of fools considered from a moralizing point of view. The words *narr*, *tore*, *affe*, *esel*, *gouch* were all in everyday use to refer to those who comported themselves as fools. The idea was a commonplace in the later Middle Ages and the usual means of venting wrath and scorn, in France<sup>7</sup> as well as in Germany. Various types of fatuous persons were subjects for popular amusement in the "Fastnachtspiele" (Shrovetide plays) before Brant (though not the Brantian idea that all sins are reducible to forms of folly); also in the tractate *Doctoratus in stultitia* of the Zürich writer Felix Hemmerlin (which Brant edited toward the end of the century) and in the anonymous satire of about 1450, *Die acht Schalkheiten*, consisting of eight handbill woodcuts with rhymes.<sup>8</sup> The notion of a utopia of ruined revelers was well known throughout the Continent and in England too long before Sir Thomas More, who derived it anew from Lucian; in France in the *Fabliaux de Coquaigne*, in Holland in *Van det edele lant van Cockaenghen*, in Germany in the tales of the *Schlaraffenland*, and in England as the *Land of Cockayne*.

In England, indeed, Brant had two important forerunners in Nigel Wireker (*Speculum stultorum*, twelfth century) and John Lydgate (*Order of Fools*, fifteenth century). But unlike Brant, each of these starts with the idea of a religious fraternity.

<sup>7</sup> As early as 1450 "la sottie" was a peculiar and popular species of literature in France, whence it was taken to Holland and Denmark.

<sup>8</sup> That at least one other such handbill containing a series of eight cartoons, each showing a fool with a couplet in a scroll, was in circulation as early as the seventies or eighties of the fifteenth century, and that (unless one assumes Brant himself to be its author) it influenced him in writing his *Narrenschiff* was proved by Zarncke when he described such a series in two articles, *Zur Vorgeschichte des Narrenschiffes*, the first in Naumann's *Serapeum* (1868), the second as a pamphlet (Leipzig, 1871). The Cornell University Library possesses copies in the Zarncke collection.

Wireker's work, a satire on the clergy, is the livelier of the two and is built on the fiction of the ass looking for a longer tail, going to foreign lands to study, and forming a new order in which he may do as he pleases.<sup>9</sup> Lydgate's work is a catalogue of isolated traits of dangerously foolish persons, similar to Brant's, but without presenting the fools in person in a sort of rudimentary drama supported by woodcuts, as Brant does. In his catalogue of sins Lydgate stresses deceit and duplicity, while Brant emphasizes riotous sensuality. This difference of emphasis is interesting if one agrees with the Englishman Herford,<sup>10</sup> who sees in these cardinal vices the outstanding national vices of the two respective countries at the time. But it is certain that Brant had no direct knowledge of either Wireker or Lydgate.

Gradually there was born in Brant's mind the idea of writing a series of chapters, each depicting some type of fool. Bergmann must have encouraged him in this, and the *Narrenschiff* was, as has been indicated, one of the very first products of the Bergmann printing establishment.<sup>11</sup> Having at his disposal apparently a whole corps of artists and woodcarvers, Bergmann had each of these chapters illustrated, no doubt under Brant's personal supervision. In this way about one half of the entire work, or the first sixty-one or sixty-two chapters, was planned, with the possible exception of Chapter 48.

There are several indications of this. Each of the earlier chapters begins at the top of the left-hand page with a three-line motto, followed by the cut and by four lines of text. Then thirty more lines of text appear on the opposite right-hand

page, the entire chapter, therefore, consisting of thirty-four lines. Some chapters, however, consist of three plus ninety-four lines. In such cases two more full pages of text followed, so that the next chapter might again begin on the left-hand page. Apart from Chapter 48, which has a full-page cut and which fits into the scheme of the latter half of the work, and the *Vorred* (Prologue), only Chapter 58 deviates slightly from this scheme in having one extra line, making three plus thirty-five in all. In the second half, this plan is no longer strictly adhered to; the cuts are either on the left or the right-hand page, and the length of the chapters runs from three plus thirty-four to over two hundred lines. Another distinguishing characteristic of the first half of the work is that it is, on the whole, more carefully done metrically. But the most striking difference between the two halves is that while the fiction of a *ship* of fools plays practically no part in the first half (in Chapters 1, 8, 16 and 36 a *narren schiff* is referred to, but more usually Brant speaks of a *narren dantz* or *spil* or *schlitt* or *seil* or *bri* or of the traditional fool's bagpipes or of a court of fools), the allegory of the ship becomes much more common in the second half and in the Prologue, which was probably written last.<sup>12</sup> The notion of a ship, then, predominated by the time the work was completed but not in its earlier stages of composition, and was used in the title.

Where did Brant derive this allegorical idea of a ship? Some early critics, relying upon what is no doubt a false etymology of the word "carnival," which they would derive from *car* and *naval* (a "cart-ship"), link the fools' ship with the floats still used during carnival time. These floats, some resembling vessels, others wagons, were laden with various types of comical or fantastic characters. The practice, said to go back to pagan

<sup>12</sup> In the *Prologue* Brant comments upon the finished work in general and speaks of having burned midnight oil in writing it.

<sup>9</sup> Chaucer in the "Nun's Priest's Tale" quotes from the *Speculum stultorum*.

<sup>10</sup> *Studies in the Literary Relations of England and Germany in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1886).

<sup>11</sup> The fact that the first edition of the *Narrenschiff* is set up in a planless mixture of Roman and Gothic types, either style being used apparently as it was momentarily available, would indicate that the shop was very new and had not yet been supplied with a sufficient number of letters of each font.



tradition and cult, is supposed to have been a part of the worship of Isis and Nerthus, goddesses of spring, who bring peace and fertility to earth and mankind. These divinities were then impersonated by masked figures, represented at first by priests, then by the populace.

However authentic or not these conjectures may be, it is true that the idea of placing careless livers, rakes, drinkers, and the like together upon a ship was widespread from Holland to Austria before Brant's time. The most famous of such ships was actually said to have started on a cross-country journey from Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle). This notion is the basis of a poem entitled *Das schif der flust* (ca. 1360) by Heinrich Teichner, an Austrian,<sup>13</sup> and of some Shrovetide verse, *Die blauwe schute* (1413), by a Dutch writer, Jacob van Oestvoren; it is suggested also in the French *Renart le Nouvel* of Giélee (1288). But of more direct and immediate significance for Brant's *Narrenschiff* is a humorous academic oration, delivered in Latin from a platform built in the style of a ship, by Jodocus Gallus in Heidelberg some time in the late 1480's at a meeting presided over by Brant's friend Wimpheling. This oration, entitled *Monopolium et societas vulgo des Liechtschiffs*, was published by Attendorn in Strassburg, probably at Wimpheling's behest, in 1489.<sup>14</sup> It seems to derive from both Teichner and van Oestvoren, for, as in *Das schif der flust*, the ship waits on land for the passengers, and, as in *Die blauwe schute*, a privileged guild of ne'er-do-wells boards it.<sup>15</sup> It travels across country and is

<sup>13</sup> See Zarncke's edition, p. lxx.

<sup>14</sup> Modern critics all believe that it was Zarncke who discovered the oration of Gallus. As a matter of fact, a Chemnitz publication of 1760, *Altes aus allen Theilen der Geschichte* (Stösselische Buchhandlung, 2. Stück, pp. 235 ff.) proves that as early as that date it was known to have influenced Brant.

<sup>15</sup> The idea of an order or a guild (but not a ship) of worthless persons was found also in Wireker and Lydgate, so that this notion must have been common literary property on the Continent and in England as early as 1450. Probably the idea of a shipful of such people was also common property on the Continent long before Brant. On the oration of Jodocus Gallus, see

followed by a second vessel. A woodcut accompanying the oration shows a ship laden with passengers sailing through the air. One man cries out: "hie har zum liecht schiff zu."<sup>16</sup> Another shouts: "fiensche companie, fiensche." Below is a man hurrying to catch up with the ship, crying: "beita, beita," while in the distance we see a wine keg drawn by two horses.

In view of Brant's usual dependence upon sources and his close personal relationship to Wimpheling it is more than likely that the *Monopolium* of Jodocus Gallus, published in his native town five years before the appearance of the *Narrenschiff*, is one of the sources for his idea of a ship. The recent discovery by Adolf Spamer of a sermon on the subject of a fools' ship, entitled *Disz ist ein hubsche predig gethon uff S. Ursula tag, sagt von dem geistlichen narrenschiff*, etc.,<sup>17</sup> seems to prove beyond a doubt that even the conceit of a fools' ship was no innovation of Brant.<sup>18</sup> Internal evidence indicates that this sermon dates from the sixties or seventies of the fifteenth century; besides, the anonymous preacher boasts that with a ship of fools he is offering something *new*, although admitting that allegorical interpretations of St. Ursula's ship have occurred before. In his sermon this preacher describes twenty-one fools of the "Narrenschiff" and, as the twenty-second character, Christ, who, followed by St. Ursula's ship, crosses the sea dry and exhorts the fools to leave their vessel and board Christ's St. Ur-

besides Zarncke, Riegger, *Amoenitates literariae Friburgenses* (Ulm, 1776), and P. von Wiskowatoff, *Jacob Wimpheling, sein Leben und seine Schriften* (Berlin, 1867), p. 74.

<sup>16</sup> These words are in a scroll. Cf. the second prefatory cut to the *Narrenschiff*, where one fool on the ship shouts to others rowing toward it: "har noch." Cf. also the words directly under the *Narrenschiff* cut: "zu schyff zu schyff bruder: Esz gat, esz gat."

<sup>17</sup> Adolf Spamer, "Eine Narrenschiffspredigt aus der Zeit Sebastian Brants," in *Otto Glauning zum 60. Geburtstag*. Festgabe aus Wissenschaft und Bibliothek, II (Leipzig, 1938), 113-30.

<sup>18</sup> Spamer's important discovery refutes the conjecture of Pompen, *The English Versions of the Ship of Fools*, p. 299, that Brant may have derived the idea of a ship from one of the *Narrenschiff* woodcuts.

sula's ship, which is described as a ship of penitence. This sermon is remarkable not only in anticipating Brant's notion; it must also be the source for Geiler's *Schiff der Penitentz und Busswirkung*. It clearly foreshadows the *St. Ursulä Schifflein* compiled by the Carthusian monks of Strassburg in 1497 on the basis of Brant's *Narrenschiff*; it suggests Chapter 103 of Brant's *Narrenschiff*, which contrasts the ship of fools with St. Peter's ship; and finally it vindicates Lessing (after almost two hundred years) in assuming a relationship between the fools' ship and St. Ursula's ship.<sup>19</sup>

Given Brant's original notion of a series of chapters depicting various fools and the subsequent influence of Jodocus Gallus and of the *Predig*, the development of the new conceit is natural enough. That it is not carried out better in the *Narrenschiff* is due, probably, to the gradual and casual development of the idea in his own mind and to his inability to elaborate the concept to a logical, imaginative, and consistent conclusion. In the Prologue he speaks of a ship and of an entire fleet traveling on land and sea. This is not taken up again (except for Chapter 48) before the second half of the work. In Chapters 103 and 108 (the latter of which takes up the conceit of the prefatory cuts and is the last integral chapter) the fate of the fleet is discussed.

<sup>19</sup> *Zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur von den Minnesängern bis auf Luthern*, in Lessing's *Schriften*, Lachmann-Muncker edition, XVI, 364. See Zarncke's edition of the *Narrenschiff*, p. lix. The story of St. Ursula is told most completely in accordance with the revelations made to the German nun Helentrude, who lived in the eleventh century. Ursula, a beautiful British maiden, demanded in marriage by a pagan king, asked for three years' respite and during that time collected a host of eleven thousand virgins, whom she trained in vigorous physical exercises. Carried off by a sudden breeze in eleven triremes to Thill on the Waal in Gelderland, Ursula and her spiritual Amazons proceeded in their vessels up the Rhine to Köln and thence to Basel. Here they moored their ships and continued on foot to Rome, to do homage to their bridegroom Christ. But on their return homeward by ship from Basel, they were slaughtered by the Huns at Köln. St. Ursula's day is October 21. Lessing, in the place noted above, records the existence of a brotherhood called "St. Ursulä Schifflein" as early as 1470.

It is destined to be destroyed, and all the fools will drown, thus atoning for their thoughtless, foolish lives. This notion is expressed by Brant himself in his introduction to Locher's Latin translation. It is also indicated by Geiler in his sermons, and is in harmony with a favorite medieval thought, also found in a Spanish morality—that a fool's aimless life is comparable to a fool's sea voyage, undertaken without rudder and compass. But that this idea should have been so widely popularized by Brant only two years after the first voyage of Columbus to the New World, of which Brant had knowledge<sup>20</sup>—that is one of those singular quirks of fate with which the pages of history are dotted.

It should be borne in mind, however, that Chapter 108 is not intended to describe the fate of the entire fools' company but merely of the *Schluraffen*—the lazy, carefree carousers of the Land of Cockayne. The purpose of the trip has been interpreted variously—as a deportation, a trip to a fool's utopia, a journey to a madhouse or to a Horatian Anticyra. Murner believed that Brant meant to colonize the world with fools, which explains why there are so many everywhere! The starting point, Narbonne, and the destination of the voyage of *all* the fools, the land of Narragonia (an imaginary country meant to suggest Aragon and the German word "Narr"), are inventions of Brant.

#### A CHARACTERIZATION AND LITERARY HISTORY OF THE "NARRENSCHIFF"

#### CONTENTS AND STYLE

It has been noted that the *Narrenschiff* is in a sense a compilation. In the introductory prose at the beginning and in the closing remarks at the end Brant notes that his work is "gesamlet."

<sup>20</sup> See Zeydel in *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* (July, 1943), pp. 410-11.

This does not mean that he has plagiarized any work in the usual way. But true to the spirit of the *bispel* collections—examples and guides for good moral conduct—Brant requires authorities for every point he makes. Whether discussing book collecting or education or dishonest servants or usury or any one of the numerous subjects considered in the 112 chapters of the first edition, he deems it necessary to quote numerous instances from the Bible,<sup>21</sup> from the *Corpus juris canonici*, from the Church Fathers, and from the ancients, usually in that order, to support his argument. So systematic is he that he sometimes cites his authorities in alphabetical order, but in the sequence noted—the Bible first, then the *Corpus*, and so forth. The Book of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes are his favorites in the Old Testament, and this is much more frequently used than the New Testament. He invariably employs the Latin Vulgate and does not shun the Apocrypha. Of Greek writers, Plutarch's *Paidagogia*, Xenophon, and Homer are used, but probably in Latin translations. Latin writers, especially Ovid, Vergil (but only pseudo-Vergilian works or the commentaries of Servius), Juvenal, and Seneca, and to a lesser degree Catullus, Cicero, Persius, and Boethius, are more often used. To make the identification of references easier, some of them are given in the margin of Locher's Latin translation. Later writers are mostly ignored; Freidank (whose work Brant later edited) is not mentioned, and the pranks of the Pfaffe von Kalenberg and Monk Islan, popular predecessors of Till Eulenspiegel, and the Moringen folk song are scorned as vulgar and obscene. In some cases an entire chapter is based upon a single source, for instance the Book of Proverbs. Chapter 112 is for the most part merely a free translation of the pseudo-Vergilian poem *Vir bonus*.

<sup>21</sup> Originally Brant may have intended to restrict his examples altogether to the Bible. The biblical quotation below the third prefatory cut would indicate this.

The *Narrenschiff* is unique, however, because of its conception, without perspective, of the sins, faults, and foibles of its own day as exemplifications of folly—"Narrheit";<sup>22</sup> its humble, quotable sententiousness;<sup>23</sup> its broad scope of types; its suggestive but never exhaustive treatment of subjects; its skillful versification; and the fact that it treats all estates alike, from the highest to the lowest, including even Brant himself, who delights—compare Chapter 111—in referring to his own folly. Another very important reason, no doubt, for the success of the work is the fact that it is a picture book, that each fool is depicted in an interesting woodcut, alone or in a group, the blocks measuring 3½ by 4½, and in a few cases 4 by 6½, inches, some of them being outstanding masterpieces. They will be discussed below.

Nor is it necessary to read the book from beginning to end to understand it. Its biting satire, its humor, its popular language can be enjoyed just as much by random samplings. Even the occasional long lists of stock examples from Brant's favorite sources are not tiresome. For the naïve and casual manner in which they are introduced, their pertinence or lack of it, the systematic way in which they are marshaled, their rich variety, and occasionally Brant's complete failure to understand the point of his source<sup>24</sup>—all these things are more apt to hold the modern reader's attention, and even to amuse or delight him, than to arouse boredom.

<sup>22</sup> The *Narrenschiff* contributed much toward giving the word "narr" precedence over the other words for "fool"—"tore," "affe," "esel," "gouch," which were previously all about equally popular.

<sup>23</sup> Brant also had a rare gift for coining pithy compound words, striking phrases, and whimsical names. The *Narrenschiff* abounds in such gems, some of which immediately became part of the language. A few examples: 76, 7: vater macht bumble bum; 81, 34: der zapf macht glunk, glunk; 91, 15: klap-perbendly; 73, 91: klosterkatz; 93, 24: Kristen-Juden; 72, 1: Grobian; 76, 83: Hans Mist; 85, 27: Hansachtsinnit.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Archer Taylor, *Problems in German Literary History of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (New York, London, 1939), p. 71.



Mention has been made of the fact that the second half shows more evidence of haste and carelessness. It reveals the author off his guard more frequently and, since he is here not impeded by mechanical requirements of space, gives him a better opportunity to express his opinion less formally and more candidly. Chapters 99 and 108 are examples of his best work.

Both content and style of the *Narrenschiff* as a whole bear the stamp of Brant's individuality. In no other German work of the fifteenth century are grave seriousness and heavy moral didacticism, schooled in the accepted authorities, so completely fused with ribald, teasing humor.<sup>25</sup> The style is always clear, always animated and buoyant, and often balladesque. Although Brant lacked the deep insight and broad horizon of Erasmus and was given far more to moralizing than to sustained plot, yet his work shows more loyalty to an ideal and more consistency than the *Moriae encomium*.

It is not difficult to boil Brant's criticism down to its essentials. The subjects of his preachment may be classed under six general headings, namely: (1) vicious or criminal offenses, (2) insolence, (3) riotousness, (4) sloth, (5) presumptuousness, and (6) perversities. Herford has appropriately styled the *Narrenschiff* a telling picture of the infirmities of German society in 1494. Isaac Disraeli writes in his *Amenities of Literature*:<sup>26</sup>

The Ship of Fools is, indeed, cumbrous, rude, and inartificial, and was not constructed on the principles which regulate our fast-sailing vessels; yet it may be prized for something more than its curiosity. It is an ancient satire, of that age of simplicity which must precede an age of refinement . . . he who turns over the volume of the learned civilian of Germany will find detailed those

<sup>25</sup> There is some relationship between the *Narrenschiff* and the popular jest books of the time. Cf. p. 6, above.

<sup>26</sup> New edition edited by his son, Benjamin Disraeli, I (London, New York, 1859), 286 f.

great moral effects in life which, if the modern moralist may invest with more dignity, he could not have discovered with more truth. We have outgrown the counsels, but we never shall elude the vexatious consequences of his experience; and many a chapter in the Ship of Fools will point many an argument *ad hominem*.

Professor Henry Charles Lea in his article "The Eve of the Reformation," in the *Cambridge Modern History*, claims for Brant's work a powerful influence on the course of historical events, calling it a "singularly instructive document for the intellectual and moral history of the period" and a notable embodiment of humanistic teaching, establishing a personal relationship between God and man.

#### THE WOODCUTS

The splendid woodcuts which accompanied the contemporaneous editions of Brant's work go far in explaining its success at the time, for with certain changes and additions they were used again and again for over a generation and were even copied in most foreign translations. They appeared in 1520 in the German edition of the sermons which Geiler von Kaisersberg derived from the *Narrenschiff*,<sup>27</sup> but the later sixteenth-century editions of the *Narrenschiff* no longer carried them.<sup>28</sup> Zarneke, in his monumental edition of the work, published in 1854, reproduced only a few of them in the back of his volume. They were not published again in their entirety until Simrock reproduced them excellently in his modern German translation in 1872, and Bobertag included them, in their original size but on poor paper, in his edition seventeen years later. They have come into their own again in the splendid facsimiles of the

<sup>27</sup> They had also been used in one of Murner's books. See also *More Books: a Bulletin of the Boston Public Library*, XVI (1941), 19, and XVII (1942), 101 ff.

<sup>28</sup> Some of the later translations, however, contained copies of them and in some cases new cuts.

original edition of 1494 published by Schultz in 1913 and in the same year by H. Koegler.

The subject of the *Narrenschiff* cuts is a difficult one to approach, for one must be schooled in iconography, the history of art, general history, literary research, philology, and folklore in order to do them justice. A controversy was aroused when Daniel Burckhardt in 1892 ascribed at least some of the better *Narrenschiff* cuts to young Dürer, who stopped in Basel between 1492 and 1494 when he was between twenty-two and twenty-four years of age. Some noted critics, among them Max Friedländer and Jaro Springer, supported this belief, while others, among them Wölfflin, were more skeptical. Certainly Wölfflin's moderate view deserves consideration. Perhaps the resemblance of some of the cuts to Dürer's work, he remarks, was due to the influence of his presence; perhaps occasionally he looked over the artist's shoulder or made suggestions to him, or even took the stylus into his own hand now and then. At any rate it is possible that Brant met Dürer in Basel, and it is certain that they met in Antwerp in 1520, when Dürer sketched his excellent portrait of Brant.

But whether Dürer participated in making the *Narrenschiff* blocks or not, internal evidence indicates that at least five or six artists were involved, that some of these were mere tyros and that the principal artist, or the master of the Bergmann shop, as he has been called since Weisbach's study of 1896, was responsible for about seventy-five, or practically two thirds of all the cuts.

The question what role Brant himself played in the preparation of the cuts has also been frequently discussed. The present writer feels that "har gemacht" in line 25 of the *Vorred* means not "hergestellt"—produced—but merely "hergesetzt"—placed or inserted here. The present generation of scholars believes—and it seems rightly so—that Brant had no ability

whatsoever as an artist, that the cuts are usually superior to his verse, that they exemplify widely varying types and styles of illustration, and that while Brant may have given the artists an occasional suggestion, he could not have taken a prominent part in their work.

One can study and admire the better *Narrenschiff* cuts a long time and still discover new beauties and allurements. These cuts are delicate and yet sure of touch. The artist reveals a deftness, a pronounced talent for the figurative, great virtuosity, yet also refreshing simplicity and naturalness.

#### THE EDITIONS AND REPRINTS

Six authorized editions of the *Narrenschiff* came out during Brant's life. The best extant copy of the first (quarto) edition (Basel, 1494, Bergmann von Olpe) is that from the Meusebach collection, now in the Preussische Staatsbibliothek, Berlin. It forms the basis, through the Schultz facsimile edition of 1913, for the present translation. Brant himself did the proofreading, yet the edition contains at least twenty-five misprints which he must have overlooked. The second edition (Basel, 1495, Bergmann von Olpe) contains two new chapters, inserted between 110 and 111 and now usually referred to as No. 110 a (with the same cut as No. 16 and dealing with bad manners in eating and drinking, 3 plus 216 lines) and No. 110 b (no cut, no motto, and dealing with those who practice excesses at Shrovetide and carry them over into the holy period of fasting and praying, 115 lines). The third edition (Basel, 1499, same printer) adds a so-called "Protestation" of forty lines, now often numbered Chapter 113, written to protect Brant against the unauthorized additions and mutilations of pirated editions, which will be discussed below. The fourth edition (Basel, 1506) still contains the name of Bergmann as the printer, but probably his successor Nicolaus Lamparter was already in charge. The fifth edition

(Basel, 1509) gives Lamparter as the printer, while the sixth (Strassburg, 1512) was printed by Matthys Hüpffuff.

While these are the only *authorized* editions to appear during Brant's lifetime, at least six unauthorized editions came out in various cities of South Germany, supplying the entire region liberally with copies. Three of these are faithful copies of the first edition—with alterations only of dialect—and came out in Reutlingen, Nürnberg, and Augsburg, all in 1494. Three others (Strassburg, 1494 and 1497; Augsburg, 1495; Augsburg, 1498) are arbitrarily altered and expanded. Perhaps the Strassburg printer Grieninger (or Grüninger) was responsible for many of the changes.

The later editions and reprints of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries appeared after Brant's death and lack the cuts. The following octavo editions were all published for the Frankfurt fairs in that city: 1553, Hermann Gülfferich; 1555, same publisher; 1560, Weygand Han; 1566, also 1567 (?) Georg Raben and heirs of Weygand Han; 1574, Nicolaus Höniger; and 1625, Jakob de Zetter. A Basel reprint of 1574 published by Sebastian Heinric Petri is also to be noted. But many of these contain arbitrary alterations in language and content and are often obviously meant for Protestant readers. Other unauthentic, grossly mutilated editions, some even under new author's names, are numerous: Augsburg, 1531 (a shamelessly plagiarized edition); Strassburg, 1540 (by Jacob Cammerlander of Mainz), 1545, 1549 (Rihel), and 1564 (Rihel); Zürich, 1563; a reprint by J. Flitner containing also a work of Murner, 1625; Hasleben (probably Frankfurt is the real place of publication), 1629 (Brant's work is here used as an appendix to another poem, *Hasen Jacht*, and the hare takes the place of the fool); and Freystadt (probably Augsburg), no date, but probably about 1670.

Twenty-nine more or less faithful editions or reprints of the

original text of this famous book, mostly appearing within a period of about one hundred twenty-five years, have been noted. No doubt the Protestant Reformation hindered its progress seriously, for German readers, Protestant and Catholic alike, were flooded with other often less entertaining but more timely reading from 1520 on. Soon after the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War the book all but disappeared, and no new edition of it came out until 1839,<sup>29</sup> when Adam Walther Strobel, professor in the Strassburg Gymnasium, got out the first modern edition, based upon the first Basel edition of 1494. His text is generally accurate, and his successors have relied upon him heavily.<sup>30</sup> His biographical sketch of Brant is also admirable. But Strobel's notes reveal inaccuracies galore. In 1845 a new edition came out in Volume I of Scheible's *Kloster*. It is worse than useless, being based upon the garbled, emasculated, and adulterated Frankfurt Höniger edition of 1574. Zarncke's monumental edition of 1854 is a masterpiece of philological assiduity and acumen and a mine, though not a well-ordered one, of useful information. Goedeke, in his edition of 1872, made the grave error of normalizing the text, thus robbing his work of all authenticity, despite the helpfulness of his notes. Bobertag's edition in the Kürschner *Deutsche Nationalliteratur* (1889) has a good introduction, a text not as reliable as Zarncke's, and sparse notes of indifferent value. Probably more students have read the work in this edition than in any other. The more recent edition of Franz Schultz (1913) has been referred to several times. Since it is a facsimile of the first Basel edition, contains a

<sup>29</sup> In 1826 Jakob Grimm confessed that he had not read the work.

<sup>30</sup> It is indeed a curious fact, never before noted, that Zarncke, Goedeke, and Bobertag all copy an error which Strobel committed. In Chapter 103, line 81, the first edition has "sie lügen," but Strobel prints "die lügen." This is copied by all three, although Zarncke speaks, p. 265, of "ein buchstäblich genauer Abdruck der Originalausgabe." Bobertag sins even more gravely when he copies other errors of Zarncke, ignoring the latter's list of errata,



useful epilogue with the best extant discussion of the woodcuts, a list of misprints overlooked by Brant himself, all the cuts (including even the new ones found in Locher's Latin version), and a correction of the position of cuts 38 and 55, which were erroneously interchanged in Brant's first edition. Schultz's work may be placed beside Zarncke's as one of the two most valuable contributions to the subject. Finally, H. Kogler published another facsimile of the first edition for the Weimar Society of Bibliophiles, Basel, 1913.

#### THE TRANSLATIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

The thirty-six editions and reprints of the text of the *Narrenschiff* to appear between 1494 and 1913 are indication enough of the popularity of the work up to 1650 and again from 1830 on. But the many translations and adaptations, which began appearing as early as 1497, in Latin, Low German, French, Dutch, Flemish, English, and modern German and which number an even dozen (published in a total of over forty editions) furnish still more eloquent testimony of the dissemination of what Schultz calls "this secular Bible which nourished an entire age." Including the present work, the total number of editions of the *Narrenschiff*, in the original language or in translation, makes an average of one edition every six years over a period of about four hundred fifty years—a remarkable record, considering the almost total eclipse of the book for a period of nearly two hundred years.

The first, and the most significant translation of the *Narrenschiff* is the Latin rendering of Jacob Locher (Philomusus Suevus), Brant's own pupil and protégé. This translation, published in Basel in 1497, was done with the direct collaboration of Brant himself on the basis of the second authorized edition. In fact, Brant personally made important contributions to this work. As indicated above, it contains some new woodcuts.

Locher's version is extremely important, not only because it was in the international language of its day, but also because practically all the other translations of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, except the Low German version, rely wholly or partially upon it. A second authorized edition also came out in 1497, a third in 1498, a Paris edition, published by Marnef, in 1498 (based, it seems, upon the second Basel edition), and a Lyons edition, published by Zachoni, in 1498. Reprints also appeared in Strassburg, Augsburg, and Nürnberg—a total of at least eight printings—and, according to the new printed catalogue of the British Museum, that institution possesses also a Basel edition of 1572.

Locher's arrangement of the chapters does not conform faithfully to that of the original. Chapters 36, 74 and 75<sup>81</sup> are totally lacking in the first edition. No. 46 follows No. 64, and Nos. 48, 108, and 111 are interspersed among new material. Each motto is resolved into two elegiac distichs, while the chapters proper are in dactylic hexameters or elegiac distichs. Chapter 111, however, is done in Sapphic strophes. A few lines from the first chapter:

Inter precipuos pars est mihi reddita stultos  
Prima: rego docili vastaue vela manu.  
En ego possideo multos, quos raro libellos  
Perlego: tum lectos negligo; nec sapio.

Primus in excelsa teneo quod nave rudentes  
Stultivagosque sequor comites per flumina vasta:  
Non ratione vacat certa: sensuque latenti:  
Congestis etenim stultus confido libellis  
Spem quoque nec parvam collecta volumina præbet:  
Calleo nec verbum: nec libri sentio mentem.

<sup>81</sup> In the second Locher edition Chapter 75 is added, but in the meter of the medieval Goliards: Si non vultis indignari/ Et poetam criminari/ Boni sagitarii/ Io Io, etc.

A very important point regarding this rendering becomes clear right at the outset. While Brant, in the body of his work, does not make much of the fiction of the *ship* until the second half, Locher stresses it at the very start and carries it through consistently. This influenced the later translations to a considerable extent.

A literal Latin translation, in a classical meter, of a work so popular and informal in tone, would of course be a physical impossibility, and one must agree with the view of Pompen, expressed in his excellent monograph, *The English Versions of the Ship of Fools*, that Locher scarcely reproduces more than one-third of the ideas and one-tenth of the wit and irony of Brant's original poem. Based upon the general idea of the German version, usually but not always following the approximate course of the thought in development and sequence, and offering the attractive woodcuts (with certain changes), Locher's *Stultifera navis* is a very free adaptation of Brant's *Narrenschiff*, not a translation, made however, it should be noted again, with the warm approval and active collaboration of the author himself. Being in Latin, it strives to appear more learned. It contains far more classical allusions than did Brant's original and frequently shifts the emphasis. Many of the chapters are considerably shortened. Chapter 66, for instance, is cut from 154 to 34 lines.

The Low German (that is, Low Saxon) translation, *Dat narren schyp*, read in practically all northern—especially northwestern—Germany, may have appeared even before Locher's work. The first edition, of which but two copies seem to be extant (one in the British Museum, one in the Royal Library of Stockholm), came out of Lübeck in 1497 and is said to be by Hans van Ghetelen; a second revised edition is dated Rostock, 1519. Van Ghetelen's work is based chiefly upon the unauthorized but reliable Nürnberg edition of 1494 and to a

lesser extent upon the Strassburg edition of the same year, mentioned above. Far more faithful and reliable than Locher, it served its mission well in helping to make the *Narrenschiff* a truly universal German classic. It shows a definite effort on the part of the translator to propagandize Brant's ideas. He introduces a great deal of independent moralizing and polemics for this purpose. It is generally believed that the same author translated *Reinke de Vos* into Low German. Herman Brandes published a new edition of the Lübeck original of 1497 (Halle, 1914), while Carl Schröder got out a facsimile of the Rostock, 1519, edition (Schwerin, 1892).

Three separate French translations, or rather paraphrases, appeared between 1497 and 1499. The first, done anonymously by Pierre Rivière (Paris, 1497—copies are in the British Museum and the Dresden Landesbibliothek), is based upon the first edition of Locher. Though a conscientious attempt to adhere faithfully to its source, the handicap of being a translation of a free adaptation proves insurmountable. A few lines, again from the first chapter:

Le premier fol de la nef suis  
Les voiles regis de ma main  
A livres avoir me deduys  
Lesquelz ie ne voy soir ne main  
De ceulx que iay leuz faiz dedain  
Ou ne les entendz, somme toute  
Tel cuyde bien scavoir qui doubte.

Le premier suis en la navire  
Les cordes ie tourne ie vire  
Je suis des compaignons vagans  
Je suis des grans folz navigans  
Sur la mer du monde parfonde.

An abridgement came out about 1535.

The second French rendering, by Jehan Drouyn (Lyons,

1498), is an abbreviated prose version based upon Rivière, but relying also apparently upon the Paris edition of Locher. Some passages are in verse, copied word for word from Rivière. A reprint appeared in 1499 and a third in 1579. The third and last French translation, by an anonymous writer, appeared in Paris, published by Marnef in 1499 and usually called the Marnef translation. It was popular for a long time and is an independent prose rendering of Locher. There are also Paris and Lyons editions (1529 and 1530).

A Flemish version, which was published at Paris in 1500 by G. Marchand, is recorded in Van Praet, *Catalogue des livres imprimés sur velin de la bibliothèque du roi*, IV, 233, and mentioned by Pompen. Having been made in Paris, it was probably based upon Locher. It is referred to again below in discussion of the later Dutch version.

A second Latin version, by the Paris book dealer Iodocus Badius Ascensius (Paris, 1505, Marnef and Badius), based upon the Paris, 1498, edition of Locher, is even further removed from the original than is Locher's, and not as good. Chapters 48 and 108 have been boiled down to five lines! A second edition appeared in Basel in 1506, and according to the new printed catalogue of the British Museum, at least four reprints appeared later (1507-1515). This *Navis stultifera* has little in common with Brant or Locher except the title and the woodcuts.<sup>32</sup>

Early in 1509, or perhaps late in 1508, the English priest Alexander Barclay, probably of Scottish origin, got out the first English adaptation in stiff, uninspired Chaucerian stanzas under the title *The Shyp of folys of the worlde . . . translated . . . out of Laten, Frenche, and Doche into Englysse*

<sup>32</sup> Already, in 1500, Badius had written a Latin imitation of the *Narrenschiff*, partly in prose and partly in verse, on the follies of women. It was published in Paris early in 1501. In 1502 Wimpheling published a new edition of this imitation in Strassburg.

*lange*. It was published by Richard Pynson. In 1570 a second edition, published by Cawood, appeared, and in 1590 another. Barclay's rendering, based upon one of the two 1497 editions of Locher, with some transpositions and considerable additions,<sup>33</sup> contains also the Basel woodcuts, recut in England to the same size. Barclay, in his introduction, mentions having used both Brant and Locher, but refers also to Locher's Latin verse as though it were the original. As a matter of fact, he did not consult Brant's original at all. But he did use Rivière's French adaptation to a considerable degree, and became acquainted with the Ship of Fools through Rivière. Barclay's work, an illustration of early French Renaissance influence in England, is discussed in greater detail by F. Fraustadt in a Breslau dissertation (1894) and, more recently, by Pompen.

Suffice it to say that Barclay writes a pure, natural English, which attempts to bridge the gap between the language of scholarship and the vernacular; that he introduces many new references and allusions, while omitting others found in Brant or Locher; that he is a very subjective moralizer, especially in his *Envoyes*; that he usually expands Locher's text, using a seven-line strophe for two, three, or four lines of Locher; that when he employs the French text of Rivière, as he often does, he usually copies that writer's errors. Barclay's *Shyp* is a ship of fools of sixteenth-century England, rather than a translation of Brant. A brief passage from the first chapter:

I am the firste fole of all the hole navy,  
To kepe the pompe, the helme and eke the sayle:  
For this is my minde, this one pleasoure have I,  
Of bokes to have grete plenty and aparayle.  
I take no wysdome by them, nor yet awayle,  
Nor them perceyve nat, and then I them despyse;  
Thus am I a fole, and all that sewe that guyse.

<sup>33</sup> The chapter "Of Foles that are Overworldly," for instance, is based upon a Latin poem of Robert Gaguinus, used by Badius in his Latin translation.



That in this shyp the chefe place I governe,  
 By this wyde see with folys wanderynge,  
 The cause is playne and easy to dyscerne,  
 Styll am I besy, bokes assemblynge,  
 For to have plenty it is a plesaunt thyng  
 In my conceyt, and to have them ay in honde:  
 But what they mene do I nat understonde.

Barclay's work was reprinted in the nineteenth century in two volumes (Edinburgh and London, 1874, also New York), and even that edition, with a good introduction by T. H. Jamieson, is now a rare-book item. Selections from the work are also to be found in Warner's *Library of the World's Best Literature* (various editions from 1896 on), J. C. Ridpath's *Library of Universal Literature* (New York, 1899), and Julian Hawthorne's *The Masterpieces and the History of Literature*, Vol. 6 (New York, 1906).

Inferior to Barclay is Henry Watson's competitive English prose version, *The Shyppe of Fooles* (Wynkyn de Worde, London, 1509), of which only a single copy, in Paris, is now extant. A second edition, now almost as rare as the first, appeared in 1517. Watson's work seems to be a literal translation of the second, not the first, edition of Drouyn's French prose version. The mottos are done in verse, as is seen in the following excerpt from Chapter 1:

The fyrste foole of the shyppe I am certayne  
 That with my handes dresse the sayles all  
 For to have bookes I do all my besy payne  
 Whiche I love not to rede in specyall  
 Nor them to se also in generall  
 Wherefore it is a proverbe all aboute  
 Suche thynketh to knowe that standeth in doute.

Yonge folkes that entende for to knowe dyvers thynges ap-  
 proche you unto this doctryne and it revolve in your myndes  
 organykes to the ende that ye maye comprehend and understande

the substaunce of it, and that ye be not of the nombre of the fooles  
 that vageth in this tempesteous flode of the worlde.

A Dutch version by Jan van Ghelen is based chiefly upon Locher but, since Chapters 34 and 74 are also included, it probably goes back to the original German as well. It seems to have been published first in Brussels in 1548.<sup>34</sup> Three later editions—Antwerp, 1584 (Cornell University Library has a copy), Leyden, 1610, and Amsterdam, 1635, have been noted.

Reference has been made to the 1874 reprint of Barclay's *Shyp*. Two years before this Karl Simrock published his modern German "renewal" (Erneuerung) of the *Narrenschiff* in an attractive quarto volume, with the woodcuts of the original. When in the same year Karl Goedeke, in his edition of Brant's work, criticized Simrock's rendering rather severely, accusing him of gross inaccuracies and of failure to reproduce the nuances of Brant's language, Simrock wrote a heated reply, defending his translation.<sup>35</sup>

A second modern German resuscitation of the *Narrenschiff*, by H. A. Junghans, has been published in the popular Reclam series (1877). The new edition available to the writer is dated 1930.

#### THE "NARRENSCHIFF" AS A FORCE IN LITERATURE

The far-reaching influence of Brant's *Narrenschiff* in Germany and abroad is a subject which has not yet been exhaustively studied. Not even for Germany has the question been fully answered, although Zarncke made a cursory examination of it in the introduction to his edition. Curiously enough the situation is somewhat better with regard to England, although

<sup>34</sup> Whether this version is related to, or perhaps identical with, the Flemish version of 1500 which Van Praet mentions, is not clear. It is also not clear whether it depends upon the Low German version.

<sup>35</sup> Published in *Alemannia*, I, 3.

C. H. Herford (1886; see Bibliography) has treated only partially and misleadingly the remarkable hold that Brant exercised upon English literature for about a hundred years. In the following paragraphs an attempt has been made to sketch briefly the part which Brant's masterpiece has played in German, French, and English literatures, with some attention also to Dutch and Italian literatures.

The earliest trace of such influence in Germany seems to be in *St. Ursulä Schifflein* (Strassburg, 1497),<sup>36</sup> a book of excerpts from the *Narrenschiff* compiled by Carthusian monks of Alsace when they were in search of a compendium of maxims for righteous Christian living. Already at this early date Brant's work was widely recognized as Germany's most brilliant book for good Christians since the invention of printing and as a sort of layman's Bible destined to guide the coming generation of conformists. This mission of the *Narrenschiff* became patent when Brant's friend Geiler von Kaisersberg delivered his one hundred forty-two sermons in the vernacular on the book, from his pulpit in the Strassburg Cathedral in 1498-99, and thereby exercised a profound influence upon his contemporaries. Geiler used Brant's original, the Strassburg revision and interpolations, and the Locher translation, quoting from them liberally, but he treated Brant's text very freely and added a good deal of original material. Soon after his death in 1510, these sermons were published in Latin, with the original woodcuts, under the title *Navicula seu speculum fatuorum praestantissimi sacrarum literarum doctoris Joannis Geiler Keisersbergii concionatoris Argentiniensis a Jac. Otthero collecta* (Strassburg, 1510). Other editions of this important work followed, among them a severely abbreviated German redaction, published by Johann Grieninger and edited by Johann Pauli (Strassburg, 1520); this is the last contemporaneous edition to contain the woodcuts.

<sup>36</sup> See above, pp. 13-14.

Hyperbolic praise of the *Narrenschiff* among Brant's friends was a commonplace during its first decade. Hutten lauded its "classical" prosody and form, Tritheim remarked that it was doubtful if a more timely book had ever been written, Wimpheling, Locher, and Geiler were just as outspoken in their encomium. The *Epistolae obscurorum virorum* referred to it prominently (Part II, Epistle 9).

In the generation of Brant and in those immediately succeeding him, it was Murner, Sachs, Fischart, and Gengenbach especially, and later Abraham a Santa Clara, who followed in his footsteps or even moved entirely in the field which had been opened by him. The vociferous itinerant Franciscan Thomas Murner, about seventeen years Brant's junior and like him a native of Alsace, who helped prepare for the Reformation, and then turned against it, came so strongly under the influence of the *Narrenschiff* that his earlier works, especially the *Narrenbeschwörung* (1512), may be called direct copies of Brant. Murner takes verse after verse, also woodcuts, over bodily, and about one-third of the *Narrenbeschwörung* is merely a rehash of the *Narrenschiff*. Almost as much can be said of the *Schelmensunft*. It is not so much the case in Murner's later works, but even in *Gäuchmatt* (1519, which, as we have seen, Brant kept from being published in Strassburg for other reasons) and in *Von dem grossen Lutherischen Narren* (1522) the imprint of the *Narrenschiff* is clearly evident. Indeed, from Brant on the "Narr" as a type became a commonplace in German literature. He was put through every conceivable form of grotesque test and torture, exorcised, poured like lead, bathed, devoured, and what not, as the many popular terms such as "Narrenbeschwörung," "Narrengiessen," "Narrensneider," "Narrenbad," "Narrenfresser," found in profusion in sixteenth-century German letters, attest.

Although Brant's influence upon Hans Sachs and Johann

Fischart is not quite as palpable as it is on Murner, yet it is strong. Both have made Brant their intellectual property, and their works teem with reminiscences of the *Narrenschiff*. Sachs frequently draws his examples from Brant, derives entire passages from him, and expands upon them. He is particularly fond of Brantian aphorisms and saws. Fischart, too, often refers to Brant. Both Fischart and Sachs learned from Brant the practice of combining the bizarre middle-class humor of the earlier "Fastnachtspiele" with Brant's grave, awe-inspiring role of wise teacher-preacher.

Pamphilus Gengenbach, in poems and dramas, schooled himself on Brant's style and language. On every page of his earlier works one can find expressions, entire lines, and expanded themes which reveal this influence. Brant's famous "Rotwelsch" chapter (No. 63) on thieves' and beggars' slang was amplified by Gengenbach in his *Liber vagatorum*. Much later—at the end of the seventeenth century, when Brant was no longer in the public eye—Abraham a Santa Clara, the Billy Sunday of his age, still used the same device as Brant for castigating fools.

The notion of a *ship* of fools, quite alive in Brant's own generation, died out soon after in Germany, but the "Narr" himself as a type lived on, later to be metamorphosed into a dove, a bee, a hare, a worm, and even the Protestant devil. In his introduction Zarncke quotes a host of sixteenth-century writers, besides those already mentioned, who (1) took long passages from Brant, (2) interlarded their own verse with passages from him, or (3) made fools and types of fools the center of their interest. This influence is manifest even in the "Volksfeste," with their pantomimes, which have survived to this day. The only phase of Brant's work, regrettably enough, by which its progeny did not profit is its style. German literature of the sixteenth century would be superior in its prosody,

clearer and more precise in its style and treatment, and less fantastic in its allegorical conceits if it had followed Brant in these respects, too.

As late as 1840 a *Neues Narrenschiff* appeared in Germany from the pen of Felix Weickert,<sup>37</sup> prompted perhaps by the publication of Strobel's first nineteenth-century edition of Brant's masterpiece a year before.

As for France, the imitation of the *Narrenschiff* by Badius (1501) has already been noted.<sup>38</sup> About the same time Symphorien Champier, the physician of Duke Antoine of Lorraine, published *La Nef des princes et des batailles de noblesse avec aultres enseignements utilz et profitables à toutes manières de gens pour congnoistre à bien vivre et mourir* (Lyons, 1502). This is the work of his friend Robert de Balsac (also called Balsat and Barsat), a royal (and, it seems, boisterous) counselor, chamberlain, and seneschal in Gasconne and the region of Agen, and a noted warrior. In this publication there was included another work of Balsac entitled *Sensuit le droit chemin de l'hôpital et les gens qui le trouvent par leurs œuvres et manière de vivre* (there are also editions of 1505, 1525, one appearing at Troyes without date, and 1635).

While the *Nef des princes et des batailles* interests us only because, probably by way of the Drouyn translation which appeared in Lyons, it has taken over the Brantian idea of a ship (but not of fools!), *Le Droit Chemin* is of greater importance. In the manner of Brant it describes as fools various types of people who by virtue of their stupid ways go "a l'ospital." The

<sup>37</sup> Felix Weickert, *Neues Narrenschiff und Freud und Leid zu lustiger Kurzweil* (Stuttgart, Scheible, 1840). Lieblingbücher in alten und neuen Geschichten, Sagen, und Schwänken . . . mit dienlichen Bildern geziert durch Willibald Cornelius, Teil 7.

<sup>38</sup> It is entitled *Stultiferae naves sensus animosque trahentes mortis in exitum* (Paris, Thielmann Kerver). Wimpeling's 1502 edition bears the title *Jodoci Badii Ascensii stultiferae naviculae seu scaphae fatuarum mulierum: circa annis quinque exteriores fraude navigantium*.



work<sup>39</sup> begins: "Gens qui ont petit et despendent beaucoup. Gens qui jouent voulontiers et perdent souvent. Gens qui ont petite prise et rents qui portent draps de soye et chiers habillemens." In this vein it goes on repetitiously for seven pages: "Gens qui . . . gens qui . . .," often followed by the exclamation "a lospital!" Many, though not all, of the malefactors are clearly old Brantian friends: merchants who sell on credit, men seeking vengeance, those who lose what their masters gave them, who are guided by the advice of fools, who delight in ostentation, who cheat their masters, gourmands, those whose servants carouse at night and sleep during the day, who clothe their wives beyond their means, who always sing *gaudeamus* but never *requiem*, who are ungrateful to God, who covet legacies, who invite lawsuits only to lose, who put things off, who give away their master's best wine.

The great and prolonged success of Balsac's little work, due partially perhaps to the foreign origin of its underlying idea,<sup>40</sup> is seen from the five editions (besides two free imitations) through which it went between 1502 and 1635. It is extremely important in the history of Brant's influence in Europe. In France it helped determine the nature of Gringoire's satire *Les Abus du monde*, and Gringoire in turn influenced Desmoulins's *Le Catholicon des maladvisees, autrement dit le cymetiere des malheureux*. Then the *Catholicon* pointed the way to free imitations of Balsac's catalogue of follies and explains such works as Jacques d'Adonville's two versified warnings against sins leading to beggary, namely *Les Moyens d'éviter meren-*

<sup>39</sup> It is reprinted in P. Allut, *Étude biographique et bibliographique sur Symphorien Champier* (Lyons, 1859), pp. 119-26. See the same work for the bibliographical description of *La Nef des princes et des batailles*, pp. 109 ff. Another reprint, by Tanizcy de Laroque in *Revue des langues romanes*, 1886, pp. 276 ff., is less accurate. C. Schmidt, *Histoire littéraire de l'Alsace*, I, 315, merely refers to these works and erroneously ascribes the *Nef* to Champier.  
<sup>40</sup> Cf. also the "Ellend Herberg" in Strassburg, for which Geiler framed a constitution in 1501: *Geilers älteste Schriften*, ed. by Dacheux, pp. 26 ff. and G. Kalf, *Westeuropäische Letterkunde* (Groningen, 1923), I, 123 and note.

*elle, soy conduire et enricher en tous estatx par l'ordonnance de raison* (1530, a second edition 1540) and the more dramatic *Regretz et peines des mal advisez*.

But the influence of Balsac's *Le Droit Chemin* extended much further even than this. The singular work forms the basis, apparently, for the Englishman Robert Copland's *Hye Way to the Spyttel House*, written about 1535, which will be discussed below.<sup>41</sup> More striking still, there is also a Dutch version of Balsac's conceit, published at Antwerp but written probably in the middle of the sixteenth century. It is found in a collection called *Veelderhande geneuchlijcke Dichten, Tafel spelen ende Refereynen* and bears a title which suggests the influence of Balsac: *Den rechten weg nae t Gaesthuys met die by weghen ende toe paden die daer leyden tot den Broodtsack*.<sup>42</sup> Parts of this work are taken directly from Balsac, while other parts are altered or amplified. Like the other imitators of Balsac, this anonymous Dutch writer introduces distinctly new features, although like Gringoire, Desmoulins, and d'Adonville he buries the pith and core of Balsac's terse and pointed satire under a mass of verbiage.

As W. G. Moore in his article in the Kastner volume suggests, it is not at all impossible that Rabelais, when a printer's reader in Lyons, was familiar with the literary tradition of Balsac and his train and more or less unwittingly crowned their second-rate satires with his great masterpiece.

<sup>41</sup> On the popularity of Balsac's *Le Droit Chemin* as an offshoot of Brant's *Narrenschiff*, see the work of a British scholar, W. G. Moore, *La Réforme allemande et la littérature française* (Strassburg, 1930), pp. 204-23. As for the influence of Balsac upon Copland, the present writer, sensing this French-British relationship keenly after reading both writers, was gratified to find his conviction confirmed in two articles by Moore, "Robert Copland and His Hye Way," in the *Review of English Studies*, VII (October, 1931), 406 ff., and "The Evolution of a Sixteenth Century Satire," in *A Miscellany of Studies in Romance Languages and Literatures Presented to Leon E. Kastner*. Edited by Mary Williams and James A. de Rothschild (Cambridge, 1932), pp. 351-60.  
<sup>42</sup> Attention was called to this work by Pompen in *The English Versions of the Ship of Fools*, p. 194, note.

But even this does not exhaust the widely ramified influence of Brant in and through France. About 1503 P. Le Dru published for A. Vérard in Paris the anonymous *Les Regnars traversant les perilleuses voyes des folles fiances du monde, composées par Sebastian Brand*. The real authorship of this satire, which censures with severity the manners of the period, and ridicules the transgressions and follies of all classes of society, and which, by the use of Brant's name again reveals his extreme popularity in France at that time, is disclosed by an "Exhortacion ou par les premiers lettres des lignes trouverez le nom de lacteur de ce present livre et le lieu de sa nativite." These initials spell the name of Jean Bouchet, historian and poet of Poitiers. Four editions of *Les Regnars* appeared within two years, two others in 1510 and 1522.

Finally a work by Balsac's friend Champier, *La Nef des dames vertueuses* (1503)<sup>43</sup> also deserves mention. Like Balsac's *Nef*, it utilizes the notion of a ship, but not a ship of fools. The curious woodcut which accompanies it is more interesting than the text. It depicts a ship at sea bearing the Holy Virgin, the child Jesus, St. Catherine, St. Barbara, and two gowned doctors.

In Italy the *Narrenschiff* was mentioned at a rather late date in Lilo Giraldi's *Dialogi duo de poetis nostrorum temporum* (Florence, 1551).<sup>44</sup> So far as is known, it led to no imitations of Brant.

Wireker and Lydgate have been noted as predecessors of Brant in England. The influence of Brant's work itself in that

<sup>43</sup> For a bibliographical description, see Allut, *op. cit.*, pp. 131 ff.

<sup>44</sup> Lilius Gregorius Gyraldus, *De poetis nostrorum temporum*, herausgegeben von Karl Wotke (Berlin, 1894, Lateinische Literaturdenkmäler herausgegeben von Max Herrmann, 10), p. 65: "Fuit et Sebastianus Ticio [Brant's Latin name] Germanus ex Argentorato [i.e., Strassburg], qui paene infinita poemata apud suos scripsit, quorum quaedam in Italiam advecta ut Rosarium divae virginis matris sapphicum [found in the *Varia carmina*] et Navis, quae stultifera vocatur."

country, ascribable wholly to Barclay's and Watson's translations and to French imitations of Brant, and lasting well into the seventeenth century, parallels its influence in France and may be called one of the most remarkable examples of the infiltration of a foreign literary work into the pattern of English letters. In a long list of writings from *Cock Lorell's Bote* and the satirical poems of Skelton to Tarlton, Rowlands, and Dekker the imprint of the *Narrenschiff* is patent.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, Brant's masterpiece held its ground in England more persistently than in Germany, despite stronger competition—not as a German work, however, but through the English and French adaptations. And it did English literature, as it did French literature, too, a great service in giving a fresh stimulus and a new form to vernacular satire, and in helping to bridge the gap between the literature of personified abstractions and that of social types, of modern satirical portraiture. It played an important role in outmoding medieval allegory and morality and in directing literature into the channels of the drama, the essay and the novel of character.<sup>46</sup>

The anonymous fragmentary poem *Cock Lorell's Bote* (ca. 1510), a serious portrait of vagrant life but not as bitter a one as Brant's *Narrenschiff*, derives its main ideas from the English adaptations of Brant's Prologue; and from his Chapter 48 ("Gesellenschiff"); and, most of all, from Chapter 108 (Schluraffenschiff"), especially the cut accompanying it in the Watson edition. These conceits are superimposed upon that of a new religious order, derived from Wireker and Lydgate. But the *Bote* is far from being merely a copy of Brantian ideas, for it is typically English; it shows more imagination yet also a realistic, distinct, and vigorous treatment, and a much better

<sup>45</sup> Sir Thomas More wrote an epigram in which he referred to the *Ship of Fools*. Cf. Pompen, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. A. W. Ward on Barclay in the *Dictionary of National Biography* (London, 1921), I, 1076 ff.

sustained plot. The inmates of the *Bote* are all merry Londoners interested in commercial ventures; they travel the length and breadth of England in their fools' ship. As illustrations the author uses four cuts made for the Watson translation.

Skelton's *Boke of Three Fooles* reverts clearly to three chapters of the *Narrenschiff* as presented by Barclay, namely, Chapters 50, 52, and 53. His *The Bowge of Court* (ca. 1520), an allegorical picture of the follies and perils of court life, although it is more dependent on Langland, again borrows the Brantian conceit of a ship and, by way of Barclay (Jamieson edition, II, 210), derives ideas from Brant's chapter on courtiers (Chapter 100). Skelton's *Colyn Cloute*, finally, bears kinship with Chapter 73 of Brant. Copland's *Hye Way to the Spyttel House* (about 1535) deals with beggars and with the economic aspects of folly. A brief visit to the "Spyttel House" affords the writer an excuse for a description of those classes which are on the road to ruin, usually through their own stupid conduct. Again, as in the *Bote* and in the *Bowge*, the satire is narrowed down to one particular class (cf. *Narrenschiff*, Chap. 63) but is carried out less discursively and with more attention to realistic detail and plot, and also with more artistry than Brant could muster. As noted above, Copland's work is strikingly similar in conception to the French work of Balsac, *Le Droit Chemin*, mentioned above. Copland, who knew Barclay and who probably became familiar with Balsac's satire by way of d'Adonville's *Moyens*, gave it a new lease on life, more body, and a fresh and original turn. For a further discussion of the remarkable three-cornered literary relationship of the German Brant, the French Balsac, and the English Copland—a clear example of French Renaissance influence in England—see the two articles of W. G. Moore mentioned in footnote 41, above.

During the first quarter of the sixteenth century the Orders of Knaves were being organized in England. It is with them

that Awdelay deals in his *Fraternity of Vagabonds*. In his *Quartern of Serving Men*, however, he broadens this into a satirical classification of social types. The *Quartern* is clearly linked to Brant-Rivière-Barclay-Watson through the *Bote* and represents another step away from morality and toward literary realism. Copland's *Gyl of Brentford's Testament* should be mentioned in this connection too and also the ballad of *The Twenty-Five Orders of Fools*, which follows Brantian procedure chapter for chapter, ousting the English fools of Lydgate and the *Bote* and replacing them, by way of Rivière-Barclay, with Brant's German exemplars. Here for the first time the full scope of Brant's satire as interpreted by his adapters came to be appreciated in England, not only as a piece of humorous imagery, but as a collection of satiric types.

Undoubtedly the woodcuts which, as has been noted, Barclay reproduced had much to do with the sustained popularity of the *Narrenschiff* in England. For these cuts, though based on proverbs rather than on ancient fables, were genuine "emblems," introduced by Barclay in England a generation before Alciati founded emblem literature.<sup>47</sup> In this connection it is also of great interest to note that the first English emblem book, Van der Noot's *Theatre for Voluptuous Worldlings*, was followed almost immediately by a new edition of Barclay's *Shyp*, accompanied by Locher's Latin version.

Queen Elizabeth's jester Tarlton must be mentioned also as coming indirectly under the spell of Brant. The fools in his *Horseload of Fools*, who cavort through Fleet Street in a pony cart to be exhibited in a puppet show, are a merry lot, depicted according to their various callings. Here moral satire has disappeared entirely and made way for more modern satire of

<sup>47</sup> On Brant as a forerunner of emblem literature, cf. Wilhelm Fraenger, *Alt-deutsches Bilderbuch: Hans Weiditz und Sebastian Brant*, Leipzig, 1930. Hans Weiditz, the Younger, who lived in the early sixteenth century, was the artist of the Augsburg and Strassburg woodcarvers.



manners. The situation is similar in Armin's *Nest of Ninnies* (1608), which grew out of anecdotes about six well-known court jesters, represented as symbolizing human frailties in general and serving as a means of universal satire on the age.

Dekker's *Gul's Hornbooke*, too, can be traced back to the *Narrenschiff*; though by a devious course, as can two works of Rowlands, *A Foole's Bolt Is Sone Shot* and *Sixteen Knaves Marching in Order*. And even in the heyday of the drama, we can still find references to the ubiquitous *Shyp* in Nash's *Summer's Last Will and Testament*, Greene's *Friar Bacon*, and other plays. Two later English imitations of Brant are only of passing interest. They are mentioned by Jamieson in his modern edition of Barclay, pp. ci-cii. The first is a four-leaf quarto tract, *The Ship of Fools Fully Fraught and Richly Laden with Asses, Fools, Jack-daws, Ninnihammers*, etc. etc. It appeared in London about 1650, is entirely in prose, and, except for the general idea, has nothing in common with Barclay. The other is a 295-page *Stultifera navis* . . . *The modern Ship of Fools* (London, 1807), a wretched production in verse in imitation of Barclay's *Shyp*, published anonymously by W. H. Ireland, the Shakespearean forger. Of more significance are the references to the *Narrenschiff* and to Barclay in Robert Burton's early seventeenth-century *Anatomy of Melancholy*. Burton speaks of fools "who sail along to the Anticyrae in the ship of fools for company together"<sup>48</sup> and, later, he mentions among those who "tax vice" Barclay, Erasmus, and "Fishcart" (*sic* for Fischart!).<sup>49</sup>

It is clear, then, that even after the first decade of the seventeenth century the "Shyp" can still be found in some English ports, although to the new age the old device of a parade of fools seemed rather insipid and was gradually replaced by a

<sup>48</sup> *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, edited by Floyd Dell and Paul Jordan-Smith (New York, 1941), p. 59.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 293.

more dramatic and psychological approach to the ever-present thought which prompted Puck's ejaculation, "What fools these mortals be."

It remains to say a word about the most famous of all books on folly, the *Moriae encomium* (1509) of Erasmus, with the illustrations which Holbein furnished in 1514. Erasmus, only eight years younger than Brant, was certainly familiar with the *Narrenschiff* before 1509, for Badius, one of its earlier translators and imitators, was a friend of his. As has been seen, Erasmus met Brant in Strassburg in 1514, and probably again in Antwerp in 1520 and admired him greatly. To trace the delicate threads which connect Erasmus' masterpiece (written for scholars) with Brant's (addressed to the upper middle class generally) and which biographers of Erasmus have consistently overlooked or slighted, not because they were unaware of them but rather because too little research has ever been devoted to the subject,<sup>50</sup> would require a monograph in itself. It should be pointed out that while Erasmus, the humanist *par excellence*, unlike Brant, the scholasticist at the threshold of humanism, is loud in his criticism of the abuses prevalent in ecclesiastical circles, while he rarely quotes the Bible (except toward the end of his work), and is much more outspoken, more bitter and telling in his satire, and far superior to Brant in carrying out his theme artistically, he follows Brant in a very great number of his subjects and uses him as a source without mentioning him.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. the following two studies: Max Radlkofer, *Brants Narrenschiff, Murners Narrenbeschwörung, Erasmi Stultitiae laus, literarisch-historische Parallelen*, Programm (Burghausen, 1877), and Hermann Schönfeld, "Die kirchliche Satire und religiöse Weltanschauung in Brants Narrenschiff und Erasmus' Narrenlob. resp. in den Colloquia," *Modern Language Notes*, VII (1892), No. 2, pp. 78-92, and No. 3, pp. 137-49, and No. 6, p. 345. This is a subject for further research which might well have been mentioned in Archer Taylor's *Problems in German Literary History* as a problem which could feasibly be undertaken in America. It is incomprehensible how Pompen, *op. cit.*, p. 298, could make the categorical statement that Erasmus did not know Brant's *Narrenschiff*.

In the introductory verse he complains, as Brant did, that the writers commit the very sins they would impugn. Throughout the early part of the work, which is, of course, in prose, Folly speaks much like Venus in Brant, and her child Cupid, too, is described as the stupid blind boy who never grows up. Other themes which Erasmus has in common with Brant are: the parade of learning; folly nourished by drunkenness and ignorance and attended by self-love, flattery, forgetfulness, sloth, pleasure, sensuality, madness, intemperance, and sleepiness; old men acting like children but cursed with infirmities; contempt for Bacchus; women as fashion slaves; feasting and drinking; husbands winking at their wives' forwardness and allowing strange eggs to be laid in their nests; ill-founded jealousy and suspicion of wives; folly governing cities, appointing magistrates, and supporting judges; nobility of character as superior to nobility of birth, and virtue as the greatest consideration in heraldry; quack doctors and ignorant lawyers; men who build without planning; dicing and gaming; hoping to get to heaven through lip service; concern for the place and manner of burial; tracing ancestors; flattery; idolatry; dishonest merchants; endless lawsuits for little gain, merely to enrich dilatory judges or knavish advocates; long pilgrimages to no good purpose; begging as a trade. Many verbal parallelisms could be pointed out in the treatment of these subjects by the two writers.

It should be noted, too, that when Erasmus does quote from the Bible he, like Brant, is very fond of the Book of Ecclesiastes. While Erasmus attacks the clergy in all its ranks, Brant says more about the humble priests and monks and only mildly censures the bishops. It is significant also that a few of Holbein's cuts, for example, Nos. 107 and 131,<sup>51</sup> are strongly reminiscent of *Narrenschiff* cuts. So much is certain, that Erasmus could

<sup>51</sup> They are opposite pages 106 and 130 in the London, 1876, English translation.

and did find far more numerous and direct suggestions in Brant than in Pasquin, and that he did so freely but never slavishly; that Brant was parochial but patriotic, Erasmus a cosmopolite; that Brant was more sternly religious than Erasmus; that Erasmus was more volatile and fickle than Brant, even flippant in serious matters; that while Brant lacked the enlightenment, rich ideas, perspective, subtle judgment, and brilliant style of Erasmus, he possessed a more steady character. The *Moriae encomium*, under the influence of Lucian and the Italian Renaissance, is surely much more sparkling than the *Narrenschiff*, but the latter is superior in its nobility of purpose and grave steadfastness of ideals.

Incidentally, it is of interest to note that upon the appearance of Erasmus' *Moriae encomium* Brant penned a six-line Latin poem on it.<sup>52</sup>

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The following Bibliography, while not aiming to be complete, gives a selected chronological list, with critical comments, of works pertaining to Brant's *Narrenschiff* or to Brant himself. It does not revert to the editions, translations, and adaptations of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, which were dealt with above.

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*Altes aus allen Theilen der Geschichte, oder alte Urkunden, alte Briefe und Nachrichten von alten Büchern mit Anmerkungen.*

<sup>52</sup> C. Schmidt, *Histoire littéraire de l'Alsace*, I, 315, discusses the relationship of Brant and Erasmus in general terms.

2. Strück (Chemnitz, Stösselische Buchhandlung, 1760), pp. 235–251.

This important work, too, is completely overlooked by Arlt. A copy is in the Cornell University Library, Zarncke collection. It mentions one of the 1494 editions of the *Narrenschiff* on the authority of Schottel's *Ausführliche Arbeit von der deutschen Hauptsprache*, V, 1171, also referred to in *Das Neueste aus der anmuthigen Gelehrsamkeit* (1755), p. 99. It alludes to the French, English, and Locher Latin translations (dating the latter 1496) and to the Badius translation, quoting from both Badius and Locher. It lists the other works of Locher and refers to Geiler. Remarkably enough, it also mentions Jodocus Gallus and his oration, without however making it clear that this is a forerunner of the *Narrenschiff*.

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NOTE. Only with great caution should the student of Brant use the encyclopedias written in English.

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sistently writes "Lovell" when referring to *Cock Lorell's Bote*. The *New International Encyclopaedia*, 2d edition, contains no less than five errors in its brief article: (1) Brant's father was not a wealthy burgher; (2) Brant received no pension from Maximilian, only a promise of one; (3) Brant took no part in any negotiations with the Holy See; (4) the author of the Latin translation was Locher, not Locker; and (5) Watson's translation first appeared in 1509, not in 1517.

The *Encyclopedia Americana*, 1941 edition, adds four new errors: (1) Brant did not become state councilor in 1501; (2) he did not translate Vergil, Terence, and other Latin writers; (3) his influence on the literature of Germany and other Germanic countries was very considerable; (4) Watson's translation was not reproduced in 1874; Barclay's version was. A reference to Brant's allusion to Columbus would have been in place.

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## Das Narren Schyff.



### Gen Narragonien.

Hi sunt qui descendunt mare in nauibus  
faciētes opationem in aquis multis.  
Ascendūt vsq; ad celos / & descēdunt vsq;  
ad abyssos. aia eorū in malis tabescebat  
Turbati sunt & moti sunt sicut ebrius: &  
omnis sapientia eorū deuorata est,  
Psalmo .Cvi.

## A PROLOGUE TO THE SHIP OF FOOLS\*

*For profit and salutary instruction, admonition  
and pursuit of wisdom, reason and good manners:  
also for contempt and punishment of folly, blind-  
ness, error, and stupidity of all stations and kinds  
of men: with special zeal, earnestness, and labor  
compiled at Basel by Sebastian Brant, doctor in  
both laws.*

All lands in Holy Writ abound  
And works to save the soul are found,  
The Bible, Holy Fathers' lore  
And other such in goodly store,  
So many that I feel surprise  
To find men growing not more wise  
But holding writ and lore in spite.  
The whole world lives in darksome night,  
In blinded sinfulness persisting,  
While every street sees fools existing  
Who know but folly, to their shame,  
Yet will not own to folly's name.  
Hence I have pondered how a ship  
Of fools I'd suitably equip—  
A galley, brig, bark, skiff, or float,  
A carack, scow, dredge, racing-boat,  
A sled, cart, barrow, carryall<sup>1</sup>—

\* The superior figures refer throughout to the Commentary, pages 367-91.

One vessel would be far too small  
 To carry all the fools I know.  
 Some persons have no way to go  
 And like the bees they come a-skimming,  
 While many to the ship are swimming,  
 And each one wants to be the first,  
 A mighty throng with folly curst,  
 Whose pictures I have given here.  
 They who at writings like to sneer  
 Or are with reading not afflicted  
 May see themselves herewith depicted  
 And thus discover who they are,  
 Their faults, to whom they're similar.  
 For fools a mirror shall it be,  
 Where each his counterfeit may see.  
 His proper value each would know,  
 The glass of fools the truth may show.  
 Who sees his image on the page  
 May learn to deem himself no sage,  
 Nor shrink his nothingness to see,  
 Since none who lives from fault is free;  
 And who would honestly have sworn  
 That cap and bells he's never worn?  
 Whoe'er his foolishness decries  
 Alone deserves to rank as wise,  
 Whoever wisdom's airs rehearses  
 May stand godfather to my verses! <sup>2</sup>  
 He'd injure me and have no gain  
 If he would not this book retain.  
 Here you will find of fools no dearth  
 And everything you wish on earth,

The reasons why you're here are listed,  
 Why many fools have ay existed,  
 What joy and honor wisdom bears  
 And why a fool in danger fares,  
 The world's whole course in one brief look—  
 Are reasons why to buy this book.  
 In jest and earnest evermore  
 You will encounter fools galore.  
 The wise man's pleasure I will win,  
 While fools speak oft of kith and kin,  
 Fools poor and rich, high-bred and tyke,  
 Yes, everyman will find his like,  
 I cut a cap for every chap,  
 But none of them will care a rap,  
 And if I'd named and then apprized him,  
 He'd say I had not recognized him.  
 I hope, though, men who're really wise  
 Will find a deal to praise and prize,  
 And out of knowledge say forsooth  
 That I have spoken but the truth.  
 If I were sure that they'd approve  
 I'd care not what the fools reprove.  
 Naught else but truth the fool must hear,  
 Although it pleases not his ear.  
 Terence asserts that truth can breed  
 Deep hate, and he is right, indeed,<sup>3</sup>  
 And he who blows his nose too long  
 Will have a nosebleed hard and strong,  
 And he whom evil tempers pall  
 Will often agitate his gall,  
 And so not deeply am I riled



When I by rabble am reviled,  
 Because my teachings seem too good.  
 Fools ever have misunderstood  
 And spurned and laughed at wisdom's touch,  
 Of simpletons this book tells much.  
 But pay more heed, I beg you do,  
 To common sense and honor's due  
 Than e'er to this poor verse or me,  
 In truth I've slaved laboriously  
 That 'mongst these leaves these idiots might  
 Foregather; I have worked at night  
 While snug in bed they slumbered tight  
 Or gambled, freely drinking wine,  
 And never thought of me and mine.  
 Some rode about in sleds on snow  
 With frozen ear or frost-bit toe,  
 Some pranced like love-sick calves elated,  
 And others losses estimated  
 That they had undergone that day,  
 And how themselves they would repay,  
 Or how tomorrow they would ply  
 Their falsehoods, sell, deceive, and buy.  
 In pondering these many pranks,  
 The pranks of countless stupid cranks,  
 'Tis wonder not that anxious fear  
 Lest rhyming bring me hate and jeer  
 Has robbed of sleep my nights so drear.  
 Both men and women, all mankind  
 Their image in this glass will find,  
 That both I mean will follow soon,  
 For man is not the only loon,

'Mongst women fools are hardly fewer,  
 I'll deck their heads and veils demure  
 With fool's cap, though I'm sure it hurts,  
 For girls, too, have on idiot's skirts.  
 Some clothes they wear would put to shame  
 Full many a man's unblemished name,  
 Shoes pointed, bodice cut too low,  
 So that their breasts might almost show,  
 And rags they wrap into their braids,  
 And build huge horns upon their heads,  
 The giant oxen mocking they  
 Parade about as beasts of prey.  
 But honorable women should  
 Forgive me what I say, I would  
 Not wish to injure their good name,  
 I'd stress the bad ones' evil fame,  
 Full scores of whom deserve a trip  
 Aboard our crowded idiot's ship.  
 With caution everyone should look  
 To see if he's in this my book,  
 And who thinks not will say that he  
 Of wand and fool's cap may be free.  
 Who thinks that he is not affected  
 To wise men's doors be he directed,  
 There let him wait until mayhap  
 From Frankfurt I can fetch a cap.<sup>4</sup>

In dunce's dance I take the lead,  
Books useless, numerous my creed,  
Which I can't understand or read.<sup>1</sup>



# I. OF USELESS BOOKS

If on this ship I'm number one  
For special reasons that was done,  
Yes, I'm the first one here you see  
Because I like my library.  
Of splendid books I own no end,  
But few that I can comprehend;

I cherish books of various ages  
And keep the flies from off the pages.  
Where art and science be professed  
I say: At home I'm happiest,  
I'm never better satisfied  
Than when my books are by my side.  
King Ptolemy did once decree  
That he have all the books there be,  
And thought he owned a treasure-trove,  
But oh, he needed Christian love,  
Could not profess the proper creed.  
I, too, have many books indeed  
But don't peruse them very much;  
Why should I plague myself with such?  
My head in booklore I'll not bury,  
Who studies hard grows visionary;  
A Dominie I well could be  
And pay someone to learn for me;  
Though I may be a vulgar lout  
I can when scholars walk about  
Say 'ita' when I might say 'yes.'  
The man of German tongue I bless;<sup>2</sup>  
Although my Latin isn't fine  
I know that 'vinum' stands for wine,  
'Gucklus'<sup>3</sup> a cuckold, 'stultus' fool,  
And I am 'doctor,' that's my rule;  
My ears are covered up for me,  
If they were not, an ass I'd be.

snobbism he respect  
understand  
scientists for their life's  
work / book although  
he finds it difficult  
to understand/read

ironic

contrast with the poem,  
appears being humble, judgemental

*Who heeds what mighty men have said  
And e'er by fickleness is led  
Drives sows to vats before they're dead.<sup>1</sup>*



## 2. OF GOOD COUNCILORS

Full many exercise their wit  
That soon in council they may sit,  
Not knowing right or wrong at all  
They blindly grope along the wall.  
Hushai, alas, has long been dead,  
Ahithophel has got ahead! <sup>2</sup>

Wouldst others with advice delight,  
Then counsel but what's fair and right,  
So you will not be like a slat  
That drives the sow into the vat.  
I truly say it is not fair,  
Let judgment be a lesser care,  
For it alone does not make right,  
One must be searching, must be quite  
Inquisitive of evidence,  
Else right is wrong and bare of sense,  
Else God will not accept your plea;  
I give the warning earnestly.  
If we could see the future clear  
We'd not be rash with judgment here.  
The standard every man's applied  
In life, by that he too is tried,  
As you judge me and I judge you  
Our heavenly Father judges too.<sup>3</sup>  
When he is dead a man will find  
The judgment he once gave his kind;  
Whose judgment injures others may  
Expect his own grim Judgment Day.  
The judgments spoke by cruel men  
Will some fine day rebound on them;  
Who does not render justice well  
Will meet harsh justice down in hell;  
No godless counsel God will praise,  
No violent, sly, or crafty ways.<sup>4</sup>



*Who sets his heart on earthly ware  
And seeks his joy and comfort there,  
Inveterate foolishness his share.*



### 3. OF GREED

*A fool who gathers earthly ware  
And finds no joy or comfort there  
And hardly knows for whom to save  
When once he finds his dark, cool grave;  
More foolish still is he who spends  
To frivolous and wasteful ends*

*What God once gave for him to own,  
What he should husband all alone.  
Some day accounting he must make,  
Where more than limb will be at stake.  
A fool gives liberally to friends,  
His own salvation never tends  
And dreads the lack of earthly wares,  
But ne'er for things eternal cares.  
O silly fool, how blind you are,  
You fear the mange, invite a scar.  
The man who wrongful riches wins  
Will burn in hell for all his sins;  
To that his heirs pay little heed,  
They'd not assist in time of need,  
They'd not redeem him for a sou  
When once in hell he needs must stew.  
For God's sake, give the while you may,  
When you've died other men hold sway;  
No wise man ever deemed it worth  
His while to garner wealth on earth,  
He'd rather learn to know himself.  
Who's wise has more than trifling pelf;  
Crassus did drink the gold, they say,  
For which he craved and thirsted ay;  
Crates his gold tossed out to sea,  
So that for studies he'd be free.  
Who piles up goods that evanesce  
Inters his soul in filthiness.*

*Who everywhere would innovate  
Arouses scandal, wrath, and hate,  
A dunce's stupid traveling mate.*



#### 4. OF INNOVATIONS

An erstwhile quite disgraceful thing  
Now has a plain, familiar ring:  
An honor 'twas a beard to grow,  
Effeminate dandies now say no!  
Smear apish grease on face and hair  
And leave the neck entirely bare,

With rings and many a heavy chain,  
As though they were in Lienhart's train;<sup>1</sup>  
Vile sulphur, resin curl their hair,  
An egg white's added too with care,  
That curls may form in basket-pan,<sup>2</sup>  
The curls amid the breeze they fan,  
Or bleach them white in sun and heat,  
For lice no ordinary treat;  
Their number now would wax untold,  
Since modern clothes have many a fold,  
Coat, bodice, slipper, also skirts,  
Boots, pants, and shoes and even shirts,  
Fur hoods, cloaks, trimmings not a few,  
The Jewish style seems smart and new.  
The styles change oft, are various,  
It proves that we are frivolous.  
Shameless and fickle I do brand  
Style slaves who live in every land;  
Their coats are short and shorter grow,  
So that their navels almost show.  
Shame, German nation, be decried!  
What nature would conceal and hide,  
You bare it, make a public show,  
'Twill lead to evil, lead to woe,  
And then grow worse and harm your name;  
Woe's every man who rouses shame,  
Woe's him too who condones such sin,  
His wages will be paid to him.

*My name is on the Reaper's list,  
Nor has the knife my buttocks missed,  
And yet in folly I persist.*



## 5. OF OLD FOOLS

*My foolish conduct mocks my age,  
I'm very old but am not sage,  
A naughty child of hundred years,  
A youthful dunce cap o'er my ears;  
The children I would regiment  
And write myself a testament*

*That after death I well may rue.  
Example bad and counsel too  
I give that in my youth I learned  
And think that praise I've thereby earned,  
And dare to boast of my disgrace,  
That I've deceived in many a place;  
Clear water I have turned to slime  
And practiced evil every time.  
That I'm no longer quite as bad  
As once I was, that makes me sad;  
But pranks that I must leave undone  
I'll teach to Henry, he's my son,  
He'll carry on my evil stock,  
For he's a chip from off this block;  
Such conduct suits him perfectly,  
And if he lives, a man he'll be.  
'T must be confessed that he's my son  
If justice would to him be done,  
His talents never stinting, sparing,  
We'll find him in the fool's ship faring.  
When I am dead 'twill give me cheer,  
I've left some good successors here;  
Old age has such a recompense,  
Old age today is bare of sense.  
Susanna's judges<sup>1</sup> showed us why  
On older men we can't rely;  
An oldish fool spares not his soul,  
A sinner cannot change his goal.*



*Whoe'er his children's mischief bears  
Indulgently and always spares  
The rod, will later suffer cares.*



## 6. OF THE TEACHING OF CHILDREN

A fool is he and blind indeed  
Who ne'er to children pays much heed  
That properly they may be reared  
And in the right direction steered;  
He must not suffer them to err

Like sheep that have no shepherd's care,  
And if to mischief they're addicted  
Chastisement due must be inflicted.  
That they are young is no excuse,  
They should be taught that for abuse  
There's punishment discreet, severe.  
O fool, I beg you, lend your ear,  
Since youth has ready memory  
The child can learn quite easily.  
The liquid poured in brand-new tubs  
Will leave a smell howe'er one scrubs;  
A youthful shoot can well be bent,  
But old shoots curved with such intent  
Will very often snap or shatter;  
Fit punishment's no grievous matter,  
The rod will drive without a smart  
All folly from your youngster's heart.  
He seldom learns who's never cuffed,  
And evils grow when not rebuffed.  
Eli <sup>1</sup> was righteous, never bad,  
But since he punished not his lad,  
God punished him and did destroy  
In wrath the father with the boy;  
Since children are not reared betimes  
We now have many Catilines.  
Our children too'd be better trained  
If they had teachers like the famed  
Phoenix <sup>2</sup> whom Pelëus admired  
And for his son Achilles hired,  
And Philip scoured Greece till he'd won  
The ablest teacher for his son;

The greatest king that ever reigned,  
 By Aristotle was he trained,  
 And he did sit at Plato's knees,  
 While Plato learned from Socrates.  
 But fathers, oh, of nowadays,  
 When greed and stinginess hold sway,  
 Engage such teachers for a son  
 Who'd make a fool of anyone  
 And send him home again (for shame!)  
 More foolish now than when he came.  
 It's little wonder that a fool  
 Has foolish children as a rule.  
 Old Crates said, if 'twere allowed  
 And proper he would loudly shout:  
 You fools, who think of getting rich  
 And have this constant burning itch  
 And ne'er to children pay much heed,  
 Since riches are your only need!  
 But retribution hastens then  
 When once your sons are councilmen  
 And strive for honor, high renown,  
 Then each will play the stupid clown  
 As he had learned in early youth.  
 Their father soon will hear the truth  
 And eat his very heart and rue  
 That he has reared a bugaboo.<sup>3</sup>  
 Some join a brutal ruffian's horde,  
 Blaspheming they malign our Lord,  
 Some go about with slattern whores,  
 Some gamble, losing shirt and horse,  
 Others carouse by day and night,

That, mark you, that's our children's plight  
 If once in youth they've been neglected,  
 By teachers never well directed.  
 From start to finish honor's prize  
 Derives alone from precepts wise.  
 A noble mind's a precious stone,  
 Your sacred trust, but not your own,  
 For from your parents it doth flow,  
 And riches also blessings show,  
 But that depends on fortune's call,  
 And fortune bounces like a ball;  
 An asset too is worldly fame,  
 But gross inconstancy's its name;  
 But beauty too's a great delight,  
 Enduring scarcely over night;  
 Good health is also very lief,  
 But it escapes like any thief;  
 Great strength of body too doth please,  
 With age and illness though it flees.  
 But one thing's constant, never dies  
 In this wide world: Good precepts wise.  
 Gorgias asked: "Does happiness  
 The mighty Persian monarch bless?"  
 Spake Socrates: "The answer's yes,  
 If wisdom, virtue he confess."  
 He meant that power and gold are vain  
 If virtue does not guide the twain.

*Who 'twixt two millstones puts his frame  
And many people would defame  
Will suffer hurt, will suffer shame.*



## 7. OF CAUSING DISCORD

Full many a man takes great delight  
In causing other men to fight  
And pitting neighbor 'gainst his neighbor,  
So that in hate and spite they labor;  
With slander too and many lies  
His neighbor's fortitude he tries,

Who only later finds it out;  
He treats his friends as would a lout,  
And that his proof the better be,  
He magnifies indignity  
And treats it like a church confession  
That no one blame his indiscretion,  
Pretending that to you alone  
His whispered secret now is known.  
'Tis thus they'd curry friends and please,  
The world is full of feuds like these.  
Tongues carry tales to every place  
Much faster than a coach could race.  
Thus Absalom<sup>1</sup> and Korah<sup>2</sup> did  
When for adherents once they bid,  
But only grief resulted thus.  
In every land an Alcimus<sup>3</sup>  
Who'd cheat his friends with discord sore  
And jam his fingers in the door,  
And often doth his fingers maim  
Like him who riches hoped to claim  
When old King Saul he put to death,<sup>4</sup>  
Like those who murdered Ish-bosheth,<sup>5</sup>  
Like him who 'twixt two millstones pines  
And causes discord oftentimes.  
Just watch him act and soon you'll see  
Of what base quality he be.  
Conceal a fool behind the door,  
His ears are salient as before.



*Who cannot answer no or yes  
And spurns advice as valueless  
Must bear his own unhappiness.*



## 8. OF NOT FOLLOWING GOOD ADVICE

A fool who with the wise would go  
Yet reason, measure cannot show,  
And e'en when speaking wisdom's word  
A cuckoo is his fowling bird.  
Some men are wise in what they say

But hitched to folly's plow they stay;  
The reason is that they rely  
Upon their shrewdness keen and sly  
And heed to no one's counsel pay  
Until misfortune comes their way.  
Thus Tobit always taught his son <sup>1</sup>  
That sage advice he should not shun;  
Because Lot's wife good counsel spurned  
And looked in back of her and turned, <sup>2</sup>  
The Lord chastised this grievous fault  
And changed her instantly to salt.  
When Rehoboam once declined <sup>3</sup>  
Wise teachings, caring more to mind  
The idiots, ten tribes he lost  
And stayed a fool at any cost.  
If Nebuchadnezzar had not ceased  
Obeying, he'd not be a beast, <sup>4</sup>  
And Maccabeus, hero bold,  
Of whom great deeds are often told,  
If he had done what Joram said,  
He would not have been stricken dead. <sup>5</sup>  
The man of stubborn, willful mind  
To prudent counsel's ever blind,  
Of gracious fortune he is void  
And prematurely is destroyed.  
Friends' counsel value every hour,  
Good counsel oft spells fortune, power.  
Ahithophel soon after died  
When his advice King Saul <sup>6</sup> decried.

*Who's crude and rude from skin to core  
And plays the fool's part evermore,  
He drags his cap along the floor.*



## 9. OF BAD MANNERS

Who wears full robes with haughty stare,  
Who struts with head held high in air,  
To this side, then to tother side,  
Now back again in circles wide,  
Now moving fast, now ambling slow,  
To me his conduct oft will show

This man doth sport frivolity,  
And that avoided it should be.  
The man who brains and breeding shares  
Will never feign affected airs,  
And what he does or what he tries  
Seems good to people truly wise.  
Real wisdom starts with modesty,  
It's decorous, acts peaceably,  
It is a friend of goodness too,  
Which brings God's blessing unto you;  
The man whose breeding knows no dearth  
Owns more than riches here on earth.  
Good breeding seen in men of parts  
Reveals their nature, shows their hearts;  
The man whose manners seem but poor  
Shows he was trained to be a boor,  
Ill-bred, uncouth the arrant knave,  
That like a cow he doth behave.  
The noblest, finest traits there be  
Are breeding, manners, modesty;  
Good breeding Noah'd always prize,  
But Ham, his son, was otherwise.  
If you've a prudent, well-bred son,  
Who sense and wisdom would not shun,  
Then saying thanks to God is meet  
For showing you the mercy seat.  
His father's nose Albinus ate  
For rearing him in shameful state.<sup>1</sup>

*Who cuffs and beats his human brother  
That nothing did to harm or bother  
Offends the sense of many another.*



#### 10. TRUE FRIENDSHIP

A fool is he, a derelict,  
If wrongs on others he'd inflict,  
Because it's thus he'll win a foe  
Who'll later triumph o'er his woe.  
If you do wrong or hurt a friend  
Who trusted you to every end

And now finds evil recompense,  
A fool you are devoid of sense.  
Such friends today are very rare  
As Jonathan and David were,  
Or as Patroclus, Achilles,  
Orestes, also Pylades,  
As Demades <sup>1</sup> and Pythias,  
Or as the squire of Saul once was, <sup>2</sup>  
Or Laelius and Scipio.  
When money lacks, your friendships go,  
For none his neighbor loves so well  
As God's commandment would impel. <sup>3</sup>  
Self-love expels whate'er is just,  
All friendship, family, and trust;  
Where might today that Moses be <sup>4</sup>  
Who loves his neighbors honestly?  
Is Nehemiah anywhere,  
God-fearing Tobit, is he there?  
Who common welfare would despise  
And only craves for personal prize,  
I deem him foolish and inane.  
What's public good is each man's gain,  
But Cains there are in every state  
Who Abel's joy begrudge and hate.  
Friendships, alas, when woes are many  
Are four-and-twenty to the penny,  
And men who deem themselves so fine:  
A mite will purchase ninety-nine.



*A man who's ready fools to hear  
When Holy Writ is always near:  
The dunce's game will cost him dear.*



## II. CONTEMPT OF HOLY WRIT

A fool is he who has forsook  
His faith in Writ and Holy Book  
And thinks that he can live as well  
Without a God, without a hell,  
Despising preachment with a sneer

As though he could not see or hear.  
If someone from the dead should hie,  
A hundred miles or more we'd fly  
To meet him and to hear him tell  
The news that he has brought from hell,  
If many live in hell's confines  
And if they drink young, heady wines,  
And other mischief bare of wit.  
There is so much of Holy Writ,  
Of Testament both Old and New,  
That everything's been proved to you.  
We'll not require assurance queer  
From Niklashausen's shepherd-seer.<sup>1</sup>  
The Lord doth verily proclaim:  
Who sins on earth, in hell finds shame,  
And who on earth in prudence lives,  
To him eternal praise God gives.  
'Twas God who fashioned verity,  
The ear can hear, the eye can see,  
Therefore an idiot he and blind<sup>2</sup>  
Who wisdom will not hear or mind,  
Or who would hark to teachings new.  
I fear the day is near when you  
Will hear new teachings, new belief,  
Far more than pleasing, more than lief.<sup>3</sup>  
Old Jeremiah warned aloud,  
But those in earshot were not bowed,  
And others too gave admonition,  
But no one could arrest perdition.

*Who never girds before he'd ride,  
And shows no care in proper tide,  
Is scorned when falling off the side.*



## 12. OF HEEDLESS FOOLS

In him is folly oft detected  
Who says: "Ah, that was unexpected!"  
For who shows care in proper tide,  
He seeks a saddle ere he ride.  
Whoe'er with thought and plan would wait  
Will find their plans are often late,

But those who plan the while they act  
Must have experience in fact,  
Or must have watched the other sex,  
Who're very shrewd in these respects.  
Had Adam used a little wit  
Before into the fruit he bit,  
He'd never for a tiny slice  
Have been expelled from Paradise.  
If Jonathan had been apprised,  
The gifts he'd surely have despised  
That Tryphon brought, the faithless man,  
Before he slew poor Jonathan.<sup>1</sup>  
Sagacious plans were ever rife  
When Emperor Julius joined in strife,  
But once while peace prevailed unchecked  
He erred in only one respect  
And friendly letters did not read  
That prophesied a heinous deed.  
Nicanor's scheming came to naught,<sup>2</sup>  
He sold the game he had not caught;<sup>3</sup>  
His plot failed signally, instead  
He lost his tongue, his hand, his head.  
Good plans are always fine, no doubt,  
If but in time they're carried out.  
Some hurry, yet arrive too late,  
Excess of zeal may break your pate.  
If Asahel had never sped  
Abner would not have stabbed him dead.<sup>4</sup>

*My rope pulls many fools about,  
Ape, cuckold, ass, and silly lout,  
Whom I seduce, deceive, and flout.*



### 13. OF AMOURS

Dame Venus I, with rump of straw,<sup>1</sup>  
Fools do regard me oft with awe,  
I draw them toward me with a thrill  
And make a fool of whom I will,  
My clients, who could name them all?  
Whoever's heard of Circe's stall,

Calypso, famous sirens' bower,  
He knows my skill and knows my power.  
Whoever thinks he's very shrewd  
In idiot's broth will soon be stewed,  
Whom I decide to wound by stealth  
Through herbs will not regain his health.  
My little son stark blind is he  
Since love-sick swains can never see;  
My son's a child, he never grew,  
For lovers act like children too.  
They seldom speak a serious word,  
Their speech like children's is absurd.  
My son goes naked every day,  
Love can't be hid and tucked away;  
Since evil loves are flighty things  
My offspring wears a pair of wings;  
Amours are changeful, fickle e'er,  
There's naught more fitful anywhere;  
And Cupid brings along his bow,<sup>2</sup>  
While round his waist two quivers show.  
In one, barbed arrows he doth bear,  
To shoot the fools who have no care.  
Whom once these sharp gilt barbs do hit,  
Deprived are they of sense and wit,  
They dance about like fools insane.  
The other pouch doth bolts contain,  
They're dull and leaded, hardly light,  
One causes wounds, the other flight.  
Whom Cupid strikes, Amor ignites,  
So that the fire his vitals bites  
And he cannot put out the flame



That killed Dido of ancient fame  
 And caused Medea, cruel mother,  
 To burn one child and slay another.<sup>3</sup>  
 Tereus would not have been a bird,  
 Pasiphaë the steer'd avoid,  
 Phaedra would Theseus not pursue  
 And passion for her stepson shew,  
 For Nessus death would not have loomed  
 And Troy would never have been doomed,  
 Scylla would leave her father's hair,  
 Hyacinth be a flower fair,  
 Leander would not swim the sea,  
 Messalina pure and chaste would be,  
 And Mars in chains would never lie,  
 Procris from thickets green would shy,  
 Sappho would not fall off the cliff,  
 Sirens would not upset a skiff,  
 Circe no vessel would impede,  
 Pan, Cyclops play no plaintive reed,  
 Leucothoë would incense spare,  
 Myrrha would no Adonis bear,  
 And Byblis would her brother leave,  
 Through gold would Danaë not conceive,  
 In night Nyctimine not rejoice,  
 And Echo would not mock our voice,  
 Thisbe would dye no berries red,  
 Atalanta be no lion dread,  
 The Levite's wife none would disgrace,<sup>4</sup>  
 Causing the death of one whole race;  
 David would not take Bersabë,<sup>5</sup>  
 Samson would not trust Dalitë,<sup>6</sup>

Solomon would not to idols pray,<sup>7</sup>  
 Amnon his sister not betray,<sup>8</sup>  
 And Joseph would not be undone<sup>9</sup>  
 Nor Hippolytus, Bellerophon;  
 As horse the wise man would not fare,<sup>10</sup>  
 And Vergil would not hang in air,<sup>11</sup>  
 Ovid the emperor's friend would be,  
 Had he not learned love's artistry,  
 And more to wisdom's fount would go  
 If smitten not with lover's woe.  
 Who sees too much of woman's charms  
 His morals and his conscience harms;  
 He cannot worship God aright  
 Who finds in women great delight.  
 Clandestine love in every race  
 Is foolish, sinful, black disgrace;  
 Such love is still more foolish when  
 It seizes older wives and men.  
 Fool who from love takes inspiration  
 And means to practice moderation,  
 For wisdom's treasure rich and pure  
 Cannot be mingled with amour;  
 A lover's oft so blind indeed,  
 He thinks no one his loves will heed.  
 Such folly I can but deride,  
 This dunce cap's pasted to his hide.

*Who says: No pity God avows,  
And that no justice He doth house,  
Is ignorant as geese and sows.*



#### 14. OF INSOLENT TOWARD GOD

He smears himself with donkey's fat  
And has the grease pot 'neath his hat  
Who dares assert that heaven hath  
Much mercy and but little wrath  
Against a man committing wrong

And would condone it for a song,  
Since these are only human faults.  
God did not fashion heaven's vaults  
To be a paradise for geese,  
And sins have never been a piece  
Of human life, and nothing new.  
Some know the Bible through and through  
And other books that others wrote,  
But nowhere do they seem to note  
That punishment is always stated  
And retribution's unabated,  
And God will evermore rebuff  
A human giving Him a cuff.  
God's joined no Czech or gypsy band,  
Their tongues though He can understand,  
Although the mercy He doth send  
To men is boundless, has no end,  
His justice e'er stays grand and free,  
Chastising sin eternally.  
Vengeance nine generations long  
Greets all of those who would do wrong;  
God's mercy too would fail and must  
If He should ever grow unjust.  
Heaven was meant nor then nor now  
For geese, nor will a fool or cow  
Or ape or grunting swine or ass  
To heaven's timeless kingdom pass.  
The soul the devil has enslaved  
Can never be redeemed or saved.

*By those who build it should be heeded  
What sums of money will be needed,  
Or else the task will not be speeded.*



### 15. OF FOOLISH PLANS<sup>1</sup>

A fool is he who has not paused  
When building to compute the cost  
And see if with his funds he can  
Complete the work as he did plan.  
The buildings blindly undertaken  
Must later often be forsaken:

Nebuchadnezzar boasted loudly<sup>2</sup>  
And claimed with arrogance and proudly  
That through his might the great and feared  
City of Babylon had been reared,  
And yet the Bible tells us how  
He stayed afield quite like a cow.  
Nimrod would build on high a tower,  
A buttress 'gainst the water's power,<sup>3</sup>  
But since no careful plans he heeded  
His work to no good end was speeded.  
Not many build as much today  
As when Lucullus had his way.  
Whoe'er would build without regret  
Should plan before the stones are set.  
Regret in many a man commences  
When losses in his purse he senses.  
If you would venture something bold,  
Reserves are needed, cash and gold,  
To reach your distant destination  
Of which you dream without cessation,  
So never mishap comes to mock  
And make of you a laughing stock.  
'Tis better never to attempt  
Than end with losses, with contempt.  
A pyramid's a costly pile  
And labyrinths at River Nile,<sup>4</sup>  
But they decay and lose their worth,  
No building can endure on earth.



*He merits future poverty  
Who always lives in luxury  
And joins the spendthrift's revelry.*



## 16. OF GLUTTONY AND FEASTING

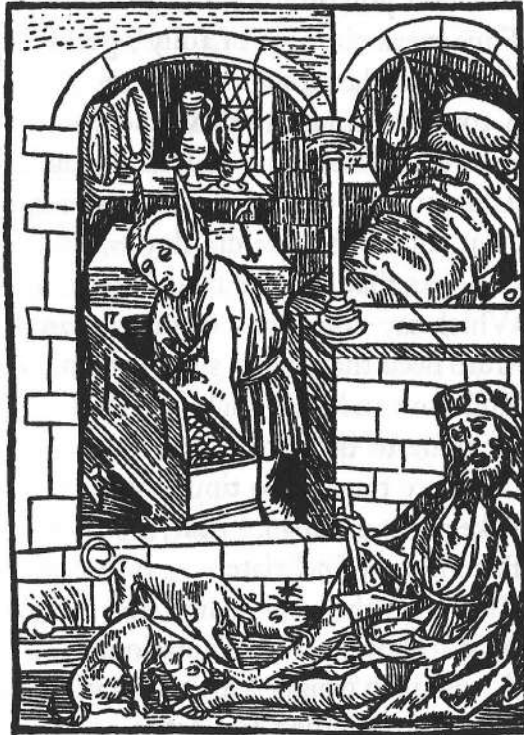
*He shoes a fool in every wise  
Who day and night forever hies  
From feast to feast to fill his paunch  
And make his figure round and staunch,  
As though his mission he were filling*

*By drinking too much wine and swilling  
And bringing hoar-frost o'er the grape.  
Into the fool's ship toss the ape,  
He kills all reason, is not sage,  
And will regret it in old age.  
His head and hands will ever shake,  
His life a speedy end may take,  
For wine's a very harmful thing,  
A man shows no sound reasoning  
Who only drinks for sordid ends,  
A drunken man neglects his friends  
And knows no prudent moderation,  
And drinking leads to fornication;  
It oft induces grave offense,  
A wise man drinks with common sense.  
For wine old Noah cared no whit,<sup>1</sup>  
Although he found and planted it;  
By wine Loth twice to sin was led,<sup>2</sup>  
Through wine the Baptist lost his head,<sup>3</sup>  
Through wine a wise man comes to prate  
And set a fool's cap on his pate;  
When Israelites were drunk with wine  
And glutted full like silly swine,<sup>4</sup>  
They gamboled then in highest glee  
And had to dance in revelry.  
To Aaron's sons did God decree  
That abstinent and chaste they be  
And that to wine they should not turn,  
But this decree the priests would spurn.<sup>5</sup>  
King Holofernes too when drunk,  
He had his head cut off his trunk;*

To feasts Tomyris had recourse  
 When old King Cyrus she would force; <sup>6</sup>  
 Wine caused the fall of Ben-hadad,<sup>7</sup>  
 Deprived was he of all he had;  
 When Alexander played the sot  
 His honor, virtue he forgot <sup>8</sup>  
 And practiced deeds in drunkenness  
 That presently brought sad distress.  
 The rich man reveled once so well  
 That on the morn he ate in hell.<sup>9</sup>  
 Man would not be a slave, in fine,  
 If he disowned the demon wine:  
 Are wine and sumptuous food your itch?  
 You'll not be happy, not get rich.  
 Woe's him and woe's his father too,  
 He'll have misfortunes not a few  
 Who always gorges like a beast  
 Proposing toasts at every feast,  
 And would with others glasses clink;  
 The man whose joy is endless drink  
 Is like a man who falls asleep <sup>10</sup>  
 Defenseless on the ocean deep;  
 Thus they who drink and e'er are gay,  
 Carousing, toping night and day:  
 If he's their friend, the generous host  
 Brings veal galore, a cow almost,  
 And gives them almonds, figs, and rice,  
 The bill, alas, is writ on ice.  
 Some men would be intelligent  
 From wine if wisdom e'er it lent,  
 Who cool their throats with rich libation.

Friend drinks to friend without cessation:  
 "I drink to you." "Here's happy days!"  
 "This cup for you." "This yours!" he says;  
 "I'll toast you till we both are filled!"  
 Thus speak the men of folly's guild.  
 Upset the glass, the drinker too,  
 A rope around his neck would do  
 Him better far than wild carousing  
 And naught but foolishness arousing,  
 That ancient Seneca did flay  
 In books that still are read today,  
 Which say one pays a drunken man  
 More heed than many a sober man,  
 And how an honor high 'tis rated  
 By wine to be intoxicated;  
 I censure those who tipple beer,  
 A keg of it per man, I hear,  
 Becoming so inebriate  
 That with them one could ope a gate.  
 A fool shows no consideration,  
 A wise man drinks with moderation,  
 Feels better, illness too defies,  
 Than one imbibing bucketwise.  
 The wine, 'tis true, our thirst will slake <sup>11</sup>  
 But later stabs one like a snake,  
 And poison through the veins will pour,  
 As Basiliscus found of yore.

*The wealthy man of foolish creed  
Who nevermore would beggars heed  
Will be denied when he's in need.*



### 17. OF USELESS RICHES

*The greatest folly ever told  
Is honoring wisdom less than gold,  
With such beliefs one only rears  
Rich men with bells on asses' ears.  
Such councilmen one fain would choose  
As have the greatest wealth to lose;*

*The world believes a man as much  
As he has funds inside his pouch.  
Lord Lucre leads the greedy on:  
If still alive were Solomon,  
The council he would have to shun  
If but a simple weaver he,  
Or if his purse of gold were free.  
To rich men dinners we will proffer,  
And game, fowl, fish to them we offer,  
The scraping host cajoles and flatters  
The while the beggar waits in tatters  
And from the cold his jawbone chatters.  
The wealthy guest is greeted: "Sir,  
Please eat!" Yes, riches cause a stir;  
You force all men to scrape and bend.  
Who has the coin has many a friend,  
He's called a chum on every side,  
And if a man would take a bride,  
The first thing is: How rich is he?  
No one inspects his honesty  
Or asks if wisdom in him rules;  
He's chosen from the guild of fools,  
Who can afford some bread with milk,  
Though he be rowdyish of ilk.  
Nor wisdom, honor have much backing  
Wherever shining gold is lacking.  
Who from the poor his treasure locks  
Will find God deaf whene'er he knocks.*



*Two hares at once would he waylay  
Who'd serve two masters well for ay,  
Performing more than one man may.*



# 18. OF SERVING TWO MASTERS

Fool he who thinks he can afford  
To serve both world and eke the Lord,  
For where two masters one must serve  
No one gets all he would deserve.  
Whoe'er to many trades would run

Will master ne'er a single one.  
The hunter who with single hound  
Would catch two hares as off they bound  
Will very often lose them both  
And may return annoyed and wroth;  
The man who shoots with many a bow,  
His arrows past all targets go;  
The man whose posts are too diverse  
Will often do what all men curse.  
Who must be here and also there  
Will often not get anywhere;  
The man who'd please both young and old,  
His breath must be both warm and cold,  
He eats what ne'er he could digest,  
Must take what may not be the best,  
'Neath each man's elbow he must squeeze  
A cushion soft to soothe and please,  
And wheedle him with clever lies  
And flattery, lest choler rise.  
But many offices bring pride  
And furnish coal for fireside,  
Who samples many kinds of wine  
Will find some brands not quite so fine.  
One quickly buys plain jewelry,  
The wise man likes simplicity.  
Who serves but one without ado  
Is called a servant good and true.  
The donkey died for want of hay  
Who changed his master every day.

*Who guards his speech and holds his tongue  
By anguish ne'er his soul is stung;  
Woodpeckers' screech betrays their young.*



### 19. OF IDLE TALK

That man's a fool who'd criticize  
When they keep silent who are wise,  
And he will harvest needless hate  
When silence were appropriate;  
Who speaks his mind when silence pays  
Is arrant fool in many ways,

Who answers long before there's need,<sup>1</sup>  
That person is a fool indeed.  
To many talking much is lief,  
But often ends in bitter grief.  
We're so persuasive, they will say,  
We'd wheedle nuts from any jay.  
Their words are oft so eloquent  
They'd poke holes in a document,  
For glib speech is their great obsession,  
But when they come to take confession  
And for salvation they should pray,  
Their tongue has not a word to say.  
E'en now the Nabals are not few,<sup>2</sup>  
They prate what they must often rue.  
We'd credit many a man with wit  
If he had not confuted it.  
Woodpeckers tell us by their tongue  
Where they have nested broods of young.  
By silence one can say a lot,  
'Tis bad to be a talking sot.  
The tongue is very short and small  
Yet causes many a man a fall,  
It can besmirch th' entire body  
And causes quarrels mean and shoddy.  
I'm oft surprised, to say the least,  
That we can tame full many a beast  
However treacherous it may be,  
But tongues defy our mastery.  
The tongue's a quite uncertain tool,  
It's dangerous to many a fool.  
The tongue it is that oft blasphemes,

The tongue insults our neighbors, schemes  
 And curses him and does upbraid  
 Whom God in His own image made.  
 Our tongues bring on our ruination,  
 Leave naught to our imagination;  
 Through talk some men such lives have led  
 That they need buy nor wine nor bread;  
 The tongue is used in litigation  
 To give a scamp sanctification,  
 Through it the needy lose their suit  
 So that they're rendered destitute;  
 Praters can always prate their fill,  
 Tickling themselves, they laugh at will,  
 Good things to say they never know  
 Of anybody high or low.  
 Who make a noise and great ado  
 Are roundly praised and honored too,  
 Above all, those who strut around  
 Studded with rings and richly gowned,  
 They seem to please our worthies well,  
 Thin gowns now cast no magic spell.  
 If we still had Demosthenes  
 Or Tullius or Eschines,  
 No one their wisdom would acclaim  
 Unless they knew the men of fame  
 And spoke the words they like to hear,  
 The flowery words a fool holds dear.  
 Who talks will talk what ne'er he should  
 To make impression fine and good,  
 Plays shrewd at games without cessation  
 And schemes and plots in emulation.

'Tis bad to prate without an end,  
 A lying person has no friend.  
 Who would revile a mighty lord  
 Will find his slander noised abroad.  
 Indeed, no matter where you are  
 The birds will carry it afar,  
 And in the end 'twill do you harm.  
 His lordship has a long, strong arm.  
 Who wields his axe and lets chips fly  
 Will get a chip into his eye  
 And who his mouth in heaven sets  
 His own chastisement often gets.  
 Whate'er he knows a fool will prate,<sup>8</sup>  
 The wise men keep their peace and wait,  
 For idle talk's of little use,  
 It only nurtures harm, abuse,  
 And so to hush is surely better  
 Than talking, prating, useless chatter.  
 Sotades few words spoke in vain,<sup>4</sup>  
 Yet got to jail as though he'd slain;  
 This only spoke Theocritus:  
 That one-eyed was Antigonus,  
 And died anon in his own house  
 Like Demosthenes and Tullius.  
 Silence is good, I always teach,  
 But better still is rightful speech.



*Who makes a find and takes it home  
And thinks that God His favor's shown,  
The devil loves him as his own.*



## 20. OF FINDING TREASURES

A fool is he who makes a find  
And in his mind is so purblind  
That he believes: "God gave me this,  
It makes no difference whose it is."  
The seeds that you have never sown,  
When harvest comes, are not your own.

It's clear to all as 'tis to me  
That that's another's property  
If from another man you have it.  
It matters not how much you crave it  
And found it but by accident,  
To its true owner be it sent,  
If it is known what man is he  
Or who the owner's heirs may be.  
If them one cannot ascertain  
Then let thereby some poor man gain,  
Or give it else to charity,  
But keep it not, whate'er it be.  
Such goods are not acquired well  
And often he's consigned to hell  
Who keeps them for himself and frets  
And gets a rubbing ere he sweats.  
Achor <sup>1</sup> did keep unlawful gain  
And caused the people grievous pain  
Until his sin he had atoned,  
When mercilessly he was stoned.  
The man who takes a little loot  
Would willingly take more to boot:  
To find, to steal—of selfsame hue  
To God when He examines you.  
'Tis better not to find, you'll learn,  
Than finding things you don't return;  
If you put findings in your sack  
You'll never want to give them back.

*Who might to highways broad repair  
But rather in the mud would fare,  
Of sense and wisdom he is bare.*



## 21. OF CHIDING AND ERRING ONESELF

A fool is he who chides in you  
What he himself would often do;  
A fool he worth dishonoring,  
Who sees the worst in everything,  
Who'd play the critic, who'd deride,

But senses not his seamy side.  
A hand that's to the crossroads tied  
Points out a path it's never tried.  
Who has a beam in his own eye <sup>1</sup>  
Should take it out ere he say: "I,  
O brother, in your eye do see  
A mote that quite displeases me."  
A teacher too is quite unwise  
Who fellow men can oft chastise,  
But his own vices will not chide  
And other people will deride.  
They'll tell him: "Doctor, if you please,  
Why don't you cure your own disease?"  
Some counsel others when in need,  
But their own words they never heed.  
Both Gentilis and Mesuë  
By fever were they snatched away <sup>2</sup>  
For which they had prescribed a cure,  
As in their books they did assure.  
Consider vices as you would,  
If they do seem alluring, good,  
To men of lofty reputation,  
Then they're a truly great sensation; <sup>3</sup>  
First do the work, then theorize  
If you want men to call you wise.  
Israel's tribe, themselves in sin,  
Attacked the sons of Benjamin,  
But their attack was all in vain  
Because their God they did disdain. <sup>4</sup>

*Who harks to wisdom e'er and learns  
And every day to wisdom turns  
Eternal honor richly earns.*



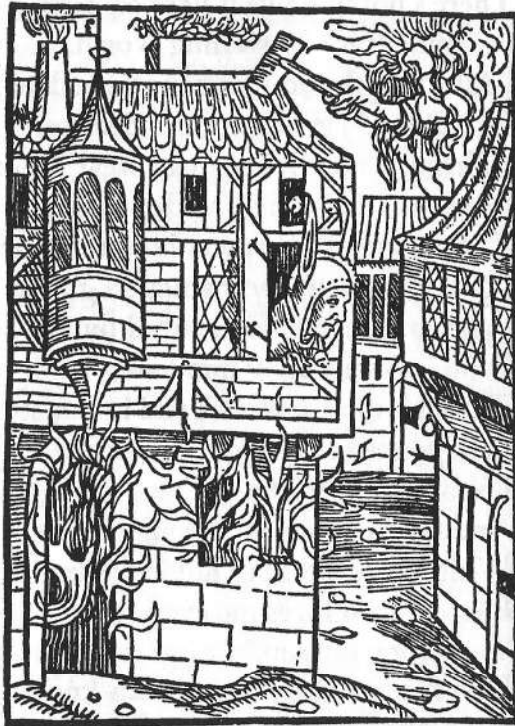
## 22. THE TEACHING OF WISDOM<sup>1</sup>

In piercing accents Wisdom says:  
"Perceive my words, O human race,  
You must be prudent, wise, and shrewd,  
Hear me in all your folly crude,  
Seek teachings ever, never gold,

Wisdom holds preciousness untold,  
'Tis better than mundane delight,  
Pursue it ever, day and night.  
There's nothing like it here on earth,  
In councils it's of sterling worth.  
"All strength and man's most prudent care  
I give you," Wisdom does declare.  
"Through me the king can wear his crown,  
Laws give I meaning, wide renown,  
Through me the princes hold their land,  
I give all powers their sanction grand,  
Who loves me dearly's loved by me,  
Who seeks me early him I see.  
Through me are wealth and honor stored,  
I am possessed by God, the Lord,  
Forever, in eternity,  
And God created all through me.  
Without me nothing holdeth sway,  
Blest he who loves me every day.  
Therefore, my sons, be not too slow,  
He's happy who my path can know.  
Who finds me, also finds salvation,  
Who hates me, suffers harsh damnation."  
A fool will be in sorry state,  
For Wisdom he will contemplate,  
And that reward that flows so free  
And lasts until eternity,  
The while with bleeding heart he'll sigh:  
O what a piteous fool am I!



*Who thinks that he has everything,  
That Lady Fortune's on his string,  
Will some day feel Fate's mallet swing.*



### 23. OF VAUNTING LUCK

He is a fool who dares to say  
That fortune always comes his way  
And that it never stands aloof,  
He'll feel the mallet on his roof.  
For kindly fortune's nothing less  
Than proof that things will evanesce,

That God will leave to tears and sighs  
The person He does not chastise.  
A well-known proverb doth contend  
That often friend will visit friend.  
A father punishes his son,  
That fear he learn and evil shun.  
The doctor gives a potion bitter,  
To make the patient feel the fitter,  
A surgeon oft will lance the wound  
That soon the patient will be sound;  
Forlorn those patients are indeed  
To whom no doctor says: "Take heed,  
This, mark you, you should not have done,  
But this 'twere meet that you'd begun."  
No doctor tells a man who's ill  
That he may have whate'er he will!  
The man the devil wants to pluck  
Is given wealth and ample luck;  
Far better suffer poverty  
Than have all wealth and luck there be.  
Let no one boast: My luck is good,  
For God could take it if He would.  
He is a fool who's prone to say:  
"O fortune, leave me not, I pray,  
And give me so much, I implore,  
That I may play the fool some more."  
No greater fool was ever made  
Than one whose luck has never strayed.

*If all men's cares you fain would borrow  
And you neglect your joy and sorrow  
You'll get a fool's bath on the morrow.*



#### 24. OF TOO MUCH CARE

A fool is he who fain would bear  
What's heavier than mortal share,  
And who alone would do what three  
Could not do with impunity;  
Who takes the world upon his back  
Will soon succumb beneath his pack.

They say 'twas Alexander's whim:  
The world was far too small for him,  
He sweated in it, I assume,  
Because he had too little room,  
Yet finally this monarch grand  
Got only seven feet of land.  
For death alone can show a man  
How much of earth he needs may span;  
A greater, mightier man than that,  
Diogenes, had but a vat,  
And nothing else he e'er possessed,  
By no desire was he oppressed,  
Had but the king not kept the sun  
From lighting up his humble tun.  
Who has ambitions bold and high  
Must take a chance to do or die.  
What profits it to win the earth  
And yet to suffer want and dearth?  
Why let the body ride on high,  
While into hell the soul must fly?  
Who'd furnish shoes for geese's feet  
And sweep all alleys, every street,  
And level mountain off and vale,  
He'll have no peace in any dale.  
Nor care nor worries aught avail,  
They make men haggard, lean, and pale,  
And those are fools who fret and falter  
Because of things they cannot alter.

*Who in his borrowing's too free  
The payment date—the wolf—will see,  
Meanwhile the ass will kick his knee.*



## 25. OF BORROWING TOO MUCH

A prominent, outstanding fool  
Who must make borrowing a rule  
And credits not the man who quotes:  
"Wolves eat no promissory notes."<sup>1</sup>  
Thus also he whose wrongs and sin

God overlooks, to chasten him,  
While daily he commits more ill  
And God in heaven waits until  
The final hour will come around  
When he will pay the final pound.  
The women, beasts, and children died  
Of sins that were Gomorrah's pride,  
That Sodomites once perpetrated;  
Jerusalem once fell prostrated  
When God had waited many a day;  
Nineveh paid without delay  
The sums it owed, and soon was free,  
But this was short-lived liberty.  
Soon Nineveh had greater sorrow,  
God sent no Jonah on the morrow.  
All things are great and then are nil,  
They take their course as heaven will;  
The man who's careful when he borrows  
Has but few cares and fewer sorrows;  
Trust not the men, they are not true,<sup>2</sup>  
Who'd sign your bond and lend to you;  
If you can't pay you will be bled,  
They'll take the cover off your bed.  
When Egypt had from famine sorrow,  
So much of foodstuff did men borrow,  
They were reduced to serfs, and yet  
They were compelled to pay the debt.  
When donkeys want to dance, don't fail  
To give them room, hold not their tail.



*Who'd wish for things he's never tried  
And waits not till the Lord provide  
Will suffer grief on every side.*



## 26. OF USELESS WISHING

A fool he'd be whoever would  
Want things that do more harm than good,  
E'en though his wish could be fulfilled  
He'd still belong to folly's guild.  
King Midas had a craving bold  
That all he touched be turned to gold,

This done, all things, to Midas' dread,  
Were turned to gold, e'en wine and bread.  
'Tis good his hair he did conceal  
Lest donkey's ears he should reveal  
Which sprouted there among the reeds.<sup>1</sup>  
Woe's him whose wishes turn to deeds;  
Full many wish protracted life<sup>2</sup>  
Yet cause the soul despair and strife,  
With boisterous living, food and wine,  
And so they die before their time;  
And even if they should grow old  
They're pale, misshapen, sick, and cold,  
Hollow their cheeks, their skin like crepe,  
As though their mother'd been an ape.  
Youth plays a happy, varied game  
But old age always is the same,  
In limb, voice, brain it quakes and shrivels,  
It's bald and from its mouth it drivels;  
Wives like not men so old and sear  
Whom e'en the children scold or fear,  
They're crabbed, cross in every wise  
And always want to criticize.  
Who live too long have great distress,  
Accursed misfortunes them oppress,  
In grief that constant sorrow breeds  
They end their days in mourning weeds.  
Nestor, Peleus, Laertes bold  
Complained of this when they were old,  
Too long, they said, the Lord watched o'er them  
Since e'en their sons had died before them.  
Had Priam perished young and strong

And lived but moderately long  
 He'd not seen bitter grief befall  
 His children, wife, his realm and all.  
 If Mithridates, Marius,  
 Great Pompey, also famed Croesus  
 Had died at some far earlier hour  
 They would have died in wealth and power.  
 Wish beauty for yourself and kin  
 And you'll be wishing naught but sin;  
 If Helen had not been so fair  
 She would have stayed in Greece fore'er,  
 And if Lucrece had ugly been  
 She'd not have suffered from Tarquin;  
 If Dinah had been humped and cropped  
 By Shechem she had not been stopped.<sup>3</sup>  
 But very seldom can one see  
 Beauty allied with chastity,  
 Yet dandies ever like to play  
 Their tricks and act in fiendish way.  
 But they are foiled and as a rule  
 They fare like any arrant fool;  
 They want a house, a wife, a child  
 And are by lust for wealth beguiled  
 And other baubles that the Lord  
 Has not approved but has ignored.  
 Our Lord such wishes ne'er approves  
 And what He grants He oft removes.  
 Some also strive for power and might  
 And seek to reach the greatest height  
 But do not call to mind at all  
 That height entails a greater fall,

That he who on the ground must crawl  
 Need never feel a humbling fall.  
 God gives us everything He will,  
 He knows what's right and what is ill,  
 What helps us, what's of real avail,  
 What brings us trouble, what travail,  
 And if He did not love us more  
 Than we ourselves, and from His store  
 Did grant us what our hearts hold dear,  
 We'd rue it e'en within a year,  
 For we are blinded by our greed  
 To wish for things we never need.  
 The man who sensibly would live  
 Let him pray God the Lord to give  
 Him sound mind, body, soul alway  
 And keep the fear of death away.<sup>4</sup>  
 And wrath and appetite and greed.  
 Who's blessed with these, that man indeed  
 Has led a life of nobler bent  
 Than Hercules had ever spent  
 Or Sardanapalus once led  
 In luxury and featherbed;  
 He's found full everything he wants  
 And need not worship gods of chance.  
 A fool oft courts his injury,  
 His wish oft brings his misery.

*Who never learns the proper things,  
Upon his cap the dunce bell rings,  
He's led by idiot's leading strings.*



## 27. OF USELESS STUDYING

Students should likewise not be skipped,  
With fool's caps they are well equipped,  
When these are pulled about the ear  
The tassel flaps and laps the rear,  
For when of books they should be thinking  
They go carousing, roistering, drinking.

A youth puts learning on the shelf,  
He'd rather study for himself  
What's useless, vain—an empty bubble;  
And teachers too endure this trouble,  
Sensible learning they'll not heed,  
Their talk is empty, vain indeed.  
Could this be night or is it day? <sup>2</sup>  
Did mankind fashion monkeys, pray?  
Was't Plato, Socrates who ran?  
Such is our modern teaching plan.  
Are they not bred to folly true  
Who night and day with great ado  
Thus plague themselves and other men?  
No other teaching do they ken.  
Of such men, writes Origines,<sup>3</sup>  
That froglike creatures quite like these  
And gadflies who, unbidden, flew in,  
Brought over Egypt rack and ruin.  
In Leipzig students act this way,  
In Erfurt, Mainz, Vienna, ay,  
Heidelberg, Basel, any place,  
Returning home in sheer disgrace.  
The money's spent in idleness,  
They're glad to tend a printing press  
And, learning how to handle wine,  
They're lowly waiters many a time.<sup>4</sup>  
Thus money spent to train and school  
Has often gone to rear a fool.

*If God should heed what mortals say  
We'd fare but badly every day,  
More tears than smiles would come our way.*



## 28. OF SPEAKING AGAINST GOD

A fool would build a fire bright  
To help the sun give warmth and light  
Or would expect the torches' beam  
To aid the sunlight's potent gleam.  
Worse, who'd impugn God's majesty,

Henry of Foolsland he would be,  
All other fools he does exceed,  
A fool of documented breed.  
God's grace and foresight, which endure,  
Are so replete with wisdom pure  
That human prudence cannot raise  
And magnify their endless praise.  
Fool, why chide God with idle care?  
Man's wisdom can't with God's compare.  
Let God prevail howe'er He will,  
Rewarding good, avenging ill,  
Let Him make storms or skies of blue,  
He'll not make weather just for you  
No matter how aggrieved you'd be.  
To wish brings only misery,  
By fretting you commit a sin,  
Far more by silence you can win.  
We pray that God's will may be done  
In heaven, on earth for everyone,  
But fools would censure God and preach  
That He should do as they would teach.  
Better are things by God arranged  
Than by your folly half deranged.  
The Jewish people teach us true  
What murmuring against God will do.<sup>1</sup>  
Who was His councilor (is it stated?)  
When He both heaven and earth created? <sup>2</sup>  
Who gave to Him, and when and whence?  
He shall receive his recompense.



*Who trusts his piety alone  
And others' sins will ne'er condone  
Will come to fall o'er many a stone.*



## 29. WHO JUDGES OTHERS

A fool is he whose faith doth rest  
On fancy, thinking he's the best,  
And never knows that deep in hell  
His soul will soon hereafter dwell.  
All fools beneath illusions labor,  
They think hell's only for their neighbor;

When they see others pale and die  
They always know the reason why  
And say: "This man was marked by folly,  
He wantoned, he was never jolly,  
He did that, this one was remiss,  
God punished him with death for this."  
Thus when they're dead are men reviled  
On whom God's favor may have smiled,  
Reviled by men of greater sin  
Against God, neighbors, next of kin,  
They fear no punishment that's nigh,  
Though knowing well that they must die,  
Where, when and how no one can know  
Till through the mouth the soul will go.  
But that his soul to hell will fare  
No one believes until it's there,  
He'll sense the plight he would desire  
When he's engulfed by hellish fire.  
We think our lives are good indeed,  
But only God our hearts can read,  
And many a man seems bad on earth  
While God appreciates his worth.  
Some men are honored while they dwell  
On earth but later live in hell.  
A fool is he who dares to say  
He's free of sins for now and ay,  
But every fool doth lack in this:  
He's loath to be just what he is.

*If many a benefice you'd share  
Your ass will fall more oft than fare;  
An ass can die from heavy ware.*



### 30. OF TOO MANY BENEFICES<sup>1</sup>

Fool he with benefice so great  
That he can scarcely bear the weight  
Yet always takes another pack  
And almost breaks the ass's back.  
A decent prebend keeps one sleek,

But take a second, then I'd seek  
To warn: Watch over your *one* eye,  
Lest out the window it should fly.  
Who for a second prebend sighs  
Will lose the sight of both his eyes.  
Yet day and night he'll have no rest  
Until with prebends more he's blest,  
Then soon the heavy sack will tear  
And off to bone yard he must fare.  
But now one oft gets dispensation,  
Which causes some men false elation,  
Who think that they are safe, although  
Number eleven be their throw.  
Some many a benefice have won,  
Who cannot tend a little one,  
Although but one would quite suffice.  
He builds up prebends, trades or buys,  
That he can scarce enumerate them  
And scarce knows how to choose or weight them.  
He'd fain reside in every one,  
He's sociable and full of fun.  
Collecting is an arduous lot,  
'Tis true, there's death in yonder pot.<sup>2</sup>  
For prebends one must now wait long,  
Simon, Gehasi<sup>3</sup> run along.  
Man's final prebend, mark it well,  
Will come to him in burning hell,  
'Tis there he'll have a wealthy presence,  
Worth more than sixfold earthly absence.<sup>4</sup>

*Who sings Cras, Cras<sup>1</sup> like any crow  
Will stay a fool till death, and so  
His dunce's cap will wax and grow.*



### 31. OF SEEKING DELAY

A fool to whom the Lord does say:  
"Improve yourself this very day,  
Abandoning your wrong and sin,  
A better life you should begin,"  
And who remarks: "Let me delay,  
And mend my ways some other day,"

And sings "Cras, Cras," as does the crow,  
But ne'er his span of life doth know.  
Many a fool has come to sorrow  
By crying: "I'll do that tomorrow."  
Where sins are found, and folly's blight,  
There crowds rush in with great delight.  
But goodly service, righteous deed,  
Are all performed with sluggish speed,  
Inviting ever long delay.  
"Confession? Yes, but why today?  
Tomorrow let God's will be done."  
In this you hear the prodigal son.  
That morrow never will be felt,  
Like snow 'twill quickly come to melt.  
But when at length the soul has gone,  
Then will at last that morrow dawn.  
So terrible misfortune's toll,  
The body pays no heed to soul.  
And thus in wilderness there died  
Those Jews whom God did not decide  
To take into the happy land  
That He had promised with His hand.  
If you would not repent today  
Tomorrow will be worse than ay.  
To whom this day God's summons call  
May later hear no voice at all.  
By thousands men are now forlorn  
Who planned improvement on the morn.

*He guards grasshoppers 'neath the sun,  
Pours water into wells for fun,  
Who guards his wife as 'twere a nun.*



### 32. OF GUARDING WIVES

*They harvest folly, sheer despair,  
Who always watch their wives with care,  
For she who's good will do the right,  
And she who's bad will sin for spite  
And manage well to perpetrate  
Her evil plans against her mate.*

*For e'en a padlock placed before  
The entrance, be it gate or door,  
And many guards about the house  
Can't keep her honest toward her spouse.  
Danaë, held in tower, grieved,  
And none the less a child conceived.<sup>1</sup>  
Penelope was loose and free,  
And many suitors did she see.  
Yet twenty years her husband strayed,  
Still chaste and pure she always stayed.  
Let only that one claim that he  
Of his wife's base deceit is free  
Who loves her so as to believe  
That she would not her spouse deceive.  
A pretty wife on folly's course  
Is like unto an earless horse.  
The man who plows with such a nag,  
His furrows oft diverge and sag.  
A wife who would be modest found  
Should cast her eyes upon the ground  
And not coquet whene'er she can  
And not make eyes at every man,  
Nor heed whate'er one says and does.  
Pandors will often wear sheep's clothes.  
If Helen had not sent a note<sup>2</sup>  
In answering what Paris wrote,  
And Dido through her sister Ann,  
They'd not have wed a lecherous man.<sup>3</sup>*



*If through his fingers one can see  
And lets his wife promiscuous be,  
As cat she views the mice with glee.<sup>1</sup>*



### 33. OF ADULTERY

Adultery's called a trifling thing,  
Like casting pebbles from a sling,  
Adultery now pays no heed  
To laws that Julius once decreed,<sup>2</sup>  
For sin no punishment is spoke  
Because so many married folk

Now lead the same licentious life  
And trade for theirs another wife  
And hush up mutual disgrace  
While holding fingers up to face  
And peeping through them evermore;  
Attentively they feign a snore.  
Men now ignore a woman's stain  
And mete no punishment or pain.  
Men's stomachs are now strong and stout,  
For all dishonor can they flout  
And be like Cato infamous,<sup>3</sup>  
His wife he lent to Hortensius.  
Few men now find adultery  
So great a cause for misery  
As those Atrides rightly faced  
When they beheld their wives disgraced,  
Or else as Collatinus loosed  
Revolt when his wife was seduced.<sup>4</sup>  
Adultery is now so meet  
That Clodius soils every street.<sup>5</sup>  
If all those people should be beaten  
Who e'er adulterers' fruit have eaten,  
As Sallust for his crime once suffered,<sup>6</sup>  
Many by welts would now be covered.  
If all adulterers should sustain  
Abimelech's distressing pain<sup>7</sup>  
Or die like sons of Benjamin<sup>8</sup>  
Or suffer such distressing sin  
As David did from Bersabë,  
Many would shun adultery.  
Whoe'er at wife's adultery winks

And of reproof never thinks,  
 Who acts with fixed deliberation,  
 Toward wisdom has no inclination,  
 He gives her cause for many a fall  
 While neighbors gossip one and all  
 And say he aids her, yes abets,  
 And shares the filthy pelf she gets,  
 While she says: "Jack, I love you true,  
 No man's as dear to me as you."  
 The cats pursue the mice in haste  
 When once they've had a little taste.  
 Women who try out other men  
 Become so bold and shameless then  
 That deep they sink into the mire  
 And only think of their desire.  
 Let each so treat his wife that he  
 Will give her cause for chastity  
 And treat her kindly, spare her stings  
 And fear not every bell that rings  
 And quarrel not by night and day  
 But listen what the bells may say.  
 And then it seems to me 'twere right  
 If many a guest you'd not invite,  
 This is preëminently true  
 In case your wife is fair to view;  
 On no one can one quite depend,  
 Of falsity there is no end.  
 Helen had still loved Menelaus  
 If he had not invited Paris,  
 If Agamemnon had not left  
 His friend Aegisthus, crafty, deft,

To rule o'er house and home and wife,  
 He never would have lost his life;  
 Kandaules foolish came to harm,  
 He showed a friend his goodwife's charm.  
 Who cannot keep his joy apart  
 Will find it sold at any mart,  
 And so I think it wisely done  
 If married folk a guest would shun,  
 The more if they can't trust in him,  
 For life is full of stratagem.  
 Suspicious people soon believe  
 That others cheat, betray, deceive,  
 As Jacob of the garment said,  
 Immersed in gory blood and red;  
 Asverus thought Haman did mean  
 Esther to violate, the queen,<sup>9</sup>  
 And Abraham his wife denied  
 Before to Gerar's walls he hied.<sup>10</sup>  
 A miser's better as a guest  
 Than others' eggs in one's own nest.  
 Who often far afield will go  
 A sparrow soon will be, I know.<sup>11</sup>  
 Who'd boast a lap of burning coal,  
 Whose trusting bosom snakes enfold,  
 Who in his pocket rears a mouse,  
 Such guests are bad in any house.

*Some think their wit is very fine,  
Yet they are geese right down the line,  
All reason, breeding they decline.*



### 34. FOOLS NOW AS BEFORE

A fool who hears what wise men say  
But never profits day by day,  
Who wants to hear what would behoove  
But never wisely would improve,  
He wants to own whate'er he spies  
And shows all men he's far from wise,

For every fool this flaw doth show:  
What's new, for that he'd crave and glow,  
But soon of novelty they tire  
And other novelty desire.  
Fools often travel very far  
Yet never learn just where they are,  
For every goose when once let loose  
Returns and still remains a goose.  
'Tis not enough to feel at home  
In Pavia, Holy Land, and Rome,  
One must have brought back something fine,  
Skill, common sense, wisdom divine,  
Then such a journey would be good,  
But had you full of crowns your hood,  
And had you precious stones to burn  
No merit I'd therein discern  
If many countries you have toured  
Yet not to wisdom are inured;  
Travel no special honor brings  
Unless it teaches special things.  
Had Moses in Egyptian clime,<sup>1</sup>  
Had Daniel not learned all the time  
When in Chaldea he did dwell,  
Men had not known them half so well.  
Confession some attend with stain  
Who'd come forth white and light again,  
But still polluted home they fare  
And round their neck a millstone bear.

*Whoever spurs his ass's hide  
Out o'er the donkey's head will slide.  
Swift wrath befits a dunce's pride.*



### 35. OF READY ANGER

That fool rides asses every season  
Who rages much without a reason  
And snarls about him like a dog,  
With evil words he's e'er agog,  
He knows no letter saving "r"  
And brags men fear him near and far,

That he may rage from dawn to dark,  
And each good fellow will remark:  
"How many dunces fume and roar,  
Misfortune gives us fools galore,  
But every fool that doth appear  
Thinks he's the only Donkey's Ear."  
Wrath baffles wise men too because  
A wroth man knows not what he does.  
Archytas, when a lowly slave  
Had wronged him, said unto the knave:  
"This gift I would not give you now  
If wrath had furrowed not my brow."<sup>1</sup>  
And Plato too suppressed his rage,<sup>2</sup>  
And Socrates, for they were sage.  
Impatience born of irritation  
May lead to sin and dire damnation,  
Man's patience calms the obdurate  
And calming speech breaks hardened hate,  
With temper virtue does away,  
A man in anger cannot pray;  
Lest wrath boil over take good heed,  
Bad temper is the idiot's meed.  
Better a she-bear's angry mood  
When she has lost her youthful brood,  
Than brook a fool's indignity  
Who has a mind the fool to be;  
The sage's conduct's never crass,  
The rash man ought to ride an ass.



*Who would on self-willed pinions fly  
Will aim at birds' nests very high,  
Hence oft upon the ground will lie.*



### 36. OF COMPLACENCY

By prickly thorns will he be frayed  
Who thinks he needs no other's aid  
And deems his cleverness sensation,  
A match for every situation.  
He'll go amiss on broad highway  
And through a wilderness will stray

And find no road that leads him home.  
Woe's him who falls when all alone!  
Toward heresy such men are bent  
Who would not hear of betterment,  
With faith in naught but their poor sense  
To win both fame and eminence.  
A fool may tumble painfully  
Who climbs for nests upon a tree  
Or seeks a road where none is found;  
Who's ladderless stays on the ground.  
Contempt will lead to many a slip  
And insolence can wreck a ship.  
No man is helpful, none respected,  
Whoe'er to teachings wise objected;  
No one would hear what Noah said <sup>1</sup>  
Until both men and beasts were dead,  
A base rebellion Korah planned <sup>2</sup>  
And perished with his evil band.  
Beasts singular will eat a deal. <sup>3</sup>  
The man who acts for personal weal  
Would rudely rip the cloak and tear it  
That has no seams for those who wear it. <sup>4</sup>  
Whoe'er from folly's ship keeps clear  
Must put some wax into his ear,  
The kind that shrewd Ulysses used  
When past the Sirens' haunts he cruised,  
Escaping them by prudent plans,  
Thus thwarting all their arrogance.

*Who perches high on fortune's wheel  
In harmful tumble soon may reel,  
And drenched he'll be from head to heel.*



### 37. OF CHANCE

A fool is he who climbs on high  
And shows his shame to every eye,  
He hopes to greater heights to go  
But fortune's wheel he doesn't know.  
All things that venture giddy flight  
Will tumble down from greatest height;

Such heights no man will ever gain,  
As on the morn he hoped to claim;  
Good luck at all times can't abound,  
Since Clotho spins the wheel around,  
No man can guard his earthly store  
'Gainst Death when knocking at the door;  
The man of power bears distress,  
Many have died through mightiness.  
The force that's but sustained by force  
Doth have a brief and short-lived course,  
Lose love and popularity,  
And you have care, anxiety.  
If you'd have many men to fear you,  
You'll fear full many who may near you:  
As sentinel fear's never good,  
It never guards you as it should.  
The man of power should learn to love  
His God and praise Him high above,  
The man with justice in his hand  
Has power that can long withstand.  
In wielding power he was wise  
Who is lamented when he dies.<sup>1</sup>  
Woe be the king beneath the sod  
Of whom men say: He's dead, praise God!  
If you'd roll boulders up a hill  
They'll tumble back and cause you ill,  
And who relies upon his luck  
By quick misfortune oft is struck.

*Who's ill and lies in direst need  
Yet doctor's counsels will not heed  
Will bear the damage that's his meed.*



### 38. OF PATIENTS WHO DO NOT OBEY

A fool is he who does not heed  
The doctor's word when he's in need  
And at the diet only jibes  
That any medico prescribes,  
To wine instead of water clings

Or does a deal of harmful things  
And takes whatever he may crave  
Until he's laid into his grave.  
Wouldst victory over ills be winning? <sup>1</sup>  
Resist them all in every inning,  
For medicine's effect is slow  
When illness once has laid you low.  
Whoever quickly would get sound  
Must show the medico his wound  
And suffer pain when it's unclosed  
Or lanced or pierced or diagnosed,  
Or when it's bound, or washed, or taped,  
E'en if his skin is thereby scraped,  
So that a life be rescued thus,  
A soul be kept from leaving us.  
A good physician does not fly  
Because a man is apt to die,  
A patient should have patience pure  
To hope that he will find a cure;  
The patient telling doctors lies,  
Who when confessing, falsehoods plies,  
Or tells his lawyer not the truth  
When seeking counsel, he forsooth  
Himself and no one else has cheated  
And has himself the damage meted.  
Fool he who any doctor seeks  
And fails to follow what he speaks  
And listens but to witches' chatter  
And meets his death through magic patter,  
Their magic, foolish medicaments,  
And lands in hell for lack of sense;

Such superstition now is rife,  
 It holds forth hope of health and life.  
 If one compiled such silly tricks  
 We'd have a book for heretics.  
 The sick were eager to be cured,  
 Not caring whence the help's procured,  
 Some men would summon up the devil  
 To flee a sickbed's threatening evil,  
 The devil though makes matters worse  
 And brings them but eternal curse.  
 He's damned to folly who when ill  
 Would seek his health 'gainst heaven's will,  
 Desiring not with wisdom's store  
 To be a wise man evermore.  
 Not wise is he, he's but a fool,  
 And goes to folly's fatuous school,  
 A quite inveterate invalid,  
 Of blindness, madness never rid,  
 For oft from sin will illness spring  
 And sinning maladies will bring,  
 And so if illness you deny,  
 Keep God the Lord before your eye,  
 Consult your priest, confess your sin  
 Before you take the medicine,  
 And pay good heed that soul be sound  
 Ere that your doctor comes around.  
 Yet many foolish men now hold:  
 Who's bodied, he is also souled.  
 But living thus you'll be bereft,  
 Nor life nor soul will then be left;  
 Eternal illness we'll be seeing

If temporal illness we are fleeing.  
 Full many rot in cold, dank grave,  
 Would they had prayed to God to save  
 And show them mercy, love, good will,  
 Before they sought a doctor's skill!  
 Without His grace they would succeed  
 But died with soul in deepest need.  
 If Maccabeus had relied  
 On God and not on Roman pride,  
 As he decided once before,  
 He surely would have lived yet more.<sup>2</sup>  
 Long Hezekiah had been dead,<sup>3</sup>  
 Had he not turned to God instead  
 And prayed the Lord that He decree  
 A meed of His longevity,  
 And if Manasseh had not turned,  
 By God Almighty he'd been spurned.  
 Our Lord to the palsied man did speak<sup>4</sup>  
 Who had for many years been weak:  
 "Go, sin no more, be foolish ne'er,  
 Lest even worse than this you fare."  
 Some vow, to sickbed's misery fettered,  
 That now their conduct will be bettered.  
 The sick restored are often seen  
 To turn out worse than they had been,  
 And think that God has been deceived  
 Till they're by greater ills bereaved.



*Who gives his plans publicity  
And spans his net for all to see,  
Avoid him, dangerous is he.*



### 39. OF OPEN PLANS

*A fool seeks sparrows as a prize  
And spreads the net before their eyes,  
For sparrows easily may flee  
The net that everyone can see;  
Who threatens people every day  
Will sometime really strike his prey,*

*Who gives his plans a public airing,  
Shun him, in danger he is faring.  
Had change not come o'er Nicanor  
And he'd persisted as before,<sup>1</sup>  
Judas would not have read his heart  
And never watched his wiles and art.  
His conduct of true wisdom savors  
Who minds his business, not his neighbor's  
In things affecting soul-salvation.  
The prying folk of every station  
They ply deceit and faithless trick  
Like cats that scratch and also lick.  
That person is in folly dyed  
Who confidential plans can't hide;  
A crowd of fools, a lover's zest,  
A city built upon a crest,  
And straw that slips into a shoe,  
They cannot be concealed from view.  
A poor man lives in privacy,  
Rich men are watched quite eagerly,  
By all their faithless retinue  
All their affairs are aired anew.  
From persons living by our side  
'Tis hard to keep what we would hide.  
No enemy's more dangerous  
Than those who share the house with us.  
The man we don't suspect and fear  
May steal our lives and treasures dear.*

*Who sees a fool that takes a fall  
But pays no heed to that at all,  
He strokes a fool's beard full or small.<sup>1</sup>*



#### 40. TAKING OFFENSE AT FOOLS<sup>2</sup>

Fools daily one may see who fall,  
Yet ridicule them one and all  
And, scorning them, make pretense wise  
But earn a fool's cap—what a prize!  
One fool another fool will goad,

Both traveling the selfsame road,  
But rocks that cause one fool to stumble  
Will also make the other tumble.  
Full many a fool Hippomenes<sup>3</sup>  
Saw headless, yet like unto these  
He courted danger, risked his head,  
And but for luck he had been dead.  
One blind man calls the other blind,  
Yet both are of the stumbling kind.  
One crab will scold the other 'cause  
He's walking backward on his claws,  
Yet none goes forward—in reverse  
They follow th' others, which is worse.  
If you would be a stepchild rather,  
And not a son, then spurn your father.  
If Phaëthon had been more shy  
And Icarus when he would fly,  
Had they but heard what father said,  
In tender years they'd not be dead.  
The way that Jereboam went<sup>4</sup>  
Has never made a man content,  
Yet others follow, knowing pain  
And grief are marching in the train.  
Who sees a fool that takes a tumble  
Should be on guard lest he too stumble.  
He's not a fool in any season  
Who criticizes fools with reason.  
The fox eschewed the cave, though urged,  
From which no one had e'er emerged.

*A bell sans hammer gives no ring,<sup>1</sup>  
No foxtail sets it echoing,  
Wherefore ignore all gossiping.*



#### 41. PAYING NO HEED TO TALK

*If now a man would get along  
He must endure much grief and wrong,  
See many things before his door  
And hear what well he may abhor.  
Therefore those men enjoy renown*

*Who spurn the world and on it frown  
And walk through valley, over hills,  
To shun the world's rebuff and ills,<sup>2</sup>  
Avoiding guilt where'er they go,  
And yet they suffer many a blow:  
The world does not deserve one whit  
That such good men inhabit it.  
Who'd righteous be in every matter  
Should pay no heed to idle chatter,  
Avow your undertaking pure  
And lend no ear to idiot's lure.  
Had prophets and wise men of old  
Paid heed to gossips loud and bold  
And overlooked fair wisdom's light  
They would have been in piteous plight.  
No man on earth of any school  
Can always satisfy a fool.  
Who'd please the men of every hue  
Would be a servant good and true  
And would arise ere break of day  
And rarely on his mattress stay.  
He must have vast supplies of flour  
Who'd fill each mouth at every hour,  
For no man could control or rule  
The talk of every arrant fool.  
The world must do what can be done  
And she's done much for many a one.  
A fool sings "Cuckoo!" oft and long,  
As every bird will sing his song.*

*From fools 'tis good to keep away  
Who pelt with rocks and stones for ay,  
Not heeding ill or wisdom's way.*



#### 42. OF SCORNERS<sup>1</sup>

Learn, fools, what well you may afford,  
The fount of wisdom: Fear the Lord!  
All knowledge of the holy lies  
In paths of understanding wise,  
For wisdom glorifies the race,  
Enriches men in every place.

A benefactor, he who's sage,  
But fools prefer the selfish stage.  
So wise are fools, they will not hear,  
They mock all wise men far and near;  
Who'd teach a scorner to be wise  
Will harvest scorn, a paltry prize.  
Who punishes a wicked fool  
Will harvest sorrow as a rule.  
Chastise a wise man, soon you'll earn  
His thanks, for he's intent to learn.  
The righteous man we must chastise  
Will think the punishment is wise.  
The unjust often will revile,  
Yet suffer scorn himself the while.  
The jaybird very scornful is,  
Yet many things he needs must miss.  
Toss out a scorner through the door,  
His scorn lies with him on the floor,  
And all abuse and mockery  
With him before the door you'll see.  
If David had not spared his ire  
Nabal had met a fortune dire;<sup>2</sup>  
Sanballat rued his scorn and guilt<sup>3</sup>  
When the Holy City's walls were built.  
By vicious bears were children raided,<sup>4</sup>  
By bald men prophets were upbraided,  
Shimei still has many sons<sup>5</sup>  
Who hurl as missiles rocks and stones.



*Why I love temporal things alone  
And scorn the Everlasting One?  
The reason: I'm a monkey's son.*



#### 43. CONTEMPT OF ETERNAL JOY

Fool he who ne'er is much concerned  
If life eternal he has earned  
And utters prayers that he may  
Live like a fool till Judgment Day,  
Gives every roistering lout his hand

But ends where'er God may command.  
O fool, no pleasures here on earth  
Can evermore give joy and mirth,  
They're harsh and bitter through and through,  
Were't otherwise I'd think that you  
Had cause to love this evanescence,  
Though foolish frailty be its essence.  
A fool that person is from birth  
Who'd live long years upon this earth:  
It's nothing but a vale of tears,  
In joys brief, long in grief and fears;  
This stay for mortals ne'er is meant  
To be quite long or permanent,  
Since all will make a journey grand  
Into a strange and unknown land.  
Full many've gone, we'll come apace,  
For we must see God face to face,  
Be it for joy or sorrow deep.  
Hence tell me, O you foolish sheep,  
Has ever greater fool been born  
Than who'd stay here and heaven scorn?  
In God the Lord you'll not believe  
And from eternal life take leave,  
A drop of honey here, that's all  
You'd have and there a sea of gall,  
On earth a moment's jubilation,  
There endless joy, perhaps damnation.  
Who would such sinful utterance dare  
Will find frustration here and there.

*Who takes to church dog, hawk, or jay,  
Disturbing others who would pray,  
The fool's role he with zeal doth play.*



#### 44. NOISE IN CHURCH

One must not ask who they may be  
Whose dogs in church bark furiously  
While people pray at mass or sing,  
Who bring a hawk that flaps its wing  
And rings its bell with tinkling gay,  
That one can neither sing nor pray.

The hood is lowered o'er the hawk,  
There's pattering and many a squawk,  
Affairs are aired and tongues are loose,  
There's clattering with wooden shoes,  
That brings disturbance, great ado;  
He peers to Lady Kriemhild's pew  
To mark if she will turn and gape  
And make the cuckoo-bird an ape.  
If men would leave their dogs at home  
To watch for thieves that prowl and roam,  
While men would worship there in church,  
If birds were left upon the perch,  
And wooden shoes were worn for street  
To pick up dirt or mud or peat,  
And other people's ears be spared—  
But when have fools for others cared?  
Dame Nature will the fool betray,  
Base folly always has its day.  
Christ gave us all a good example,  
Coin-changers drove He from the temple,<sup>1</sup>  
And men with pigeon-vending urge  
He chased in anger with a scourge.  
If now He'd oust the men of sin  
But few would still remain within;  
At first the priest away He'd send  
And with the sexton would He end.  
God's house deserves much sanctity  
Since God's own dwelling place it be.

*Who knowingly goes into fire,  
Or enters wells in full attire,  
Deserves his fate should he expire.<sup>1</sup>*



#### 45. OF COURTING MISFORTUNE

Some fools will worship every day  
And, as they think, sincerely pray  
And call to God with loud appeal:  
"O help me, God, my folly heal!"  
But still their dunce's cap they don

And every day they put it on  
And think that God is saying no,  
Yet what they want they never know.  
Who leaps into a well through whim  
And fearing death that threatens him  
Shouts: "Throw a rope, O see my plight!",  
Hears neighbors say: "It serves him right,  
No one 'Jump in' commanded him,  
He could have stayed upon the rim."  
Empedocles was such a fool,  
He entered Etna's flaming pool;  
Whoso had saved him from that hell  
Would not have acted wise or well,  
For steeped in folly quite insane  
He would have made the leap again.  
Likewise some think that God's sweet voice  
Should call and bid them e'er rejoice  
And give them lovely gifts and grace,  
But ah, God never sees their face.  
Full many waste their every day,  
And God is deaf to what they say,  
So heaven never shows them favor  
E'en when their prayers of wisdom savor.  
Who prays and knows not what he prays  
The wind he blows and shadows lays;  
And many pray for things so bad,  
'Twould irk them if those things they had.  
Who lives in constant fear and cares  
Bears ills no matter how he fares.

*Folly has lavish retinue,  
The whole world joins it, even you,  
If you have power and money too.*



#### 46. OF THE POWER OF FOOLS

'Tis need that many fools there be,  
For some are blind and cannot see,  
But only wit is their ambition,  
Though all do know their base condition  
Of folly yet would never dare

To ask: Fool, what're you doing there?  
And when in wisdom fools cavort  
It's wisdom of a foolish sort,  
And when no one will praise their ways  
Themselves they shower then with praise,  
Although the truly wise man thinks  
That, broadly speaking, self-praise stinks.  
The man who's overconfident,<sup>1</sup>  
A man is he of foolish bent,  
But he who walks in wisdom's light  
Is praised by us with all our might.  
That land is blest that has a lord<sup>2</sup>  
Whose wisdom is a treasure hoard,  
Whose princes always eat aright  
But seek no greed or base delight.  
O woe's the prince whose land you see<sup>3</sup>  
Accursed to puerility,  
Whose princes eat at early morn  
But all sweet wisdom hold in scorn.  
A needy child with wisdom's grace<sup>4</sup>  
Is better in its rightful place  
Than yon old king who's but a fool  
And pays no heed to future rule.  
Woe unto those who love what's right<sup>5</sup>  
When fools ascend onto the height,  
But after fools are once defeated  
For righteous persons they're unseated.  
An honor 'tis for any land<sup>6</sup>  
When good men hold the reins in hand,  
But when an idiot has the rule  
He ruins many an arrant fool.



Unjust is he whose judgment says:  
 Trust friendship, mere appearances,<sup>7</sup>  
 For but a piece of bread or less  
 A man will oftentimes transgress.  
 The wise on judging well are bent,  
 Respect not men for judgment sent.<sup>8</sup>  
 Judge, councilman should have no bias,  
 Susanna's judges still defy us,  
 Who practice wantonness and force,  
 For righteousness has run its course,  
 Both swords are rusty, badly worn,<sup>9</sup>  
 And from the scabbards can't be torn,  
 Nor will they cut whene'er there's need,  
 Blind justice is and dead indeed,  
 And gold alone is deified.  
 Jugurtha when from Rome he hied<sup>10</sup>  
 Did utter: "O you venal state,  
 How soon it would be 'Check' and 'Mate'  
 Did but some buyer bid for you!"  
 Like Rome are many cities too,  
 Where bribery goes on apace  
 And many another black disgrace.  
 All money, favors help us naught,  
 So Moses learned, by Jethro taught.<sup>11</sup>  
 Greed, money, friendship, favor, power  
 Break laws and charters every hour.  
 The princes formerly were sage,  
 Had learned councilors old of age,  
 And things went well in every land,  
 And sin had retribution grand,  
 And peace prevailed o'er all the earth.

Now folly's pitched its tent of mirth,  
 Preparing onslaught bold and blind,  
 To force the princes, force their kind  
 To leave all wisdom, knowledge true  
 And seek advantage for the few,  
 Advising them in childish way  
 Until they meet an evil day  
 Which worse will grow with every hour.  
 Great folly goes with copious power.  
 Our Lord would let the princeling rule  
 A long time, were he not a fool,  
 Becoming bitter and unjust  
 Through councilors whom none can trust.  
 No prince should trust that vicious tribe  
 That takes of money, gift, or bribe:  
 The man who takes a bribe's not free,  
 Accepting gifts breeds treachery,  
 As Ehud killed fat King Eglon<sup>12</sup>  
 And as Delilah lured Samson,<sup>13</sup>  
 Gold vases from Andronicus  
 Did cause the death of Onias<sup>14</sup>  
 And Ben-hadad did break the league,<sup>15</sup>  
 Enticed by gifts and base intrigue,  
 And Tryphon, when he would deceive,<sup>16</sup>  
 That Jonathan might well believe,  
 Presented gifts and largess to him,  
 So that with stealth he might undo him.

*Some men persist on folly's road  
And draw a cart with heavy load:  
The right cart waits in heaven's abode.*



#### 47. ON THE ROAD OF SALVATION

No fool by God has e'er been taught  
The miracles that He has wrought  
And daily works, wherefore the fool  
On earth will perish as a rule  
And suffer lasting death above

Because our Lord he does not love  
And will not live as God desires.  
Here he has pain, there hellish fires,  
Here he must pull the heavy load,  
There he will go a harder road.  
Therefore, O fool, ask not, I pray,  
Where hell does lie, or seek the way.  
One reaches it with effort slight,  
The road is open day and night,  
It's broad and smooth and duly worn,  
Leads many to a dunce's bourn.  
But ah, the road to high salvation—  
Pure wisdom's only destination—  
Is very narrow, hard, and steep  
And few the men that to it keep  
Or have the pluck that will endure.  
This is the answer clear and sure  
To fools who seem too curious  
And ask why fools so numerous  
Will travel hell-bound night and day,  
While few the wise who fare that way.  
The world is wanton, blind, untrue,  
Fools live aplenty, wise men few.  
Many are called but very few  
Are chosen. In what class are you?  
Six hundred thousand men in all,<sup>1</sup>  
Not counting wives and children small,  
Were led by God across the sand,  
Two only reached the Promised Land.<sup>2</sup>



#### 48. A JOURNEYMAN'S SHIP

A ship for journeymen sails by  
 With artisans from far and nigh,  
 With many trades diversified,  
 And each with work tools by his side.  
 No trade is honored o'er the land,

They're overcrowded, overmanned,  
 Every apprentice would be master,  
 For all the trades a great disaster.  
 Many to masterhood have turned,  
 But ah, their trade they've never learned.  
 One crowds the other to the wall  
 And thus prepares for his own fall.  
 Trying to make his product cheap  
 He fails and out the gate must creep.  
 If you'll not sell for less than he  
 You're undersold by two or three.  
 Their work is good, so they assure,  
 But really 'tis but very poor:  
 Many will turn out petty trash  
 To sell it cheap for little cash.  
 That man can never earn a tittle  
 Who pays a deal but sells for little.  
 One man by trading wrecks himself  
 And leaves the other man with pelf.  
 A bargain often may entice,  
 But sometimes it's not worth the price.  
 A bargain oft lacks quality,  
 Is made in haste, as one can see,  
 And is designed for fleeting eyes.  
 A craftsman over losses sighs,  
 For profits ne'er are very high.  
 "What you refuse to do I'll try."  
 'Tis slipshod work, poor quality,  
 But I lay store by quantity.  
 And I myself, the truth to say,  
 With such have tarried many a day

Before I could describe such wight,  
 As yet they've not been judged aright,  
 I'd need more time if that I'd do,  
 Good work cannot be hurried through.  
 An artist to Apelles rushed <sup>1</sup>  
 His painting negligently brushed,  
 And said he'd painted this in haste,  
 With this reply he then was faced:  
 "Your work, O painter, doth reveal  
 Great carelessness and little zeal,  
 With speed you could, if you'd the mind,  
 Paint many works of such poor kind!"  
 No praise will hasty work e'er find,  
 Competitors will soon hold sway.  
 Shoes, twenty pairs, in one brief day,  
 A dozen swords, all keen and prime,  
 But everything is sold "on time."  
 Such practices will net no savings,  
 Poor carpenters make many shavings,  
 The masons dote on gaps and breaks,  
 A tailor hasty stitches takes  
 So that the seams can never hold.  
 The printers squander coin untold,  
 A weekly wage a day, I'm told.  
 So rash their reckless, roistering way,  
 Although their work's laborious ay.  
 They print and putter, cut a die,  
 Set type, correct, arrange and pi,  
 Apply the ink—a printer's game—  
 Make pigments over burning flame,  
 Grind colors then, cut spaces new.

Many do work the whole day through,  
 And yet their work's of poorest brand  
 If come they do from Monkey Land.  
 They've learned their trade disgracefully;  
 Some sail the ship with utmost glee,  
 They find companions good though plain  
 Who work and see but little gain  
 And spend that little in a wink  
 When wine at festivals they drink.  
 No care the future bears or sorrow,  
 The while they beg for alms and borrow.  
 One man will lend on odds and ends  
 But make no more than what he spends.  
 No sale can now be made—'tis odd!—  
 Before one swears an oath by God,  
 And after many an oath and plea  
 One grants a discount cheerfully.  
 'Tis clear that all the world has grown  
 To like low bids as in Cologne: <sup>2</sup>  
 "Half off on that!" bids every wag,  
 "Good luck!" 'twill injure no one's bag.  
 And so they sail, full many a guild,  
 Some vessels are but partly filled.



*What you do, that your child will do,  
In evil children copy you,  
Break jars, your child will break them, too.<sup>1</sup>*



#### 49. BAD EXAMPLE OF PARENTS

Who tells his wife and children much  
Of evil things, amours and such,  
Let him expect that they will gape  
And play the mimic, play the ape.  
Good manners, virtue hold no sway,

Wives, children learn our evil way,  
Wives follow husbands' lead apace,  
From parents children learn disgrace,  
And when the abbot likes the dice  
The monks will follow in a trice.  
The world is full of vicious sin,  
And virtue's gone, and discipline.  
The fathers bear the heavy blame,  
The wife will ape her husband's shame,  
The son will do as does the father,  
The daughter do as does the mother.  
Should it now be so strange to us,  
That fools on earth are numerous?  
The crab walks as his father went,  
Wolves bear no lambkins innocent.  
Brutus and Cato long have died,<sup>2</sup>  
And Catilines have multiplied.  
If wise we are, good, virtuous,  
Our children will resemble us.  
Diogenes a lad once spied,<sup>3</sup>  
Inebriate, to him he cried:  
"As did your father, so you do,  
A drunken man gave birth to you."  
In children's presence take great heed,  
They'll copy you in word and deed,  
For habits grow, and that's the cause  
Why children show so many flaws.  
Let each man be a righteous spouse  
And keep vexation from the house.

*The stupid oft by lust are felled  
And by their wings are firmly held:  
For many, this their end hath spelled.*



## 50. OF SENSUAL PLEASURE

*A temporal pleasure's like unto <sup>2</sup>  
A brazen, sensual woman who  
Infests the street and plies her trade,  
Inviting every amorous blade  
To come and practice fornication  
At bargain rates—a great temptation—*

*She begs all men in shameless fashion  
To join and quench her evil passion.  
Fools seek her out, indifferent, low,  
As oxen would to slaughter go,<sup>3</sup>  
Or like a harmless, frisky wether  
That does not know about the tether  
Until it feels the deadly dart  
That's shot to penetrate its heart.  
Remember, fool, your soul's at stake  
And soon in deepest hell you'll bake  
If such lewd women you frequent.  
Shun lust, then blessings will be sent,  
Seek not for lust, licentiousness  
Like heathen king Sardanapalus,  
Who thought that men should live on earth  
In lust and joy and sensuous mirth,  
Because they're over when one dies.  
Such nonsense silly fools advise,  
To trust in pleasures ever fleeing.  
Yet this old king was quite far-seeing.  
The man of lust and pleasures vain <sup>4</sup>  
Buys moderate joy with ample pain;  
If temporal lust be sweet, my friend,  
It's wormwood, mark its bitter end,<sup>5</sup>  
The whole world's base licentiousness  
Turns finally to bitterness,  
Though Epicurus placed his trust  
In worldly joys and wanton lust.*

*Who cannot keep a secret well  
And other men his plans must tell,  
He's under great misfortune's spell.<sup>1</sup>*



### 51. KEEPING SECRETS

Fool he who tells his secret plan  
To wife or any other man,  
Thus mighty Samson, less than wise,  
Lost strength and locks and both his eyes.  
The prophet Amphiaraüs<sup>2</sup>  
He suffered his destruction thus,

For women, as in Writ we're told,  
A secret cannot guard or hold;  
Who cannot keep a secret hidden,  
Who by deceitfulness is ridden  
And like a fool will blurt his plan,  
He's shunned by every prudent man.  
One may be proud of escapades  
At night, and lovers' serenades,  
But later when we go a-spying  
We'll find him on a dunghill lying,  
And from his tales it can be seen  
Just where in folly he has been.  
If you desire that I say naught,  
'Twould not be fair that you say aught,  
If you cannot a secret hold  
Which to my trusting ear you've told,  
Why would you ask that I refrain  
If you yourself cannot abstain?  
If Ahab had not wished to tell  
His secrets all to Jezebel,<sup>3</sup>  
And hushed the words that he had said,  
Naboth had surely not been dead.  
Who bears a secret in his heart  
To none this secret should impart,  
No other man can then reveal  
What carefully we would conceal.  
The prophet spoke: "My secrecy  
I'll guard and keep alone for me."<sup>4</sup>

*Who weds and for naught else is fain  
Than growth of property and gain  
Will suffer quarrels, woe, and pain.*



## 52. MARRYING FOR THE SAKE OF GOODS

Who flays a donkey for its fat  
He has no brains beneath his hat,  
Who weds an old wife just for gain  
Makes one grand splurge, then ne'er again,  
And he has very little joy,

No children, either girl or boy,  
And happy, carefree days he lacks  
Save when he sees the money sacks.  
The money bag is often stressed  
That's made of him a fool at best,  
And by this truth I'm often struck  
That such a marriage brings ill luck.  
Who muses but of property,  
Neglecting good name, piety,  
Unhappily that man has wed,  
Joy, friendship, comradeship are dead.  
Far better seek a wilderness <sup>1</sup>  
Than live with such a sorceress:  
An angry, scolding, nagging shrew  
Whose evil ways will ruin you.  
I never trust such men myself  
Who sell their youthful years for pelf.  
Because one likes the smell of fat  
He'd flay the donkey just for that.  
But after many days are past  
He finds but dung and filth at last.  
Full many Ahab's child pursue <sup>2</sup>  
And come to sin and later rue.  
Now Asmodaeus seems to wield <sup>3</sup>  
Much influence in Hymen's field.  
Rare is the Boaz now forsooth <sup>4</sup>  
Who fain would court and marry Ruth.  
One finds but woe, calamity,  
And *criminor te, scratchnor a te.* <sup>5</sup>



*Ill will and hatred everywhere,  
One finds great envy here and there,  
Neitharts still live, are never rare.*



### 53. OF ENVY AND HATRED

Fools thrive on jealous enmity,  
This chapter shows, as we shall see.  
It seems to spring alone from this:  
You envy me what I possess  
Or crave to garner what is mine  
Or bear me ill will all the time.

Yes, Envy is a deadly wound,  
Who's stung by her will ne'er be sound.  
Bad qualities she has inbred,  
She plants fixed thoughts within your head,  
By night nor day will Envy rest  
To put her evil plans to test.  
For Envy will not laugh nor sleep,  
Her heart in sadness will she steep,  
Her lips are pallid, pinched, and lean,  
She's like a sullen cur and mean.  
Her eyes are red, she'll never try  
To look a man straight in the eye.  
With Saul and David 'twas the case,  
With Joseph, too, and with his race.  
Dame Envy only laughs when she  
Has sunk a foe's ship out at sea,  
When Envy gnaws with eager bite,  
She eats herself alone for spite.  
Etna consumed itself alone,  
Aglauros turned into a stone.<sup>1</sup>  
How poisonous spite and hate can be  
In brothers' hatred we can see:  
As Cain, Esau, and Thyestes,  
Jacob's sons, and Eteocles:  
In such deep hatred each did live,  
As though he were no relative.  
A kinsman oft will hate some other  
Far less than he may hate his brother.

*If bagpipes you enjoy and prize <sup>1</sup>  
And harps and lutes you would despise,  
You ride a fool's sled, are unwise.*



#### 54. OF IMPATIENCE OF PUNISHMENT

A sign of folly clear and sure  
Is that a fool will ne'er endure  
To hark and lend a patient ear  
When men of wisdom he can hear.  
A wise man lists to wise men's lore,

Enriching thus his wisdom's store,  
Bagpipes are dunces' instrument,  
For harps they have no natural bent,  
And naught gives fools a greater joy  
Than wand and pipe, their favorite toy.  
How shall we mete out punishment  
Since fools are many, have no end?  
Remember, fool, at every tide  
That death is lurking at your side,  
And that in ashes once you'll bide.  
Among all creatures small or great  
Endowed with sense in nature's state  
You are the least—a bastard base,  
Mere scum and dregs—an old carcase.  
Why do you vaunt your mortal power,  
Your wealth, youth, station every hour,  
When everything beneath the sun  
Is foolish, vain, and soon undone?  
Far better wise men's condemnation  
Than dunces' sheepish cachinnation.<sup>2</sup>  
For as a burning thorn will crackle,  
So will a fool's dull-witted cackle.  
Blesséd the man who always shows  
A sense of fear where'er he goes.  
A wise man's heart will think of sorrow,  
A fool will pipe but reck no morrow.  
Say what you will, entreat and plead,  
His "Come, eleven!" he'll not cede,  
Nor will he pain or lesson heed.

*The medico who'd treat and cure  
But of his skill is never sure,  
That man's an idiot simon-pure.*



## 55. OF FOOLISH MEDICINE

A fool is he, of little skill,  
Who tests the urine of the ill  
And says: "Wait, sir, and be so kind,  
The answer in my books I'll find."  
And while he thumbs the folios  
The patient to the bone yard goes.

Some men physicians are yclept,  
But in that art they're not adept.  
They only know what herb books say,<sup>1</sup>  
Or healing women old and gray.  
They have an art of great appeal,  
All ills and ailments it would heal,  
No class or age it fain would ban,  
Cures young, old, children, wife, and man,  
Or humors moist, dry, cold, and hot.  
This herb such strength and power's got,  
E'en like the salve in Alabaster,<sup>2</sup>  
Wherefrom the surgeons make their plaster  
And heal all wounds (so goes the rumor),  
Stabs, ruptures, cuts, and e'en a tumor.  
The doctor-fool keeps all in humor.  
Who'd use a salve for sick and weary,  
Cure dripping eyes, bloodshot and bleary,  
And purge without a urine glass,  
He's such a quack as Zuhsta was.<sup>3</sup>  
He's like a stupid advocate  
Who's poor of counsel, light of pate.  
Like some confessor-priest is he,  
Who cannot ever learn to see  
How he can cure a rank disease  
Or mortal sins he may appease.  
He walks about in senseless ease.  
Some men by foolishness misled,  
Can see it not until they're dead.

*To earth no power has e'er been sent,  
But in good time its way it went  
When once its usefulness was spent.*



## 56. OF THE END OF POWER

One finds such fools at every hour  
Who would rely upon their power,  
As if 'twere infinite, although  
It actually melts like snow.  
The emperor Julius was no wight,  
Rich, mighty he, with prudence dight,

Before he took the lofty throne  
And as the emperor was known,  
But once the scepter's weight he bore,  
He tribulations had galore.  
Nor did he heed what prophets said,  
So, stabbed by foes, he soon was dead.  
Darius ruled a mighty race<sup>1</sup>  
And could have stayed home sans disgrace,  
He could have kept his wealth and name,  
If he had not gone forth for fame,  
To conquer this land, yonder king.  
The upshot: He lost everything.  
Xerxes to Greece shipped hopefully  
Troops many as the sands of sea.  
So numerous sails were there unfurled,  
He might have frightened all the world,  
But what, I ask, did Xerxes gain?  
Athens he flayed with might and main  
As some dread lion kills a hen  
And yet fled like a rabbit then.  
The great king Nebuchadnezzar,  
When he had far more luck than ever  
And overcame Arfaxat too,<sup>2</sup>  
He thought his lands were far too few,  
And yearning after heavenly power  
Was turned to ugly beast that hour.  
More tales are found of similar bent  
In Old and Newer Testament,  
Yet I have shown enough of these.  
But few men die as they would please,  
Those only die of natural ills



Whom no assassin finds and kills,  
 So take good heed, you men of might,  
 Though holding fortune's wheel so tight,  
 Be wise and heed your dying day,  
 Lest that wheel spin the other way.  
 Fear God the Lord and serve Him well,  
 His wrath may send you down to hell,  
 It catches fire quite easily,  
 Then powerless again you'll be,  
 You'll perish, robbed of power and land.  
 Ixion's wheel would never stand,  
 It turned, by gentle breezes blown.  
 Blesséd who trusts in God alone.  
 That boulder rolled and always will  
 Roll down again from yon high hill  
 That Sisyphus did push with fear.  
 Power and luck last but a year.  
 Oh, heed the proverb, hear it say:  
 Ill luck and hair grow every day.<sup>3</sup>  
 Unrighteous power is but an ill,  
 Remember Ahab, Jezebel.<sup>4</sup>  
 A lord may have no foe at all  
 But by a slave's hand may he fall,  
 Or friends may force him to the wall  
 And cheat him oft of rank and might.  
 Zimri conspired with scoundrel spite<sup>5</sup>  
 And finally his lord did slay,  
 Then reigned, but not too many a day.  
 Alexander ruled the world as king,  
 A servant killed him with a drink.  
 Darius many dangers fled,

His servant Bessus stabbed him dead.  
 Thus power ends for no man's good  
 And Cyrus drank his own life's blood.  
 No power on earth is e'er so great  
 That some day it will not abate.  
 No friend can boast such mighty friend  
 That happy days to him he'll lend  
 Or guarantee a single hour  
 Wherein he'll have good luck and power.  
 What now the world deems best of all  
 Will some day turn to bitter gall.  
 Presumptuous men who proudly stand  
 May slip and fall upon the sand  
 And fate will mock them with a brand.  
 Great folly 'tis to have great might,  
 It often lives one day or night.  
 When all the states on earth I scan,  
 Th' Assyrian, Persian, Median,  
 And Macedon, the states of Greece,  
 Or Carthage, Rome, they found their peace,  
 They all now slumber under sod.  
 Our Roman Empire trusts in God,  
 He's granted it a time and fate,  
 May He still fashion it so great  
 That all the world its cause may serve  
 To such extent as it deserve.

*Who, lacking merit, seeks a prize  
And on a fragile reed relies,  
His plans go backward lobster-wise.*



## 57. PREDESTINATION OF GOD

Some fools display a wealth of wit  
Who hide behind the books and Writ,  
They think they're striped and famous sages  
When they have thumbed a volume's pages  
They eat the Psalter, 'twould appear,

*As far e'en as Beatus vir,<sup>2</sup>  
They think if God has blessed them all  
That then from grace they'll never fall.  
Since down to hell these men may fare,  
On earth they would be debonair  
And live with others blithe, in mirth,  
And never reck their future dearth.  
Fool, cease from all your fantasy,  
Or else in fool's stew you will be.  
That God rewards where naught is earned,  
Believe it, fool, be unconcerned  
And wait until a roast fowl slips  
To earth and nestles 'twixt your lips.<sup>3</sup>  
Were life so simple, then indeed  
Most every wight would have his meed  
No matter if he works or nay,  
But that is not earth's usual way.  
With rich rewards should heaven bless  
A man who lives in idleness  
And grant a knave who wants to nod  
His kingdom and the meed of God?  
I say no man on earth can live  
Whom God unearnéd boons would give,  
Or whom our Lord God owes a sou,  
God owes no man, nor me nor you.  
A free lord gives to whom he will,  
He may give little, may give nil  
As he may please, who can gainsay?  
He knows why he says yea or nay.  
A potter fashions out of earth  
A pot, to some of little worth,*

A jar, a jug of any style  
 For any liquid good or vile.  
 No pot will say to th' potter's face:  
 "I should have been a lordly vase!"  
 God knows (and He alone can know)  
 Why everything on earth is so  
 And wherefore Jacob He preferred  
 But for Esau no love averred  
 And why King Nebuchadnezzar,<sup>4</sup>  
 Who long in sin had taken pleasure,  
 Was punished and away was cast  
 But was restored as king at last.  
 Though Pharaoh was soundly scourged,  
 A wicked man he yet emerged.  
 A medicine makes one man well  
 But drives another nearer hell.  
 One man, if he will understand  
 God's wrath and feel His mighty hand  
 Will rue his sin with many a sigh,  
 While some upon free will rely,  
 And seeking heaven's righteousness  
 Abuse His loving kindness.  
 God will not let a sinner lie  
 Unless He knows the reason why.  
 If everything were once equated  
 Alone the rose would be created,  
 But God desired the thistles too,  
 Justice for all, for me and you.  
 He'd be a slave of jealous whim<sup>5</sup>  
 Who'd think the Lord unjust to him  
 Because He gave him meagerly

And with another one was free.  
 If you're a slave of indolence,  
 Then God bestows no recompense,  
 But many righteous men on earth  
 Will suffer bitter want and dearth  
 And God will treat them, every one,  
 As though a grievous wrong they'd done,  
 But idiots you will often find  
 Who have good luck of every kind  
 And in their sins are frank and free,  
 As though they lived in sanctity.  
 God's ways are all mysterious,  
 Their cause is known to none of us,  
 The deeper into this we pry,  
 The less we know the reason why.  
 And even men who dream and hope  
 To know the reason merely grope.  
 The why of such things men are spared  
 Before to tother world they've fared,  
 Wherefore let God's predestination  
 And all His prudent dispensation  
 Stand undefiled, be dutiful,  
 For God is good and merciful.  
 Let God know everything He knows,  
 Do right, see how your guerdon grows,  
 Be steadfast, then I'll guarantee  
 That down in hell you'll never be.

*Who'd quench a neighbor's blazing fire  
While flames around his barn mount higher,  
He plays upon the dunce's lyre.*



## 58. OF FORGETTING ONESELF

Who takes all pains that e'er he can  
To aid and help some other man  
Or win him gain in any shape,  
That man's indeed a silly ape  
If he has stupidly neglected

Himself and goes quite unprotected;  
He takes the fool's book off the shelf  
Who thinks of others, not himself.  
Well-ordered love for other men  
Means: With yourself you must begin.  
Terence was right when once he stated:  
"I'm nearest to myself related."<sup>1</sup>  
At your own self 'tis wise to glance  
Before you see how others dance.  
He'll perish long before he should  
Who only cuts his neighbor's wood;  
Who comes to clean his neighbor's dress  
While his is marred with dirtiness;  
If fire in neighbor's home you'd stop  
While flames shoot through the crumbling top  
Of your own house with violence,  
For your own good you have no sense.  
Who'd push or pull his neighbor's dray,  
His own not, he's a fool, I say.  
Who carries packs with vim and will,  
Except his own, will come to ill;  
Who easily can be persuaded  
To deeds for which a man's upbraided,  
He'll not escape the luring charm  
Of fools that take him by the arm  
And teach him wisdom via harm.  
He'll suffer hardest while he dies  
Whom others all can recognize,  
While he when landing on the shelf  
Knows he's not recognized himself.



*Who wants good service every day  
But never "Thank you" wants to say  
Deserves a club in every way.*



## 59. OF INGRATITUDE

He craves a lot, this foolish wight,  
But favors never will requite,  
He causes toil and troubled care  
But ah, his gratitude is rare.  
If profit from a deed you'd find  
You must be fair, make up your mind

With joy to give as well as take,  
For justice, honor are at stake.  
A wearied horse is little use  
When once subjected to abuse,  
A willing horse for naught is good  
If given not the proper food.  
A fool he who'd expect a lot  
But give no pay for what he got;  
The man who always scolds and frets  
For righteous recompense he gets,  
Some day he should not be dejected  
If with a whiplash he's corrected.  
If you desire a worth-while treasure  
You must pay back in ample measure;  
Ingratitude wins paltry gain,  
A spring of water will it drain.  
Wouldst from old cisterns water draw?  
Pour water in, then pour some more!  
Door hinges oftentimes have grated  
Unless they're duly lubricated.  
He never earns a greater prize  
Who smaller presents would despise.  
To him all gifts should be denied  
Whoe'er in small ones takes no pride,  
He's senseless, coarse, and stultified.  
All sages hate the man as crude  
Who's marred with base ingratitude.

*My time in fool's broth I must pass  
Since I esteem the looking glass;  
I'm brother to a silly ass.*



## 60. OF SELF-COMPLACENCY

A fool's broth he does stir and feed  
Who thinks he is of witty breed  
And so admires his lovely face  
That e'er into the glass he'd gaze,  
Yet grossly ignorant that he  
A fool in yonder glass doth see,

And if an oath he were to swear  
He'd say he's wise and debonair,  
With ne'er a failing, flaw or dearth,  
With not a peer upon the earth,  
And swear his conduct's ever fine,  
And that unblemished it doth shine.  
The mirror never leaves his hands,  
Whene'er he sits or lies or stands,  
Like Emperor Otho who, they say,<sup>1</sup>  
Did take his glass into the fray,  
He shaved twice daily smooth as silk  
And washed his face in ass's milk.  
In this same way the ladies pass  
Their time before the looking glass,  
The while they prink and don their gear  
Much time will pass, almost a year.<sup>2</sup>  
Who lays such store by beauty's work  
Is like the ape at Heidelberg.<sup>3</sup>  
Pygmalion did his statue like<sup>4</sup>  
So well, he lost his mind, the tike,  
And had Narcissus not espied  
His image he would not have died.<sup>5</sup>  
Who in the mirror sees his face  
Will often see a vile grimace.  
The men that show such stupid bent  
Will reck nor pain nor punishment,  
They've reached so stuporous a stage  
That they will balk at being sage.

*For dancing this can well be said:  
One does not always push ahead,  
Betimes one wheels and turns instead.*



## 61. OF DANCING

I'd take all those for fools almost  
Who skill and joy in dancing boast,  
Cavorting, prancing as they must,  
With weary feet in dirt and dust,  
But later then I called to mind  
That dance and sin are one in kind,

That very easily 'tis scented:  
The dance by Satan was invented  
When he devised the golden calf  
And taught some men at God to laugh,  
And Satan dancing still doth use  
To hatch out evil, to abuse.  
It stirs up pride, immodesty,  
And prompts men ever lewd to be.  
The pagan Venus gives her hand  
And purity is rudely banned.  
Could viciousness to joy give birth?  
There's naught more evil here on earth  
Than giddy dancing gayly done  
At kermess, first mass,<sup>1</sup> where the fun  
Is shared by priests and laity,  
Where cowls can flap in zephyrs free.  
They swing their partners in the breeze  
Till girls' bare legs high up one sees,  
Their other sins I will not treat.  
They'd rather swing their girls than eat;  
When Jack and Maggy swirl and sway  
They never wait a single day,  
They strike a bargain willy nilly  
And trade a she-goat for a billy.  
If some class that as recreation  
I call it base abomination;  
Some crave for dances many a tide  
Whom dances never satisfied.

*The man who'd play the amorous wight  
And sing a serenade at night  
Invites the frost to sting and bite.*



## 62. OF SERENADING AT NIGHT

The dance of fools would now be o'er,  
Though there'd be something still in store,  
For we've not mentioned those gallants  
Who walk the streets and would entrance  
The girls, to whom they're very sweet,

And wend their way from street to street,  
While playing lutes for all to hear  
At doors from which a girl may peer,  
And do not from the street go dashing  
Until a night-pot's dregs come splashing,  
Or till a rock has struck their pate.  
The pleasure's never very great,  
Since wintry blasts may nip his nose  
Who late at night a-courting goes  
With lute, song, piping, boisterous thumping,  
In lumber yards o'er timber jumping,  
Priests, students, laity hell-bent,  
They hum a fool's accompaniment.  
One screams, shouts, bleats with might and main  
As though he feared he's being slain,  
One fool will tell the motley crew  
Where they've arranged their rendezvous,  
And there the music is begun.  
"In secrecy" the thing is done,  
So everyone may well agree,  
E'en fishers noise it publicly.<sup>1</sup>  
One leaves his wife alone in bed  
Who'd rather play with him instead,  
If he goes duncing none the less  
And all ends well, I miss my guess.  
No word of those who take delight  
In going out like fools bedight;  
But call such fool a gaby dense,  
At such a pass he'll take offense.



*I feared no fools were left for me,  
The beggars then I went to see,  
Their wisdom was of low degree.*



### 63. OF BEGGARS<sup>1</sup>

Bold begging charms full many a fool,  
For begging has become the rule  
And ranks among our best professions:  
Church orders teem with rich possessions  
And yet lament their pauper state.  
Poor cadgers, ah, the pity's great!

Rank pauperdom, that is your class,  
Though heaps of wealth you should amass,  
And Prior shouts: "Bring more, bring plus!"  
His is a sack that's bottomless!  
Quite similar are the relic-vendors,  
The pious dealers and pretenders.  
No kermess but they thither fare  
And there they advertise their ware:  
"In this bag you will find the hay  
That once in bygone ages lay  
Beneath the crib at Bethlehem." <sup>2</sup>  
"An ass bone here of Balaam."  
"Of Michael's wing I have a feather."  
"St. George's steed once wore this tether!"  
"See here St. Clara's laced-up shoes."  
To beg some men will always choose,  
Though they could work if but they would,  
They're young and strong, their health is good,  
Save that their back they'll not incline,  
These sluggards have a corpse's spine.  
Their children in their youth they train  
To profit well by beggar's gain,  
To learn the cries—a mumper's token—,  
Or else they'd have their bones all broken  
Or so be maimed with welt and bruise  
That they would scream from sheer abuse.  
Of such two dozen seek their gain  
At Strassburg in St. Thomas Lane,  
Others in foundlings' homes are cast,  
But beggars very rarely fast.  
In Basel where the scoundrels lurk

They carry on much rowdy work,  
 They have their thieves' slang everywhere,  
 It helps them out where'er they fare.<sup>3</sup>  
 Full every beggar boasts a Moll,  
 She lies, cheats, plies her folderol,  
 Scouts where her Johnny may find swag,  
 He twigs the wine that gives a jag,  
 In all gin-mills his luck he tries  
 And "roll the bones," that's how he buys,  
 Until he's plucked them here and yon.  
 Discovered now, he rambles on  
 Across the countryside to fare,  
 Steals webfoot here and cackler there,  
 Whose necks he slices off or breaks  
 While hobo gang his escort makes.  
 To humankind 'tis a disgrace  
 That all men after money chase.  
 All sorts of heralds once could claim<sup>4</sup>  
 They spoke rebuke of public shame  
 And earned themselves an honor so;  
 Now every fool pretends to crow<sup>5</sup>  
 And wants to bear a herald's stave:  
 Thus begging, money he would save,  
 Indeed, he'd like his clothes in tatters.  
 Beggardom every country spatters.  
 One needs to have a silver cup  
 And seven measures daily sup.  
 He uses crutches when he's out,  
 But not when no one is about;  
 He throws a fit before a crowd  
 So everyone will shout aloud;

He borrows children by the score  
 So he'll have mouths to feed galore,  
 Equips an ass with baskets nine,  
 As though he'd seek St. James's shrine.<sup>6</sup>  
 He limps, he's hunched and very sick,  
 He ties his leg to crutch or stick  
 Or hides a bone 'neath garments thick.  
 Should anyone inspect his wound  
 He'd find it very shrewdly bound.  
 Beggars I grant a deal of space,  
 They're plentiful in every race  
 And evermore their numbers grow,  
 For begging's pleasant, that they know,  
 Except for those who have no choice,  
 The rest in cadgers' weeds rejoice.  
 By begging they can get ahead,  
 Some even get to eat white bread,  
 And they don't drink the cheaper wine,  
 But Reinfal,<sup>7</sup> Alsace, that's their line,  
 And begging brings them many joys,  
 These toying, courting beggar boys,  
 For after they have spent their share  
 They're always beggars now as e'er,  
 They may go begging anywhere.  
 As beggars many men live high,  
 Who have more coin than you or I.<sup>8</sup>

*Some men would ride morn, noon, and late  
If they could only dodge their mate,  
But women's grip is obdurate.*



#### 64. OF BAD WOMEN

When I began I did not shun <sup>1</sup>  
A solemn protestation,  
Good women never I'd forsake,  
Nor injury in my book they'll take;  
Against me men would soon complain  
If evil ones I'd not disdain,

For those who trust in wisdom's name  
Will not be prone to vice and shame.  
A good wife calms a husband wroth,  
Ahasuerus swore an oath,  
By Esther then he was disarmed,  
Abigail David quickly charmed.  
But evil wives give counsel bad,  
As Ahaziah's mother had.<sup>2</sup>  
Herodias her daughter bade  
To amputate the Baptist's head,  
By women Solomon was moved  
To worship idols he reprov'd.  
A woman has a magpie's tongue  
And likes to exercise her lung;  
Pierus had a brood of young,<sup>3</sup>  
Their tongues were smeared with venom dire,  
They burned ablaze and stung like fire.  
One mourns, one prattles, one tells lies,  
Another lives to criticize,  
And e'en in bed this good wife frets,  
No rest her suffering husband gets,  
Must hear a sermon grave and deep  
While many a barefoot monk's asleep.  
Some tug against a nagging wife  
Yet they must yield through all their life.  
In shrewdness women lead the van,  
Not matched are they by any man.  
His words she never will obey,  
She heeds not what he'd teach or say,  
For man misfortune's often sprung  
From woman's loose and babbling tongue.

Amphion found his joy denied  
 When all his lovely children died.<sup>4</sup>  
 If women's talk is our contention  
 Calphurnia<sup>5</sup> should come to mention.  
 Bad women show their evilness,  
 And Joseph's wife is proof of this.  
 No wrath can evermore mount higher  
 Than such a woman's boiling ire,  
 She's like a lioness in mood  
 Who's been deprived of suckling brood,  
 Or like a bear of cubs distressed,  
 Medea, Progne<sup>6</sup> prove this best.  
 In all the books of history<sup>7</sup>  
 More bitter nothing e'er can be  
 Than wives whose hearts are like a net  
 That catches fools and holds them yet.  
 Three things the earth do agitate,<sup>8</sup>  
 The fourth it will not tolerate:  
 A servant who has come to rule,  
 A gluttonous, voracious fool,  
 An odious, evil, poisonous wife,  
 Once she is married, prone to strife,  
 The fourth all friendship spoils indeed,  
 A maid who should her dame succeed.  
 Three things insatiable I fear,  
 The fourth cries ever: "Bring more here!"  
 A wife, a hell, and any ground  
 That swallows water all around,  
 The fire will never say: "'Tis good!  
 I have enough, bring no more wood."  
 Three things I cannot comprehend,

The fourth—there I've no news to send:  
 When through the air an eagle flies,  
 On rocks a snake that crawls and lies,  
 A ship that sails the water wild,  
 A man who still is like a child.  
 Of similar kind a wife would be  
 Who, planning on adultery,  
 Will lick her chops and wash them clean  
 And say, "Not evil have I been."  
 A leaky roof ere winter's through  
 Is like a woman who's a shrew:  
 He has his hell and torture now  
 Who with such woman pulls a plow.  
 Vashtis<sup>9</sup> did many daughters breed,  
 Their husbands they will never heed.  
 Nor of those women will I think  
 Who give their men a poisonous drink,  
 Like Portia<sup>10</sup> and Agrippina,<sup>11</sup>  
 Belides<sup>12</sup> and Clytemnestra,  
 Who stabbed their husbands in their bed,  
 As Pheraeus was stricken dead.<sup>13</sup>  
 Quite different is Lucretia  
 Or Cato's famous Portia.  
 But wanton wives are far from rare,  
 For Thaïs<sup>14</sup> dwelleth everywhere.



*The world is full of superstition,  
Men prophesy by stars' position  
And every fool deems this his mission.*



# 65. OF ATTENTION TO THE STARS<sup>1</sup>

Fool he who'd promise more than he  
Can keep with full propriety,  
More e'en than he'd desire to do.  
Physicians well may promise you  
But many fools will promise more

Than all the world could hold in store.  
For future things one feels a bent,  
What stars and what the firmament  
And what the planets' course proclaims  
And God's wise providential aims.  
They wish to know and would discuss  
Th' Almighty's plans for all of us,  
As though the stars prescribed to you  
What you should do and should not do,  
As though our Lord were not much higher,  
Not guided by His own desire,  
And letting even Saturn-born  
Be good and pure as is the morn,  
While Sun and Jupiter have had  
Some children that are very bad.  
A Christian true should never heed  
Base heathen arts of any creed:  
One can't by scanning planets say  
If this be our propitious day  
For business, war, or marrying,  
For friendship or for anything.  
Whate'er we've done, where'er we've trod,  
Our conduct should rely on God.  
He lacks a faith in God's creation  
Who trusts in any constellation,  
Believing certain things are good  
And so propitious that we should  
Start things of moment only then,  
And if they're not accomplished when  
The stars are lucky, then delay,  
Since that's an unpropitious day.

And he who sports no brand-new thing  
 At New Year's—goes not forth to sing,  
 And hangs no greens about the room,  
 He thinks he sees approaching doom  
 As once Egyptians seemed to fear.<sup>2</sup>  
 And then, when comes the bright New Year,  
 The one who gifts does not receive  
 Will fear a year when he must grieve  
 And other superstitious fancy,  
 Palm-reading, e'en ornithomancy,  
 Or symbols, signs, and books of dreams,  
 Or search for things by Luna's beams,  
 Or black arts done with pomp and show.  
 There's not a thing men wouldn't know.  
 Who says: "I've all that I desire!"  
 Lacks many things, the brazen liar.  
 Not only do men prophesy,  
 From starry course they also try  
 To read the smallest things there are—  
 A fly's brain lit by twinkling star,  
 Whate'er'll be said and what be done,  
 If you'll have luck, if you'll have none,  
 Your health, your very destination,  
 They'll read it from a constellation.  
 With folly all the world's insane,  
 It trusts the fool, the most inane.  
 In calendars and prophecy—  
 In these the printers profit see,  
 They'll print whatever one may bring,  
 Yes, e'en the most disgraceful thing.  
 Such things go scot-free, are believed,

The whole world wants to be deceived.  
 If such art were observed and taught  
 And not with dangerous evil fraught,  
 So that for man's soul 'twould be well,  
 As Moses did and Daniel,  
 Of wickedness it would not savor,  
 'Twould have our confidence and favor.  
 The cattle's death they do divine,  
 The blight of corn, the failing wine,  
 When rain will come, and when 'twill snow,  
 When sun we'll have, when wind or no.  
 The peasants like it—good their reason:  
 It helps them plan a prosperous season,  
 For they may hoard their corn or wine  
 Till prices upward may incline.  
 When Abraham read books like these,  
 And sought Chaldean prophecies,  
 That consolation then was gone  
 That God had sent in Canaan.<sup>3</sup>  
 Yet naught it is but blasphemy  
 To treat such matters frivolously,  
 To force th' Almighty we'd aspire  
 And bend His will to our desire.  
 God's love and favor now have fled,  
 We seek the devil's art instead.  
 When God forsook the old king Saul<sup>4</sup>  
 The devil heeded well his call.

*Who measures heaven, earth, and sea,  
Thus seeking lore or gaiety,  
Let him beware a fool to be.*



# 66. OF EXPERIENCE OF ALL LANDS<sup>1</sup>

I do not deem him very wise  
Who energetically tries  
To probe all cities, every land,  
And takes the circle well in hand  
That thereby he may well decide

How broad the earth, how long and wide,  
How deep and large the seas expand,  
What holds th' extremest sphere of land,  
And how at ends of earth the sea  
Clings tight to its extremity,  
If round the earth a man can fare,<sup>2</sup>  
What men live here, what men live there,  
If underneath our feet below  
Men walk the nether earth or no,  
And how they hold their ground down there,  
That they fall not into the air,  
And how with rule and compass you  
May cut the whole great world in two.  
Archimedes, too, who knew a lot,  
Drew circle in the sand, and dot,  
That many things he might compute,  
But all the while he played the mute,  
He feared he'd blow the sand away  
And all the circles might not stay.  
Before he'd speak, he'd suffer pain  
And let himself be foully slain.  
His skill was in geometry,  
His death, though, he could not foresee.  
With ardor Dicearchus tried<sup>3</sup>  
To measure every mountainside,  
Mount Pelion, he then confessed,  
Loomed up, the highest mountain crest.  
He never measured with his hand  
The Alps in mountainous Switzerland,  
Nor measured he how deep is hell,  
To where he went and still must dwell.

And Ptolemy described the girth,  
 The length and breadth of all the earth,  
 He drew the length from Orient  
 And ended it in Occident,  
 Degrees one hundred eighty he  
 Set down, toward midnight sixty-three,  
 The breadth from equinoctial ran.<sup>4</sup>  
 Toward midday 't has a narrower span,  
 While twenty-five degrees are shown  
 Of land, as far as now is known.  
 Then Pliny figured that in paces,  
 Strabo used miles to measure places.  
 Since then more countries far away  
 We've found past Thule,<sup>5</sup> past Norway,  
 As Iceland and Pilappenland,<sup>6</sup>  
 Which ancient writers never scanned.  
 They've found in Portugal since then  
 And in Hispania naked men,  
 And sparkling gold and islands too  
 Whereof no mortal ever knew.<sup>7</sup>  
 Marinus failed most grievously,  
 To figure earth by means of sea.  
 The master Pliny<sup>8</sup> once did say  
 That vain it is in every way  
 To measure out the world's expanse  
 And then to cast a further glance  
 Beyond the earth, beyond the sea;  
 In this all men err grievously,  
 Into these problems each would delve,  
 Yet can he understand himself?  
 In knowledge many will persist

Of matters e'en that don't exist.  
 Once Hercules set in the sea  
 Two brazen pillars plain to see,  
 The tip of Africa is one,  
 By the other Europe is begun.  
 To ends of earth he paid much heed,  
 But his own fate he would not read:  
 For all his deeds of bravery  
 He died by woman's treachery.  
 Bacchus fared forth with retinue,  
 Crossed every land and ocean blue,  
 The only aim that he was willing  
 To own was teaching drinking, swilling,  
 And where no wine or grapes were near  
 He led men on to mead and beer.  
 Silenus<sup>9</sup> sought no urging strong,  
 He joined our ship and went along  
 With women lewd and other rabble  
 Who sing and play and laugh and babble.  
 A drunken scamp was he in fine  
 Since he was very fond of wine;  
 If he had ever toiled at aught,  
 Carousing, drinking he'd have taught.  
 Men still go roistering everywhere,  
 Silenus through our land doth fare,  
 Some drink all day and never stop,  
 Whose fathers never touched a drop.  
 But what did Bacchus ever gain?  
 He had to leave his merry train  
 And fare to hell the while he's cursed  
 To tipple not for joy but thirst.



The heathens always sang his fame,  
 A god they called him, praised his name,  
 And e'en to this, our present day,  
 The goddess Berchta <sup>10</sup> yet holds sway;  
 So Bacchus e'en today is praised,  
 Though great the evil he has raised.  
 Bad customs always persevere  
 And viciousness has mastery here.  
 The devil e'er will strive to see  
 That mankind shows him fealty.  
 But time it is that we reverted  
 To other topics we've deserted;  
 Why should we humans seek to be  
 More than we are in verity?  
 We never know what gain it brings  
 To study many lofty things,  
 No one his hour of dying knows,  
 Which like a shadow comes and goes.<sup>11</sup>  
 Although his arts are great, no doubt,  
 He's but a mad and foolish lout  
 Who rates this lightly in his mind:  
 That toward himself he's always blind  
 And puzzling problems would dissect  
 Quite alien, then himself neglect.  
 Self-knowledge never was his aim,  
 He strives for honor and for fame  
 And thinks of no eternal life,  
 How spacious 'tis, with beauty rife,  
 Where live the souls of sterling worth.  
 Blind fools can only see this earth  
 And find their joys and pleasures vain

Which bring more injury than gain.  
 Some have explored a foreign land  
 But not themselves can understand.  
 If like Ulysses men got wise,  
 As when he fared 'neath foreign skies  
 And saw new lands, men, towns, and sea,  
 Acquiring new sagacity;  
 If they were like Pythagoras—  
 Of Memphis he a native was—<sup>12</sup>  
 And Plato Egypt once did see  
 And also went to Italy  
 With hope of learning ever more  
 And making rich his wisdom's store;  
 Appolonius <sup>13</sup> went to every place  
 Where'er he found a wise man's trace,  
 He followed it without surcease,  
 His skill and knowledge would increase,  
 And everywhere he learned new lore  
 Of things he'd never heard before.  
 He who would take such trips as these,  
 That e'er his wisdom might increase,  
 He could be pardoned one sole vice,  
 Though even that would not suffice.  
 For those ay longing to depart  
 Cannot serve God with all their heart.

*How did the silly Marsyas fare?  
He lost his hide and lost his hair,  
And yet his bagpipe still was there.*



## 67. NOT WISHING TO BE A FOOL

Fools all possess this quality:  
They are unable quite to see  
That people mock them and deride,  
Whence Marsyas lost hair and hide.  
But folly is so very blind,

A fool is all the more inclined  
To think he's witty when men mock  
And make of him a laughing stock:  
His faith is solid as a rock  
That all men in his wit believe—  
Until the pipe falls from his sleeve.  
The rich man gathers hosts of friends  
Who walk the sinful way he wends  
And swindle him for sinful ends.  
They persevere until he's poor  
And he exclaims: "My friends grow fewer,  
O Godamercy, how they wane,  
No friend consoles me, stills my pain!  
If sooner I had realized  
I'd still be rich and not despised!"  
He must a stupid fool appear  
Who squanders in a single year  
The sums for all his lifetime meant,  
In one brief, reckless splurge they're spent.  
He hopes to end his earthly stay  
And join his pelf in heaven some day,  
But then when nothing he can see  
But scorn, contempt, and misery  
And when he's tattered all and bare,  
He's stabbed by penitent despair.  
Bless him who faithful friends can find  
Through goods that he must leave behind,  
Who'll comfort him and with him stay  
When he's undone by sheer dismay.  
Full many a man the idiot plays  
And takes on idiotic ways,

And even though he's boiled and flayed  
 From ignorance he'll not be swayed,  
 He'll shut his ears quite unafraid.  
 The fool he is, the fool he plays  
 But no one likes his foolish ways.  
 Although his folly's manifest  
 No one applauds his wit or jest,  
 And men will comment then at once:  
 "The dunce would like to play the dunce,  
 In everything he suffers dearth,  
 He's but a fool, has little worth."  
 A curious thing it is on earth  
 That many a man would fain be shrewd,  
 Yet folly's mantle he's indued  
 And likes to think he should be praised,  
 But men say: "He's in folly raised."  
 But many idiots know I too  
 Who've once been hatched by some cuckoo;  
 They speak of wisdom every minute,  
 Pretending they are experts in it;  
 As witty as they'd fain be rated  
 So stupid are they estimated.  
 If fools were brayed upon a stone,<sup>1</sup>  
 As often with the pepper's done,  
 And they were crushed a year or more  
 They'd still be fools as evermore.  
 The fools lament to one another:  
 Wonolf is now Briegolf's brother.<sup>2</sup>  
 Some men would let themselves be flayed  
 And tied with ropes from foot to head  
 If only that would net them gold

And bring them affluence untold,  
 And some in bed would gladly be  
 And have the rich man's malady,<sup>3</sup>  
 Or take a scolding like a knave,  
 If only riches were their slave.  
 With little no one is content,  
 He who has much, on more is bent,  
 From riches arrogance will spring  
 But humbleness they seldom bring:  
 Must dung not stink like anything?  
 And many a man who childless lives,  
 Has brothers not nor relatives,  
 Yet slaves and labors day and night,  
 By riches ne'er contented quite,  
 He never asks himself: "Ah me,  
 For whom toil I in drudgery?"  
 God grants some men a happy lot,  
 Their souls have everything but not  
 The wisdom sage and forethought fine  
 To use their wealth in goodly time.  
 They save, economize, and spare  
 To please some lavish, gluttonous heir.  
 With water Tantalus is cursed,  
 Yet cannot satisfy his thirst,  
 Though he sees apples everywhere  
 Yet has no joy of fruit so fair,  
 For with himself he does not share.

*Who passes time with fool or child,  
Unless he's at their jesting smiled  
An arrant fool will he be styled.*



## 68. NOT TAKING A JOKE

A fool is he who does not feel  
That with a fool he has to deal,  
Fool he who answers bark with bark  
And fights with drunkards in the park,  
Who fain would play with child or fools  
And won't abide by folly's rules.

Who wants to hunt must rouse up game,  
The bowler sets the pins in frame,<sup>1</sup>  
Admit you lie if naught you lack,  
Howl if you rove with wolfish pack:  
"Give words for words" is fool's device,  
"Give good for ill" commands high price.  
But who requites the good with evil  
Will ne'er be rid of any devil.  
Who laughs when others weep and grieve  
Will meet the same fate some fine eve.  
Wise men with wise associate,  
A fool will have a fool as mate.  
The reason no one loves a fool:  
Self-love is always folly's rule.  
A fool feels more of jealous dread  
When other people forge ahead  
Than joy he knows that all adore him  
And kneel in reverence before him.  
By this remark I've merely meant:  
The proud would rule and regiment.  
Haman's delight was not intense<sup>2</sup>  
That all men did him reverence,  
He grieved far more that Mordecai  
Looked down on him, would not obey.  
No need to look for fools have you,  
They show themselves in all they do.  
If you'd be wise, as all men should,  
You'll shun all idiots for good.



*Go, toss into the air the ball  
And do not guard against its fall  
If you would anger one and all.*



# 69. DOING EVIL AND NOT BEING ON GUARD

You are a silly if you do  
What others should not do to you;  
Before you would abuse another,  
Reflect if you would like it, brother.  
As once into the woods you shout,

So will your voice come echoing out;  
Who'd push a man into a sack  
He must himself expect a whack.  
The man whom others' faults disgust  
Is like to hear his own discussed.  
As Adonibezek had done <sup>1</sup>  
To others, such reward he won.  
Berillus in the ox was roasted, <sup>2</sup>  
Once meant for others, he had boasted,  
And such the fate of Busiris,  
Of Diomedes and Phalaris. <sup>3</sup>  
For others many dig a pit,  
But they themselves fall into it.  
Haman made gallows for a foe,  
To these same gallows he did go. <sup>4</sup>  
Trust everyone but use your eyes,  
For too much trust is oft unwise,  
Find out what lies behind your man:  
False trust has cost full many a span. <sup>5</sup>  
Eat not with one of envious eye <sup>6</sup>  
Nor sit at table with him by,  
For he may plan how you'll be caught  
In wiles you never would have thought.  
Though he say: "Friend, O drink and eat!"  
His heart for you will never beat,  
And he may think: "I give it lief,  
As lief as if you were a thief."  
Some men will smile a friendly smile  
But eat your heart out all the while.

*Who'll never glean in summer's heat,  
In winter he'll have naught to eat  
And like the bear lick hands and feet.<sup>1</sup>*



## 70. NOT PROVIDING IN TIME

Some men are worthless and inane,  
They're fickle like a weather vane  
And consequently leave undone  
The many things they have begun.  
Naught can they do when times are right,

Things will escape them over night.  
For usually they're so remiss,  
They never know what they may miss,  
Or what they'll need in future pinch,  
Unless the goal lies but an inch  
Away; their planning never goes  
Much further than from mouth to nose.  
The man who gleans in summer's heat,  
So that in winter he may eat,<sup>2</sup>  
He's wise in more than one respect.  
But who in summer would neglect  
His work and slumber 'neath the sun,  
Must have in storage ton on ton,  
Or through the winter's cold must see  
The presence of adversity,  
And suck his fingers hard and long  
Until his hunger pangs are gone.  
Who when it's summer makes no hay,  
With grief in winter will he pay.  
He'll drag a rope that's tied together,  
And beg cheap hay in stormy weather.  
He who no winter plow has led,<sup>3</sup>  
May beg in summer time for bread,  
He'll suffer misery and grieve,  
Ask much but little will receive.  
Learn, fool, the ant to imitate,<sup>4</sup>  
Provide before it is too late,  
That you may never suffer want,  
When other men rejoice and vaunt.

*He'll get much raillery uncouth,  
Who fights like children tooth for tooth,  
And thinks that he can blind the truth.*



## 71. QUARRELING AND GOING TO COURT<sup>1</sup>

Now of that fool I would report  
Who always wants to go to court,  
And amicably end no suit  
Before he's had a hot dispute.  
When cases would protracted be,

And men from justice hide or flee,  
They must be summoned, warned, apprized,  
Banned, outlawed, even ostracized,  
They hope that then they'll twist the law  
And come out free through any flaw,  
As though the law a wax nose were,  
Not realizing they're the hare,  
That goes into the law clerk's soup.  
The judge, attorney—all the group  
Of jurists feed from clients' dish  
And win a handsome mess of fish;  
Delay, protraction is their aim,  
'Tis thus they trap and catch their game:  
Small cases e'en like big ones look,  
A trickle's made into a brook,  
A foreign speaker must be brought,  
Imported here from far-off port,  
That he may well pervert the case  
And cheat the judges to their face.  
Full many hearings there must be,  
So that there'll be an ample fee,  
And greater sums red tape will take  
Than all the sums we have at stake.  
The money won in lawsuits will  
Ofttimes not pay your parsley bill.<sup>2</sup>  
They think that truth can never see  
When suits are lengthened endlessly.  
The man who'd rather sue than eat  
Should have some nettles on his seat.

*Vile, scolding words do irritate,  
Good manners thereby will abate  
If sow-bell's rung from morn to late.<sup>1</sup>*



## 72. OF COARSE FOOLS

A new St. Ruffian now holds sway,  
Men celebrate him much today  
And honor him in every place  
With words and ways that spell disgrace,  
And make a jest of ribaldry,  
Though belted not with decency.<sup>2</sup>

Sir Decency is doubtless dead,  
Fool holds the sow's ear, wags her head,  
And makes the sow-bell loudly ring  
So that the sow her ditty sing.<sup>3</sup>  
The sow leads on and cannot fail,  
She holds the fools' ship by her tail,  
That laden down no wreck it be,  
For that would bring great misery.  
The wine no fool today would heed  
That's quite inferior wine, indeed.  
Full many a litter breeds the sow,  
And wisdom lives in exile now;  
The swine on decent people frown,  
The sow alone now wears the crown.  
Whoever rings her bell, that man  
Is now the one who leads the van,  
While he who does such foolish work  
As that famed priest of Kalenberg,<sup>4</sup>  
Or as Monk Islan long of beard,<sup>5</sup>  
He thinks that he's himself endeared.  
Some men in folly are so free  
That if Orestes<sup>6</sup> them could see—  
He had no brains beneath his hat—  
He'd say: "Sane men can't act like that."  
"Come clean to village" lost its sense,  
For peasants drink and give offense.  
Sir Alderblock is roundly fêted,  
With Roughenough and Seldom Sated.  
Most every fool doth love the sow  
And wants to have his grease box now,  
Which he keeps filled with donkey's fat.<sup>7</sup>



But rarely is it bare of that,  
 Though everyone would take a piece,  
 To keep his bagpipes well in grease.  
 Now grossness everywhere has come  
 And seems to live in every home,  
 And sense and prudence both are dead.  
 What now is written, what is said,  
 Is covered o'er with donkey's fat.  
 Carousers know and cherish that.  
 The sow the *matins* does recite,  
 The donkey sings the *prime* all right,  
 St. Ruffian sings the *tierce* with might,  
 Hatmakers' boys recite the *sext*,  
 Coarse felters<sup>8</sup> do compose the text.  
 Rude rabble doth recite the *none*,  
 And gluttoners the words intone,  
 The *vespers* from a sow's voice ring,  
 Filth, gross untidiness then sing.  
 And lastly the *compline* is done,  
 When *all is full* at length is sung.  
 The donkey's fat is potent grease,  
 With sow's fat it is mixed with ease.  
 One reveler smears it on another,  
 If he would have him be his brother.  
 Reserve and modesty 'twill smother.  
 Nor God nor honor then are spared,  
 Lewd things are scrutinized and aired,  
 The one who's quite the foulest swine  
 Is given a brimming glass of wine.  
 Applause is his with vim and zest,  
 He's asked to tell another jest.

They say: "A great success you've scored!  
 You keep us thus from being bored!"  
 As fool to fool they all declare:  
 "Be sociable, gay, debonair!  
*Feti gran schier e belli schier!*<sup>9</sup>  
 Let's all be cheerful while we're here,  
 Good fellows should rejoice, not pout,  
 Let's laugh and sing, carouse and shout!  
 We've but a little while on earth,  
 Let's spend it wassailing, in mirth.  
 The man who dies will never rise  
 And never walk 'neath sunny skies.  
 Has any mortal ever learned  
 Of mortal men from hell returned,<sup>10</sup>  
 That they might tell us how it's been?  
 To have a good time's not a sin!  
 The priests can say whate'er they may,  
 Let them forbid this, that for aye!  
 If this were sinful, as they claim,  
 Then why, why do they do the same?  
 If priests did not discuss the devil,  
 And shepherds saw in wolves no evil,  
 No one would profit very much."  
 'Tis fools alone who utter such  
 Remarks, and with their brutal crew  
 Insult the world and God and you,  
 But finally their gain is rue.

*For priesthood some declare desire,  
They don a priest's or monk's attire,  
But later their regret is dire.*



### 73. OF BECOMING A PRIEST

Another type I'd have you mark  
That on the fool's ship should embark  
Has recently been much increased,  
For every peasant wants a priest  
Among his clan, to dodge and shirk  
And play the lord, but never work;

It's not done out of veneration  
Or for the sake of soul's salvation,  
They want a high-placed relative  
On whom the other kin may live.  
"Training," they say, "we need not give  
Him much, he'll learn it easily,  
No need for scholarship I see  
So long as benefices be."  
Priesthood to them is something slight,  
As though it were a trifling mite;  
Ofttimes young priests are now so crude,  
They seem just like a monkey's brood,  
Shepherds who flocks should tend and keep  
But could be trusted with no sheep.  
In church affairs they're as astute  
As Miller's ass upon the lute.<sup>1</sup>  
But if to orders they're admitted  
For this the bishops should be twitted,  
Soul shepherds they should never be  
Unless they're friends of decency.  
Unwise the shepherd who'd abuse  
His flock and all his sheep confuse,  
But now these young and foolish beasts  
Have one ambition—being priests,  
This is the hope that they unfold,  
But everything is not of gold  
That on the saddle brightly gleams,  
It's merely dung that costly seems.  
A youth that enters priesthood's state  
May later execrate his fate  
Because he took the step in haste,

By begging later to be faced.  
 If he had had a living good  
 Before he donned the gown and hood,  
 It never would have gone so far.  
 Full many priestlings summoned are  
 And have to bless the fish and meat  
 At lordly feasts where others eat.  
 A patent's rented out and hired,  
 So that a title be acquired:  
 To cheat their bishop they believe,  
 But only their own selves deceive.  
 No poorer creature lives on earth  
 Than priests who suffer want and dearth.  
 They must pay fees to one and all,  
 To bishop, vicar, and fiscal,  
 Collator and to many a friend,  
 Housekeeper, children without end,  
 These lash him with a cruel whip  
 And land him on the dunce's ship.  
 Thus joy is killed and pleasures pass,  
 O God, so many priests say mass,<sup>2</sup>  
 'Twere better far did they refrain  
 And graced the altar ne'er again.  
 Your sacrifices will not win  
 The Lord when done with sin in sin.  
 To Moses God the Lord did say<sup>3</sup>  
 That every beast should stay away  
 And should not touch the holy mound,  
 Else black misfortunes would abound.  
 Uzzah,<sup>4</sup> who saw the ark and dared  
 To touch it, was by death not spared;

Korah, Abiram, and Dathan<sup>5</sup>  
 The censer touched and perished then.  
 The sacred meat seems good to eat,  
 With monkish coal some warm their feet,  
 Who'll later roast and stew in hell.  
 I'm preaching to the sensible.  
 Full many a youth ordained we see  
 Who has not reached maturity,  
 And ere he knows what it will do  
 Of good or bad, he's in the stew.  
 Habituation oft will do it,  
 But sadly some men have to rue it  
 And curse their friends with loud complaining  
 Who bear the blame for this ordaining.  
 Most enter monasteries blind,  
 Not old enough to know their mind,  
 They enter not by heaven's will  
 And only hope to eat their fill;  
 They pay no heed to priestly vow,  
 They never make a reverent bow,  
 Especially in orders where  
 Observing rules is very rare.  
 Such cloister-cats are insolent  
 Because they are not tied and pent.  
 Far better close the orders all  
 Than monks that into sinning fall.

*Some men on hunting spend their all  
But find the profit very small  
Though they may shout the hunter's call.*



#### 74. OF USELESS HUNTING

Aye, hunting can be quite inane,  
One spends much time with little gain;  
Although it's meant for sport and pleasure  
It's sumptuous beyond all measure.  
The many kinds of dogs you need  
Are quite expensive in their feed,

The dogs and hunting birds you've got  
Have little use but cost a lot.  
No hare or partridge brought to ground  
Will cost you less than one full pound.  
It's irksome work and little fun  
To follow game, to ride and run  
On hill, in vale, in woods to bide,  
To set a trap, in ambush hide.  
Some rouse more game than they can take,  
Their nets but poorly they did make;  
Some hunters "catch" the selfsame hare  
That they have bought at mart or fair.  
Some hardy hunters even score  
When hunting lion, bear, or boar,  
Or chase the chamois to his haunt,  
But in the end they'll suffer want.  
Now peasants hunt amid the snow—  
The rich man's privilege long ago:  
He hunts but nothing can espy,  
The peasant sold it on the sly.  
Nimrod took up the hunting horn <sup>1</sup>  
When he by heaven was forlorn,  
And Esau hunted; <sup>2</sup> was he not  
A sinner who his God forgot?  
Few hunters now like Hubertus  
Or even like Eustachius, <sup>3</sup>  
Who threw away the hunter's rod,  
Else they could not have served their God.



*In shooting let your aim be true,  
For if you missed the target, you  
Would land among the fool-ship's crew.*



## 75. OF BAD MARKSMEN

If marksmen gave me their permission  
I'd have a shooting competition  
For fools, a range along the shore,  
Where fools could targets miss galore,  
And bowmen's prizes we'd be setting,  
The champion the best prize getting.

If you shoot for elimination  
You must use wise discrimination,  
Aim straight and not too low or high  
If you would strike the target's eye,  
And shun an all-too hasty try.  
Some men will shoot too high or low,  
They break the string or bolt or bow;  
In bending bows some make a slip  
Or on the bolt they lose their grip.  
Too soon the arrow's oft released  
Because the bowstring's overgreased.  
For one the mark stays not the same  
And so he cannot take his aim;  
One's tried it o'er and o'er again  
But all his efforts seem in vain;  
To lose the porker he is fated,<sup>1</sup>  
At last he'll be eliminated.  
Hast ever witnessed matches which  
Proceed without a single hitch?  
"This happened." "That was not the case"—  
With such excuse one saves his face.  
"Had this not been, had that been done,  
The prize I surely would have won."  
Of marksmen I a plenty know  
Who hear of contests with the bow  
To which they come from every clime,  
To take a part at given time—  
The champions under any skies,  
Of whom no one can win the prize  
Unless he never misses once.  
Now many an archer's such a dunce:

He knows he'll lose, yet in a dither  
 He undertakes the long trip thither,  
 And tries the victory to attain.  
 I'd take his costs for all his gain,  
 Say nothing of the entrance fee,  
 The sow his empty sleeve will be.<sup>2</sup>  
 At wisdom many men would aim  
 But miss the mark as well as fame,  
 The reason is they cannot sight,  
 Misjudging depth, misjudging height;  
 One does not wish to cock his eye,  
 One fails because he will not try,  
 One takes a shot like Jonathan,<sup>3</sup>  
 His arrow lands behind the man.  
 If you'd hit wisdom's pith and marrow  
 I'd recommend you such an arrow  
 As Hercules possessed of yore,  
 Wherewith a victory to score<sup>4</sup>  
 And strike his victim's very core.  
 Who'd shoot at wisdom all his rounds  
 Should take good heed to stay in bounds,  
 For if he fails the mark, mayhap  
 He's fitted for the dunce's cap.  
 Who over reckless shots must grieve  
 Will bear the sow within his sleeve;  
 A hunting, jousting, shooting wight  
 Has great expense but profit slight.

*Knight Peter of the Olden Years,<sup>1</sup>  
 I have to pinch your silly ears,  
 Both you and I are arrant fools,  
 Though knightly spurs are your proud tools.*



## 76. OF GREAT BOASTING

Of louts and fools I also sing  
 Who boast of many a lofty thing  
 And want to be what they are not,  
 The whole world's vision they would blot

Because it never honors them.  
 From noblemen they claim to stem  
 The while their father banged and pounded <sup>2</sup>  
 And in the cooper's trade was grounded,  
 Or in his fortune he progressed  
 By buying out the dispossessed,  
 Or else a Jewish spear he held  
 Wherewith full many a man he felled;  
 Now he would claim his blood is blue  
 As if no man his father knew.  
 His name was Master Jack of Mayence, <sup>3</sup>  
 The while his son is Squire Vincenz.  
 Some boast of lofty elevation  
 And vaunt in constant emulation,  
 But 'neath the skin base fools they be  
 Like Peter Knight of Porrentruy <sup>4</sup>  
 Who made the claim he was a knight  
 That joined at Murten in the fight,  
 Whereas he was so fain to flee  
 And hide in marshy, muddy lea,  
 His pants so spattered were with dirt  
 That there was need to wash his shirt;  
 Yet shield and helm he bore away  
 To prove he was of knightly clay.  
 A hawk is like a heron dressed, <sup>5</sup>  
 And on the helmet eggs in nest,  
 And on the nest a moulting cock,  
 He's brooding out the little flock.  
 I know that all the foolish host  
 Of this would like to vaunt and boast:  
 That they have always led the van;

Whenever some retreat began  
 They looked behind with sorrowing  
 To see if foes were following.  
 Some men of fighting brag a lot,  
 How one they stabbed, another shot,  
 In truth they were so far away,  
 No shot could e'er have reached their prey.  
 His coat-of-arms a peasant draws  
 With decorative lion's paws,  
 A helmet crowned on golden shield,  
 And he's a knight of Bennefield. <sup>6</sup>  
 Some men are noble through their mother,  
 In Ruprecht Meadows lived their father; <sup>7</sup>  
 So many wear their mother's arms,  
 But as to father they have qualms,  
 Some own a seal and patent good,  
 They prove they are of noble blood.  
 They're first, they claim quite rightfully,  
 To be dubbed in that family,  
 And I nor blame nor disagree. <sup>8</sup>  
 'Tis virtue makes nobility,  
 For breeding, honor, virtue can  
 Alone proclaim the nobleman,  
 But if unvirtuous you be—  
 No breeding, honor, modesty—  
 Of nobleness for me you're bare,  
 E'en though a prince your father were;  
 Nobility with virtue goes,  
 Nobility from virtue flows, <sup>9</sup>  
 And many claim a high degree  
 Who know not Sextus nor Decree,

No Digest, Institute, Clementin.<sup>10</sup>  
 They only own a parchment skin  
 On which their right is fully writ,  
 It documents their ample wit  
 And shows that bagpipes they can play.<sup>11</sup>  
 Here Dr. Grab-It holds the sway,<sup>12</sup>  
 A learned and a witty wight  
 Who by the ears grips all men tight  
 And does more than most doctors might,  
 Who've been at famed schools many times,  
 At home and eke in foreign climes  
 Which average fools can never see  
 Who dote upon a high degree.  
 As "doctor" they would be addressed  
 Because in crimson gown they're dressed  
 And had as dam a monkey pure.  
 I know one well, he's Jack Manure;  
 To all who listen he will say  
 He's been in Sweden and Norway  
 And in Granada and Cairo,  
 And where the pepper plants do grow.  
 In truth he ne'er so far did rove,  
 But when his mother at her stove  
 Was frying cakes or sausage there  
 He'd hear and smell it anywhere,  
 For bragging lies so frequent fall  
 I simply couldn't count them all,  
 Since this is every dunce's lot:  
 He wants to be what he is not.

*To gambling many are inclined,  
 No other sport is on their mind,  
 But future losses will they find.*



## 77. OF GAMBLERS

Some foolish idiots I could name,  
 They love the cards, the dice, the game,  
 Preferring never to exist  
 Before from gambling they'd desist,  
 And day and night they game and rattle  
 With cards and dice, and drink and prattle,



And all night long they warm their seat  
 And never sleep and never eat,  
 But they must always drink a lot,  
 For gaming turns your liver hot  
 And makes you parched and full of thirst,  
 And then the morning is the worst:  
 One's face is like a pear in hue,  
 One goes behind the door to spew,  
 The color of their fellow knave  
 Is like a corpse's laid in grave,  
 Or else his face shines in the sun  
 Just like a smith's when day is done.  
 His head has suffered from abuse,  
 He yawns all day without excuse,  
 As though his aim were catching flies.  
 No man were fain to earn a prize  
 For sitting through a sermon deep  
 An hour, yet falling not to sleep,  
 But, head concealed in mantle's slit,  
 He'd show the priest 'twere time to quit;  
 When gaming though, how very odd!  
 He'll sit and sit and never nod,  
 And many women are so blind  
 That they forget their sex and kind  
 And know not that propriety  
 Forbids such mixed society.  
 They sit together 'mongst the men  
 And never feel dishonored when  
 They shake the dice and bet and game,  
 For all good women great the shame.  
 The distaff they should tend and wet

And gamble not with men and bet.  
 If each one stays among his kind  
 No need for any shame he'll find.  
 When Alexander's father told  
 His son to race for prize of gold,  
 Because to running he was bred,  
 The stripling to his father said:  
 " 'Twere meet and proper that I do  
 Whate'er my father wants me to,  
 And surely I'll be glad to run  
 Against some other ruler's son,  
 You'd never need to urge the case  
 If I against a peer could race."  
 But nowadays it's come to pass  
 That priests and knights of noble class  
 Sit down with barber's helper Jack  
 Whose soul their excellence must lack.  
 'Tis never good a priest to see  
 At gaming with the laity,  
 For they should always bear in mind  
 The hate long felt against their kind,  
 Else Neithart <sup>1</sup> may their pathways cross  
 And take revenge with gain or loss,  
 And they should bear in mind at least  
 That gambling is forbid the priest.  
 The man who gambles with himself  
 Will rarely sacrifice his pelf  
 And need not fear a bad reverse  
 Nor imprecations nor a curse.  
 But let me make it very clear  
 What's meet for gamesters far and near

And hearken to what Vergil sings,<sup>2</sup>  
 Who speaks like this of all these things:  
 "Avoid the gambler all the while  
 Lest lustful avarice beguile,  
 For gaming is a senseless vice  
 Which kills your reason in a trice.  
 Ye valiant, heed your virtuous name,  
 Lest that be harmed by dice and game.  
 A gambler coin must have and daring,  
 When luck is bad be not despairing,  
 No wrath or curse his gains advance.  
 Who plays with cash must take his chance,  
 For many come with coins not few  
 And leave the house without a sou.  
 Who plays alone for ample winnings  
 Will not have many lucky innings,  
 For peace he'll have who gambles not,  
 And he who plays must feed the pot.  
 Who wants to sit in every bout  
 And try his luck with every lout,  
 He must be blessed with shekels many  
 Or else go home without a penny.  
 You've furies three, desiring more?  
 Then take me, thereupon have four."<sup>3</sup>  
 With sin most gambling is beguiled,  
 On gamblers God has never smiled,  
 The gambler is the devil's child.

*Most fools are under pressure ay:  
 Those who are fools in many a way,  
 The donkey rides them every day.*



## 78. OF OPPRESSED FOOLS

The dunces' guild is numerous  
 And I was nigh forgotten thus,  
 I'd missed the boat upon the pier  
 But that the ass breathed in my ear.  
 I'm he whom all things do oppress,  
 I'd hide my face for shamefulness,

If but the donkey'd leave me free  
 And not upon my back would be.  
 If but my patience will suffice  
 I'll shake the donkey in a trice,  
 But I've a great sodality,  
 They're pressed by what oppresses me.  
 Take him whom no one dares advise,  
 Who's furious when wrath's unwise,  
 Who buys misfortune, mourns for naught,  
 Seeks strife when peace were better sought,  
 Who likes his children petulant,  
 Who treats his neighbor not as friend,  
 Who lets his shoe pinch worse than sin,  
 Whose wife must seek him at the inn,  
 The fool-book's none too good for him.  
 Who uses more than he can earn,  
 Who borrows much, which melts in turn,  
 Who shows his wife to eager eyes,<sup>1</sup>  
 A fool is he, an ass unwise.  
 Who thinks on all his sin on earth  
 And pain to which our sins give birth,  
 Yet laughs and jests at every pass,  
 He should not ride upon the ass,  
 The ass should ride upon this dunce  
 And press him down to earth at once.  
 A fool is he who sees the good  
 But e'er to evil turns his mood.  
 Untold the fools from far and wide  
 Whom such an ass takes for a ride.

*When clerks and knights have once waylaid  
 A sturdy peasant plain and staid,  
 Their victim will be squeezed and frayed.<sup>1</sup>*



## 79. KNIGHTS AND CLERKS

The clerks and knights one ridicules  
 For having joined the class of fools,  
 Both eat from out the selfsame pot,  
 One's blows are overt, th' other's not,  
 One risks his health 'neath any skies,  
 His soul in dusky inkwells lies.

The knight will build a blazing fire,  
 The clerk a peasant doth desire  
 Who's fat and drips as well he could  
 To make his cabbage lush and good.  
 If each of them did as he should  
 Each would be fully worth his board,  
 One with the pen, one with the sword.  
 Both knight and clerk we well could use  
 If they did not their rights abuse  
 And if at law they did not scoff  
 And live from stirrup unto mouth.  
 But since for personal interest  
 Each one of these shows zeal and zest,  
 They'll pardon me if that I slip  
 Them midst the dunces in our ship.  
 I did not ask that they go there,  
 Themselves they proffered me the fare  
 And offered me of their accord  
 To bring more customers aboard.  
 Clerks many, hypocrites I see,  
 They practice wanton chivalry,  
 Like riders' squires they snatch and pillage  
 For food in countryside and village.  
 It is indeed a great disgrace,  
 Unsafe are highways every place  
 For travelers seeking gain or grace.  
 And yet I know why this is so:  
 Safe-conduct makes the shekels flow.<sup>2</sup>

*O, I have wandered far and wide,  
 No empty flask hung by my side:  
 This message fools may well betide.*



#### 80. FOOLISH NEWS

Though messengers I might ignore  
 And all their folly should not score,  
 Of it will they remind me e'er,  
 For fools must have a messenger  
 Who bears a letter 'twixt his lips  
 So that no rain upon it drips.



He walks the roof with cautious care  
 And hopes the tiles will stand the wear <sup>1</sup>  
 And always he will try to do  
 E'en more than masters want him to,  
 But whither he's been told to go  
 Because of wine he doesn't know  
 And tarries long in alley, street  
 Because there many folks he'll meet.  
 Some nearby lodgings him entice,  
 Examining each letter thrice  
 To see what may be written in it,  
 He spreads its message in a minute.  
 At night a bench doth hold his bag  
 While he drinks wine and gets a jag,  
 Without an answer coming home.  
 Such fools I mean—such fools alone.  
 They chase our ship in full career  
 And find it too 'twixt Aix and here.<sup>2</sup>  
 They should presume ('twill be no task!)  
 To bear in mind their little flask,  
 Their liver, privates both are dry  
 From running fast, from many a lie.  
 Snow offers men a cooling fine  
 When it is found in summer time,<sup>3</sup>  
 So too a messenger who's true,  
 Who's done his duty well for you.  
 I praise the messenger one hires  
 Who carries out what one desires.

*Here come the butlers, servants, cook  
 Who all to things domestic look,  
 They tend the ship in every nook.*



## 81. OF COOKS AND WAITERS

A messenger preceded us  
 To find out where our vessel was,  
 We gave him salty soup quite ample  
 So he his little flask might sample.  
 He ran so very speedily

That he did drink incessantly;  
 We offered him a letter long,  
 His will to wait though was not strong.  
 Now we come walking down the street—  
 Cooks, maids, and butlers, servants neat,  
 Who work in kitchens, wait and serve  
 And treat all men as they deserve.  
 We've no regrets at any turn <sup>1</sup>  
 For we expend what others earn.  
 Above all when our master's gone  
 And sees not what is going on  
 We visit inns and there carouse,  
 And then bring guests into the house  
 And give and take full many a swig  
 From cans and jugs and bottles big,  
 And when at night our masters snore  
 And locks and bars are on the door,  
 We drink the wines with comrades boon  
 And tap the largest barrel soon  
 Which will not show that it's been bled.  
 We take each other then to bed,  
 But each a pair of socks we wear  
 That we're not heard upon the stair.  
 And if they hear some creaking sounds  
 They'll say it's cats that make their rounds.  
 And when a little time has passed  
 And master thinks that he still has  
 A keg of wine he hasn't drunk  
 The spigot answers: Glunk, glunk, glunk,  
 A token this that now the keg's  
 Near empty to the very dregs.

And we can skillfully prepare  
 A wealth of dishes served with care,  
 Thereby the palate always wooing  
 With cooking, boiling, frying, stewing,  
 With roasting, baking, pepper pot.  
 Of sugar, condiments a lot  
 We do prepare an oxymell <sup>2</sup>  
 So that our master vomits well  
 Or takes a purging laxative  
 With enema and syrup stiff.  
 This reck's us not, for we can treat  
 Ourselves: we'll have more food to eat,  
 And we ourselves devour a lot,  
 We snatch the best from out the pot,  
 For though we died of hunger we  
 Would be accused of gluttony.  
 The butler says: "Fry me a link  
 Of sausage, cook! You'll get a drink."  
 The butler, he the wine's defier,  
 The cook, he is the devil's frier,  
 He's used to all the stifling heat  
 Which later on in hell he'll meet.  
 Starved cooks and butlers ne'er one sees,  
 They serve up food in quantities,  
 Our ship is popular with these.  
 When Joseph into Egypt came  
 The prince of cooks fell into blame, <sup>3</sup>  
 Nebusar-Adan won Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup>

*My mind had almost made a slip  
Since I procured no extra ship  
When on to peasants' vice I skip.*



## 82. OF PEASANTS' SQUANDERING

The peasant folk had simple ways  
In not extremely distant days,  
To them was justice never dead.  
When Justice from the cities fled  
She went to live in huts of straw

And peasants bare of wine she saw,  
While now on drinking wine they're set.  
They plunge themselves in heavy debt,  
And though their corn and wine sell well  
They borrow more than I can tell,  
And payments are alway belated.  
They must be excommunicated,<sup>1</sup>  
Of goodly twill they now complain,  
They want no jackets cheap and plain,  
From Leyden, Mechlin they export  
Clothes cut away and slit and short,  
With colors weird and quite absurd,  
Upon the sleeve a cuckoo bird.  
Now city folk from peasants learn  
Great wickednesses in their turn,  
From peasants springs all knavery—  
Each day a new discovery.  
Simplicity has left the earth:  
Of wealth the peasants have no dearth,  
They hoard their corn and wine by stealth  
And other things inducing wealth,  
Thus driving prices ever higher,  
Until the thunder comes with fire,  
For barn and corn a funeral pyre.  
And now for such a reason too  
We've hatched full many a cuckoo  
Who burgher, peasant used to be,  
Now he'd profess nobility.  
A noble would be baronet,  
A count a prince's title get,  
At royal crowns the princes aim,

And many knights (a grievous shame!)  
 Use not their swords for righteousness.  
 A peasant wears a silken dress  
 And round his neck gold chains he bears.  
 A burgher's wife now often wears  
 Clothes better than a countess would,  
 For where wealth is there's hardihood.  
 One goose another's raiment sees,  
 For that untiringly she'll tease.  
 "I must have this if I'm to live!"  
 Thus nobles lack prerogative,  
 A tradesman's wife one often finds  
 Who wears more gauds of various kinds,  
 Skirts, rings, cloaks, broid'ries scant and rare,  
 Than in her home is anywhere.  
 It's ruined many a good man's life,  
 He must go begging with his wife,  
 From jugs in winter time drinks he  
 To keep his wife in finery,  
 And if today she has her fill  
 She sells it soon to junkman Will.  
 Who every whim of wives would please  
 When he feels hot will really freeze.  
 All lands into disgrace have got  
 And none's contented with his lot,  
 And none remembers now his sires,  
 The world is full of fool's desires,  
 Nor need I overstate a bit:  
 The trident in the bag must fit.<sup>2</sup>

*From naught these fools derive a pleasure  
 Unless it smack of gold and treasure,  
 In fool's fold now I take their measure.*



### 83. CONTEMPT OF POVERTY

Of money-fools there's never dearth,  
 One could not count them all on earth,  
 To honor money they prefer,  
 To poverty they all demur.  
 Men cannot live on earth alone  
 With virtue, if that's all they own,



For wisdom now is spurned and scored,  
 Respectability ignored,  
 It will not prosper now a whit,  
 Nobody wants to mention it,  
 And who for riches has an itch  
 Will hatch a plan for getting rich  
 And heeds no sin at any season  
 Nor murder, usury, nor treason,  
 Which now is common here on earth,  
 All evil's done for money's worth.  
 What's just for money's sake is sold,  
 Some men'd be hanged because of gold,  
 The gold it is that buys them free,  
 For money sinners go scot-free.  
 I'd say it plainly what I'd say:  
 The little thieves are hanged alway,  
 Gadflies from spider webs can flee  
 But gnats are caught and can't get free.  
 Ahab was never satisfied <sup>1</sup>  
 With all his kingdom far and wide,  
 He wanted Naboth's land beside,  
 So poor, god-fearing Naboth died.  
 Into the sack the poor must haste,  
 Give money, then you have good taste.  
 Stark need, which now has little worth,  
 Once bore a name upon the earth,  
 To Golden Age it once was dear,  
 No money-lovers were there here,  
 Nor any private property,  
 Common was all to you and me;  
 Contented were we and we used

Whate'er th' untilléd soil produced  
 And what Dame Nature chose to grow.  
 But once the plow they came to know  
 With greed they oft were fain to whine  
 And say: "If thine were only mine!"  
 And virtue here might well have stood  
 If men craved only what they should.  
 A gift of God is poverty  
 Although men treat it mockingly,  
 The reason is that men refuse  
 To think: The poor have naught to lose,  
 And scarce to him can come a lack  
 Who always had an empty sack,  
 And any man can swim the best  
 Whoever's naked, who's undressed.  
 The poor sing through the woods with cheer,<sup>2</sup>  
 For losses they need never fear.  
 The poor man has his liberty  
 To beg his way, for he is free,  
 Though hard looks he may often see,  
 And though he's driven from the door  
 He'll be no poorer than before,  
 For better counsel poorness offers  
 Than any opulency proffers,  
 That's proved by Quintus Curius <sup>3</sup>  
 And also by Fabricius  
 Who wanted neither goods nor gain,  
 For honor, virtue, these his aim,  
 For poorness once gave fundament  
 And rise to prudent regiment,  
 Most towns by poverty were grounded,

All arts by poverty were founded,  
 Of evil poverty is bare,  
 All honor takes its rise from there.  
 To all the peoples far and near  
 A long time poverty was dear,  
 The Greeks subdued through poverty  
 Lands, cities, peoples o'er the sea;  
 Both poor and just was Aristides  
 And stern and plain Epaminondas,  
 Poor Homer was, but widely read  
 And Socrates was wisely bred,  
 Phocion stood high in lenity.  
 The Bible says of poverty:  
 There's naught on earth whate'er its fame  
 But once from poverty it came.  
 The Roman Empire—high its name—  
 From poverty at first it came,  
 For who will note what's much expounded  
 That Rome by shepherds once was founded  
 And long by peasants poor was ruled  
 And then by riches was befooled,  
 He'll realize that poverty  
 Did Rome more good than property.  
 Had Croesus but been poor and wise  
 He would have kept what he did prize.  
 When Solon, asked that he confess  
 If he possessed true happiness,  
 Since he had power, wealth, and worth,  
 He answered: One should not on earth  
 Call mortal happy ere he dies,  
 Since none knows what before him lies.

Who claims that he's secure today,  
 He does not know the future way.  
 The Lord spake: "Woe to you and fear,<sup>4</sup>  
 Ye rich, your joy is only here,  
 Your joy in futile goods ye see,  
 Blest are the poor with spirit free."  
 Who's wealthy through a lying tongue,<sup>5</sup>  
 A worthless man by fear unstrung,  
 He feeds himself upon his woe  
 Till choked by Death and then laid low.  
 Treat poor with base iniquity<sup>6</sup>  
 And profit by their poverty  
 And you will find a richer boor  
 Who'll swindle you and make you poor.  
 Upon such goods turn not your eye  
 That soon will take to wings and fly,  
 For wings 'twill grow, like eagles fare<sup>7</sup>  
 From hence and fly into the air.  
 If riches were a blessing sure  
 Would Christ have been so bare and poor?  
 Who says: "For me the only curse  
 Is this: I've nothing in my purse,"  
 He's ignorant of wisdom's way,  
 He lacks far more than he can say.  
 Precisely this he never knows:  
 He's needier than he'd suppose.

*Some men with plows are very spry  
Yet end in trouble by and by,  
The cuckoo finds their eggs on high.*



#### 84. OF PERSISTING IN THE GOOD

*Some use a sturdy hand to plow <sup>1</sup>  
And first with zealousness they bow  
To wisdom, for good works show will  
Yet never reach the highest hill  
That toward the realm of heaven's inclined;*

*Alas, they often look behind  
And yearn for that Egyptian land <sup>2</sup>  
Where all their dreamed-of flesh pots stand,  
Reverting e'er to sins so great,  
Like dogs to food that once they ate, <sup>3</sup>  
That several times they do devour.  
Their intent's bad at every hour.  
A wound will heal but slowly when  
It has been opened up again.  
The sick man, deaf to all advice,  
So that his ills grow in a trice,  
Will oft discover that he may  
Remain a sick man many a day.  
Not starting's better, I insist,  
Than start and presently desist.  
God speaks: "I wish that you were not  
Lukewarm but either cold or hot, <sup>4</sup>  
But since you'd rather be but luke  
I'm much displeased and must rebuke."  
Although a man much good has done,  
The right reward is oft not shown  
If he gives up before the end.  
From greatest evil God did fend  
And once redeem the wife of Lot, <sup>5</sup>  
But later, when she heeded not  
The word of God and looked behind,  
A salted pillar one could find.  
A fool returns to cap and bell,  
A dog will like his vomit well.*

*Can wealth, strength, youth, nobility  
Have peace and quiet, Death, from thee?  
What's born to live, to feel life's boon,  
If mortal, that must perish soon.*



### 85. NOT PROVIDING FOR DEATH

We're cheated, friends, I know it well,  
Whoe'er upon this earth do dwell,  
Because in time we don't provide  
For death, which never spares our hide;

We've known it long and know it yet,  
For each of us an hour is set,  
To when, how, where, 'tis true, we're blind,  
Yet death will leave no man behind.  
To die and flow away we're bound  
As water flows into the ground.  
Hence we are fools with donkey ears,  
We never see in all the years  
That God allows us life and breath  
That we should e'er provide for death.  
The truth of this we needs must see:  
From Death we must, can, should not flee.  
The wine-pledge solemn did we drink <sup>1</sup>  
And from the bargain cannot shrink,  
Our first and final hours are mated,  
And when the first man God created  
He knew then how the last would die.  
But folly cheats us shrewd and sly,  
That we neglect the truth each day:  
That Death won't let us tarry ay,  
Our pretty horse he'll take away,  
Our greening wreaths and garlands fair.  
His name is truly Jack Sans Care;  
Whom Death would grasp, let him beware,  
If he be young or fair or strong  
He'll take to leaping high and long,  
And this I call the leap of death,  
He'll sweat, freeze, writhe, and hold his breath  
And like a worm will twist and wiggle  
And finally will writhe and jiggle.  
O Death, thy power is quite untold,



Thou snatchest off the young and old,  
 O Death, thy name is execration  
 To mighty nobles high of station,  
 To those precisely who delight  
 In nothing else but temporal might.  
 Death breaks with hard, impartial foot <sup>2</sup>  
 The hall of kings, the shepherd's hut,  
 He heeds nor pomp nor wealth nor power,  
 Takes peasant, Pope in one brief hour.  
 A fool who flees from day to day  
 The things he cannot halt or stay,  
 He thinks that if his dunce bells ring  
 Death ne'er will do him anything.  
 On such condition everyone  
 Comes here: That he will soon be done  
 And be the property of Death  
 When soul flees body void of breath.  
 Impartially Death takes away  
 The things o'er which our life holds sway.  
 "You die, but you, my friend, will bide,"  
 Yet no one stays a long, long tide,  
 Who e'en a thousand years did stay  
 Death ultimately took away.  
 From father down to son's a score  
 Of years—a coat's age—nothing more.  
 In tender years the son oft dies,  
 He knows it who a calfskin buys.  
 Of death there's never diminution,  
 Who dies not well finds retribution.  
 Those men are all to folly born  
 Who o'er the dead will weep and mourn

And would begrudge to them the rest  
 With which we hope we'll all be blest.  
 Too soon that place one cannot see  
 Where one will dwell eternally.  
 To many a man it is a boon  
 If God in heaven calls him soon,  
 For many death has been a gain,  
 Since thus they're rid of grief and pain.  
 Some men for death have had the mood  
 And some would die with gratitude  
 If Death before their time they'd see.  
 Death even sets some prisoners free,  
 A life-long prison term is o'er  
 When he's been through the prison door.  
 Luck gives some men a paltry share  
 But Death deals equal lots and fair.  
 Death's like a judge who hears no plea  
 Of any man for clemency,  
 For Death will everything requite,  
 He spares no man the smallest mite,<sup>3</sup>  
 He shows no man obedience,  
 For at his summons all hie hence  
 And dance as he may lead the way,  
 Pope, kaiser, bishop, king, and lay.  
 But many do not seem to know  
 That soon a-dancing they must go,  
 That they must dance in rows (or totter)  
 The Westerwelder or the trotter.<sup>4</sup>  
 Who'd gird himself and well prepare  
 Would not be taken unaware.  
 Full many a blockhead Death did call

Who pondered long his funeral,  
 So much had he upon it spent  
 That even now there's wonderment.  
 A mausoleum for her dear  
 Spouse Artemesia did rear,  
 She fashioned it with such expense,  
 With luxury, munificence,  
 That 'mongst the seven wonders known  
 To earth it can be counted one.  
 In Egypt graves are very famed,  
 The pyramids are aptly named,  
 In such a grave did Chemnis store<sup>5</sup>  
 His goods and all his wealth galore;  
 Three hundred sixty thousand men  
 Piled up this tomb, if right I ken,  
 For herbs alone he spent so much  
 (On other costs I will not touch),  
 No prince today so rich has grown  
 That he could pay that all alone.  
 Amasis built a pyramid<sup>6</sup>  
 And Queen Rhodope also did.<sup>7</sup>  
 'Twas naught but folly, great, untold,  
 For men to squander so much gold  
 On graves wherein naught else is thrown  
 But sacks of ash and rotting bone,  
 And waste much money bare of sense  
 To build for worms a residence,  
 Not thinking where the soul may be  
 Which lives for all eternity.  
 Souls need no costly cenotaph,  
 A marble stone they never have,

No shield hangs here, no helmet, banner,  
 No coat-of-arms in lordly manner  
 And no inscription writ on stone,  
 The best shield is a skull-and-bone  
 For worms and snakes and toads to gnaw,  
 A shield that kaiser, peasant bore.  
 Who boasts a paunch now fine and sleek  
 May feed his retinue next week,  
 There'll be a fighting, tussling free,  
 Your friends will crave your property,  
 And this they're hopeful to attain,  
 The devils soon the soul will gain  
 And triumph over it with pother,  
 From one bath take it to another,  
 From biting cold to biting heat.  
 Witless we live and indiscreet  
 That for the soul we never care,  
 But bodies heed we everywhere.  
 Earth's consecrated but to God,  
 Who well has died lives well in sod,  
 The sky doth vault o'er many dead  
 Who 'neath no burial stone are laid.  
 How could you rest in better place  
 Than where the stars light up your face!  
 God finds the bones at His own leisure,  
 In graves a soul will ne'er have pleasure.  
 Who dieth well, his grave's the best,  
 The sinner's death is never blest.

*Who fears from God no punishment  
Because no thunder yet He's sent,  
His thunder God on him will vent.*



## 86. OF CONTEMPT OF GOD

A fool who feels for God despite  
And strives against Him day and night  
And thinks that He is like mankind  
And speaks not when He's mocked, maligned,  
For many a man possesses trust—  
When thunder does not straightway thrust

A fire on him and strike him dead,  
Because to evil ways he's bred,  
Or when he dies not suddenly—  
That fearful now he need not be,  
Since God has quite forgotten him,  
Postponing punishment for him,  
Perhaps He'll e'en reward him, too.  
Such sinful thoughts mark the cuckoo,  
Who's always to the bad adhered.  
When God spares man what he has feared,  
He dares to grasp and pull God's beard,  
As though his Lord he would deride,  
And in such folly He'd abide.  
O listen, fool, and learn today,  
Do not rely on such delay,  
It is a cruel punishment  
That by th' Almighty must be sent,  
For even though He spares you so,  
The punishment postponed will grow.  
God lets some men sin long before  
He may chastise them all the more  
And square accounts and pay them back  
(We say that it doth clean the sack).  
Some die sin-free, without disgrace,  
God shows them mercy, goodly grace,  
He takes them young from this earth's face  
So that their sins may not increase,  
And rob their soul of heavenly peace.  
God's promised those who do repent  
His love—acquitment He has sent,  
But ne'er to sinners does He say:

"So long in this life you may stay  
 Until you do repent, improve,  
 Or till repentance you will move."  
 The mercy God may show today  
 Tomorrow he may take away.  
 Hezekiah <sup>3</sup> won from God reprieve,  
 And, came his time, he did not leave  
 The earth, but lived for fifteen years.  
 Belshazzar <sup>4</sup> sooner died, in fears,  
 That hand did kill his joy and mettle,  
 That wrote its Mane, Phares, Thetel.<sup>5</sup>  
 His weight, it seems, was all too light,  
 And so he lost his splendor bright.  
 He had not marked his father's woe,<sup>6</sup>  
 Who had been punished years ago,  
 And who had rued his evil deed,  
 Wherefore God, harkening, did heed,  
 So that as beast he never died,  
 But penitent, with God allied.  
 For mortal God has writ before  
 His time, his sins, so much, no more.  
 Hence hasten not base sins to do,  
 Who sins too much will soon be through.  
 Full many died this very year  
 Who could have changed their conduct here.  
 If they'd but turned the glass one day  
 The sand would not have run away  
 And on this earth a while they'd stay.

*Who with his oaths 'gainst God is free  
 Lives shameful, dies in misery;  
 Woe's him and his persistency.*



## 87. OF BLASPHEMING GOD

The greatest fools, I know them all  
 And yet I know not what to call  
 Such fools who never tire of sin  
 And brag they are of devil's kin,  
 For they must show in every wise  
 That God doth hate them and despise,



And they deny Him, bare of sense.  
 One charges God with impotence,  
 For God's own tortures God would blame—  
 His millet, entrails, kidney, brain.<sup>1</sup>  
 Who cannot swear new oaths with might—  
 Oaths barred by decency and right—  
 Is but a chicken-hearted wight.  
 One must have crossbow, have a spear  
 And fight four foes without a fear  
 And tilt the bottle debonair  
 And o'er the wine cups curse and swear,  
 Or over cards for lowly stakes.  
 'Twill not surprise if heaven makes  
 An end to earth, turns all to ash,  
 And causes heaven's vaults to crash.  
 Thus men malign their God, blaspheme,  
 All honor's left the earthly scene,  
 No legal punishment doth follow,  
 For that we suffer pain and sorrow.  
 It happens now so publicly  
 That all can mark it, hear and see.  
 In judgment God Himself would sit,  
 For long He cannot bear with it,  
 For He commanded mortals well  
 To stone blaspheming Israel.<sup>2</sup>  
 Sennacherib did curse the Lord  
 And with disgrace and scorn was gored.<sup>3</sup>  
 Lycaon <sup>4</sup> and Mycentius <sup>5</sup>  
 Endured, and famed Antiochus.<sup>6</sup>

*Say: "God's too prone to punishment  
 And plagues us often with intent,"  
 And plague to you will soon be sent.*



## 88. OF TORTURE AND PUN- ISHMENT BY GOD

A fool who notes in wonderment  
 That God sends men His punishment  
 And lets one pain pursue another,  
 Despite full many a Christian brother  
 And many holy priests on earth,

Who all their time in want and dearth  
 Devote to fasting, ardent prayer.  
 But hear me: 'tis no wonder e'er  
 That you will not find one estate  
 In which the evil is not great,  
 Where yet there's no degeneration.  
 Wise men discuss this situation: <sup>1</sup>  
 "If you destroy what I do raise,  
 We'll both regret it all our days  
 And all our work will be for naught."  
 For thus the Lord in wrath has taught: <sup>2</sup>  
 "If my command you will not hear,  
 I'll send you plague and death and fear,  
 Drought, hunger, pestilence, and war,  
 Heat, frost, cold, hail, and thunder's roar,  
 And make it worse from day to day  
 And from your prayers I'll turn away.  
 Though Moses, Samuel beseech me,  
 Their prayers and pleadings will not reach me,  
 I loathe the soul on sinful path,  
 I, God, will punish it in wrath."  
 Regard the Jews and all their kin,  
 What they have lost through grievous sin,  
 How often God expelled their band,  
 Through sins, from out the Holy Land.  
 The Christians, too, have lost it now,  
 They've merited God's ireful vow.  
 I fear that we may lose still more,  
 And worse we'll fare than e'er before.

*Whoe'er for bagpipes trades his mule,  
 Will not enjoy his trade, the fool,  
 He'll walk when riding's been his rule.*



#### 89. OF FOOLISH TRADING

A fool has greater trouble e'er,  
 Because his soul to hell will fare  
 Than any hermits ever face  
 In wilderness and lonely place,  
 When he serves God with fast and prayer.  
 One sees what trouble pride can bear,

It prinks, paints, laces up, and ties,  
 And suffers stress in every wise.  
 Greed drives men over seas to go,  
 Through storms and rain and heavy snow,  
 To Norway and Pilappenland.<sup>1</sup>  
 From lovers rest and peace are banned.  
 And gamblers have no joy and leisure;  
 The mounted thief has greater measure  
 Of care when he goes venturing.  
 Of wild carousers I'll not sing,  
 For heartburn is their constant bane  
 And pressure, often secret pain.  
 The climber's time is not the best,  
 He fears the rivals in the nest.  
 Its own limbs greed doth boil and bake,  
 No man's content for heaven's sake  
 Or patiently doth search his soul—  
 'Twas Noah's, Job's, and Daniel's goal.  
 Too many men in evil fare,  
 Those choosing good are very rare,  
 The good by wise men's much adored,  
 The bad will come of its accord.  
 Who gives up heaven for trumpery,  
 A fool is he whoe'er he be.  
 He never will enjoy his trades  
 Who gives what's deathless, takes what fades.  
 To say it in a word, he has  
 Secured a bagpipe for an ass.

*Your father, mother honor ay,  
 That God grant you long earthly stay  
 And no disgrace upon you lay.*



## 90. HONOR FATHER AND MOTHER

A fool who gives to his young brood  
 What he may need for personal good,  
 Relying on this hope forever:  
 His children will desert him never  
 And keep him in his need, instead.

But every day they wish him dead.  
 He seems a burden, seems a pest  
 To all his brood, a hateful guest,  
 And yet it almost serves him right,  
 For he's a dull and witless wight.  
 He harks to kind words smoothly shod  
 And should be beaten with a rod.  
 But that man lives not long on earth  
 Who does not prize his parents' worth.  
 His lamp will fade and grow quite dim <sup>1</sup>  
 Whose parents are not dear to him.  
 Since Absalom opposed his sire <sup>2</sup>  
 He found his end in hellish fire,  
 And so a curse was laid on Ham,  
 When he disclosed his father's shame. <sup>3</sup>  
 Balthesar suffered sorrow too <sup>4</sup>  
 Because his father he did hew.  
 Sennacherib died by his sons, <sup>5</sup>  
 No realm thereby the villains won.  
 Tobit asked that his son revere <sup>6</sup>  
 His mother, that he hold her dear.  
 With such intent King Solomon <sup>7</sup>  
 Rose for his mother from his throne  
 And Coriolanus for his own.  
 God gave the Rechabites their meed, <sup>8</sup>  
 To their own father they gave heed.  
 The man who'd live, the Lord doth say, <sup>9</sup>  
 His parents he should honor ay,  
 He'll have a long and prosperous day.

*In church full many fools hold sway  
 Who prate, help, counsel every day  
 That ship and cart get under way.*



## 91. OF PRATTLING IN CHURCH

Some men in church or in the pew  
 Will prate advice the whole year through  
 How ship and skiff he best prepares  
 Who off to Narragonia fares.  
 The war in Italy's discussed



And lies are told (to my disgust)  
 And many a novel yarn is spun,  
 Thus then the matins are begun  
 And last until we vespers read,  
 And many come to church for greed,  
 For they do business there in church,  
 Else they would leave it in the lurch.  
 'Tis better nevermore to come  
 And all the time to stay at home  
 And close the prattling bench in haste  
 And have the goose mart elsewhere placed  
 Than tending personal affair  
 In church—it has no business there.  
 The business some have not completed  
 They bring to church where then it's treated,  
 How they may start the ship and cart  
 And latest news to friends impart,  
 And taking pains in every way  
 That their ship suffer no delay.  
 He'd rather leave the church for good  
 Than grease the wagon as he should.  
 Of those men hardly dare I speak  
 Who into church do merely peek,  
 They scarcely show themselves before  
 They've made their exit through the door.  
 What good and reverential prayers  
 Are prayed by men of such affairs!  
 They're paid rich prebends while they gape  
 Upon the bearded organ ape.<sup>1</sup>

*Who lauds himself in vanity  
 And always on the crest would be,  
 The devil traps that man with glee.*



## 92. PRESUMPTUOUSNESS OF PRIDE

He kindles fires on roofs of straw  
 To whom world fame is highest law,  
 Who acts for notoriety,  
 For in the end he too will see  
 That he has been misled by pride

And but on rainbows has relied.  
 Who builds upon a pier of pine,  
 His plans will fail and never shine.  
 If e'er for worldly fame you've striven  
 Expect no more above in heaven.  
 Some dunces vaunting may be seen  
 That they've in Romance countries been  
 And learned in yonder school and this,  
 Bologna, Pavia, Paris,  
 Or at Siena sapience,  
 Or in the school at Orléans,  
 And there the organ ape they met  
 And Maître Pierre de Conniget,<sup>1</sup>  
 As though in our own German life  
 No reason, honor, sense were rife,  
 That art and science we might learn.  
 No need to foreign schools to turn.  
 Who'd study here in native land  
 Will now find many books at hand,  
 You can't excuse yourself, you see,  
 Without misleading shamefully.  
 Once men thought learning could but ay  
 Be sought at Athens far away,  
 And then in Italy 'twas found,  
 But now here too on German ground.  
 Our only failing's love for wine,  
 To it we Germans do incline,  
 And good hard work is rarely done.<sup>2</sup>  
 Bless him who has a prudent son!  
 I never liked a learned man  
 Who pride and profit will not ban

And boasts that he is shrewd and bluff.  
 The wise man's scholarly enough.  
 Who learns for haughtiness and pelf  
 Wins passing glory for himself,  
 Just like a wench who prinks with glee  
 And mirrors for the world to see,  
 When devil's nets she doth prepare,  
 That many souls to hell must fare,  
 For that's the owlet, that's the stick<sup>3</sup>  
 Wherewith the devil plays his trick.  
 He's led full many a man astray  
 Who thought that he was witty ay.  
 Balaam gave Balak counsel odd<sup>4</sup>  
 And Israel brought wrath to God,  
 They were defeated in the fray  
 Which through the women came their way.  
 Had Judith not dressed up and spruced,  
 Holofernes had not been seduced.<sup>5</sup>  
 Once Jezebel did paint her face  
 When King Jehu she would disgrace.<sup>6</sup>  
 The wise man says: "Turn thee away  
 From woman, she will tempt thee ay."<sup>7</sup>  
 A foolish wench is insolent,  
 She gives herself with vile intent  
 And seems to think 'twill never hurt  
 With fools to ogle, jest, and flirt.  
 His thoughts are bad who sees a wench,  
 It sets him on the idiot's bench,  
 He follows up his goal absurd  
 Until he's caught the cunning bird.  
 If clothes had been on Bersabë<sup>8</sup>

She'd not have known adultery.  
 Dinah went out lewd men to see <sup>9</sup>  
 And so gave up virginity.  
 A humble wife's with honor decked,  
 And she deserves the world's respect,  
 The woman who to pride would tend,  
 Her haughtiness it knows no end,  
 She always strives to lead the van,  
 No man with her would live, nor can.  
 The greatest wisdom God e'er gave  
 To him who does what men would crave,  
 But if their goal seems bad to us:  
 To do the thing that's decorous.  
 But who by women would do right,  
 He must be more than serving knight.  
 For oft through weakness they achieve,  
 Where cunning skills cannot deceive.  
 The pride of those who know God's hate  
 Will rise and rise and ne'er abate,  
 Yet finally, you'll find, it fell  
 To Lucifer's domain in hell.  
 Hark, pride, the hour's not far away,  
 When you yourself will speak and say:  
 "What joy brings me my haughtiness,"<sup>10</sup>  
 I sit in grief and deep distress,  
 What good are wealth and prosperous station,  
 World's honor, fame, and reputation?  
 They are but shadows faint and wan,  
 In one brief moment are they gone."  
 Bless him who spurns and scorns such things,  
 And onto deathless matters clings.

A fool on earth can't find enough,  
 But in the end he finds rebuff.  
 Above all, pride should be maligned,  
 By nature is it so designed  
 That e'en the highest angel could  
 Not stay in heaven; and Adam should  
 Leave Paradise in sheer disgrace.  
 For pride there's ne'er on earth a place.  
 For in the end all pride must dwell  
 With Lucifer in pools of hell.  
 Let pride seek him who fathered pride,  
 It would to hell and there abide.  
 Hagar, through haughtiness beguiled,  
 Was banished with her little child,<sup>11</sup>  
 Pharaoh was destroyed through pride,<sup>12</sup>  
 And Korah with his people died.<sup>13</sup>  
 Indignant, angered God appeared,  
 When haughtiness the tower reared.<sup>14</sup>  
 Proud David numbered all the folk,  
 But pestilence his self-love broke.<sup>15</sup>  
 Herod was clad in vanity,  
 As though he had divinity.  
 To godly honor was he urged  
 But by the angel he was scourged.  
 Who lives in pride's humiliated,  
 Meekness by God is highly rated.

*The usurers are vile and rash,  
The man of poverty they thrash,  
They'd care not if the world should crash.*



### 93. USURY AND PROFIT- EERING

We'd punish him for all his tricks,  
From him we must remove the ticks  
And pluck his pinions with elation  
Who buys up goods on speculation,  
The wine and corn in all the land,

No sin, dishonor stays his hand,  
So that a poor man cannot flee  
Starvation with his family.  
Thus prices mount, it must be clear,  
They're higher now than those last year,  
If wine now costs a scant ten pound,  
Next month 'twill certainly be found  
You'll pay full thirty when you buy.  
The same is true of wheat, spelt, rye.  
The great abuse need not be stressed  
Of money, kind, and interest,  
Of loans, pawn business oft unsound:  
In one day some will earn a pound  
More profit than a year should hold,  
They lend in silver, ask for gold,  
You borrow ten, eleven's due,  
They're more usurious than the Jew.  
Their business now the Jews may lose,  
For it is done by Christian Jews.  
With Jewish spears they run about,<sup>1</sup>  
I could name many such a lout,  
Unsavory are their transactions  
Yet are not stopped by legal actions.  
With joy they greet the hailstorm's might  
And see the hoarfrost with delight,  
But often too, deprived of hope,  
You'll find men hanging from a rope.  
Harm common weal and help your own,  
And you're a fool, but not alone.



*Some cast an eye on others' ware  
And hope to bury them as heir,  
But they die, their testators ne'er.*



#### 94. OF HOPE OF GETTING LEGACIES

A fool is he who hopes to be  
Another's heir and legatee  
Or take his place in council wise,  
His goods and post at his demise.  
Another's death he will await

But does not know the plans of fate.  
He'd bury others, rascal knave,  
Who may plant pear trees on his grave.  
Who other men to graves would send  
And doesn't know where he will end,  
He shoes the ass upon whose back  
To Foolsland he will beat a track.  
Young, strong, and jolly men may die,  
And calves' hides one can often buy,<sup>1</sup>  
Though smaller than a cow's they be.  
Let each one praise his poverty  
And not desire that it may grow.  
Fate deals us mortals many a blow.  
Bulgarus was the legatee,<sup>2</sup>  
His sons died unexpectedly.  
Priam saw all his children killed  
Although his realm to them he'd willed.  
'Gainst David Absalom did plot,<sup>3</sup>  
But at the oak he found his lot.  
Some come to riches overnight  
Of which they'd never thought a mite.  
Some men have such vile legatees,  
They would prefer a dog to these.  
Not everybody's wish comes true,  
As Abraham's<sup>4</sup> and Simeon's, too.<sup>5</sup>  
Be free of care, when God but will  
Your fortune's goal He can fulfill.  
Our home's<sup>6</sup> the one best legacy,  
Where we desire some day to be.  
Yet that home few can hope to see.

*On holidays men go to church,  
And leave their labors in the lurch,  
Yet some for work and business search.*



## 95. OF BEING MISLED ON HOLIDAYS

A citizen of Apeland he <sup>1</sup>  
Who saves the work and tasks there be  
To do upon a holiday.  
The ape-cart is his private shay.  
One wants his horses shod that day,

Another buttons has to sew  
Which should have been done long ago  
The while he gamed with friends and wined.  
Another has his shoe points lined,<sup>2</sup>  
That rags and lint are in them pressed.  
Another tries on pants and vest,  
No other day would suit him ay,  
It must be some high holiday.<sup>3</sup>  
The cooks a fire do soon prepare  
Before the church is opened e'er,  
And then they feast and gormandize,  
Before most men from bed arise,  
The taverns, too, are full of folk,  
Who every kind of wine would soak,  
Especially on holidays  
When other work aside one lays,  
They get their carts and drive away.  
Men turn to fools on holiday.  
Some think the holiday's assigned  
For little tasks that God won't mind:  
A game of checkers can't be wrong,  
Or playing cards the whole day long;  
On servants sundry tasks are laid,  
No master cares if child or maid  
Would worship, list to sermons wise  
Or for the early mass arise,  
And over mead we find them toiling  
Which through th' entire week was boiling,  
No trade, it seems, will feel disgrace  
By doing work on holidays,  
So eager they to earn a penny,

As though no days were left, not any,  
 Some stand and chatter in the street  
 While others game, carouse, and eat.  
 For wine some lavish what they'd seek  
 To earn by working all the week.  
 A bungler he, a niggard, lout <sup>4</sup>  
 Who stays not till the party's out  
 All day and night till cats awake  
 And sunbeams through the windows break.  
 Jews jeer at us with words that flay,  
 That we neglect the holiday  
 Which they observe with heart and lip,  
 So that into the dunce's ship  
 I would not place them, but they err  
 In other ways like some mad cur.  
 A poor man on a holiday  
 Sought sticks; they stoned him then straightway.<sup>5</sup>  
 The Maccabees once would not go  
 On Holy Day to ward the foe,<sup>6</sup>  
 And many of these were stricken dead.  
 One does not bake the heavenly bread <sup>7</sup>  
 On holy days, as God has said.  
 But oft we work in foolish way  
 And save the work for holiday,  
 The work we shirk some other day.  
 O fool, respect the day of rest,  
 With workdays man will e'er be blest,  
 E'en after you decay in grave;  
 The road to vice by greed is paved.

*A fool is he who mourns all day  
 For things that he cannot allay,  
 Or rues that he has done some good  
 To one who has not understood.*



## 96. GIVING AND REGRET- TING

*A fool is he who gives a gift,  
 But soon his inclinations shift,  
 He makes a dour and angry face  
 That gladdens no one, shows no grace;*

He loses gift and gratitude  
 Who would regret his generous mood.  
 So persons who do something fine  
 Through heaven's grace or will divine,  
 And yet regret their noble way  
 If God rewards them not straightway.  
 Who would give gifts in spirit mellow  
 Must laugh and be a jolly fellow  
 And not say: "I regret my deed,"  
 If gratitude and love he'd need.  
 God contemplates his gift with sadness  
 Who does not give in joy and gladness.  
 What's yours, retain it if you will,  
 To force a man to give is ill,  
 The gift a man bestows with grace,  
 'Tis such that's welcome any place.  
 Thanks usually can be found,  
 Though they be slow in coming round,  
 For very often things are righted:  
 With "two for one" we're all delighted.  
 Though one sees gratitude disdained,  
 One finds some men in honor trained,  
 Wise men of gratitude and sense  
 Who for the rest give recompense.  
 But he who boasts of liberal mind  
 Deserves no prize of any kind  
 And should expect no gratitude.  
 A boastful giver's oft too crude,  
 For people always look askance  
 At one who boasts munificence,  
 Nor will he profit from it hence.

*There's laziness in all the classes  
 And most among the servant classes;  
 Pay any wage, it will not please,  
 Still they will spare their energies.*



## 97. OF INDOLENCE AND SLOTH

No better fool where'er you go  
 Than one whose pace is always slow,  
 So lazy he that he will burn  
 His shinbone e'er he'll stir and turn.



As smoke is bad for human eyes,  
 As vinegar the teeth defies,<sup>1</sup>  
 So too the slothful man for one  
 Who'd have him on an errand run.  
 A lazy man is useless too,  
 Except to be a bugaboo.<sup>2</sup>  
 Long must he sleep in any case  
 Behind the stove, his proper place.  
 He's happy who with pickax works,  
 The idle man's the one who irks,  
 An idle man can try the Lord,  
 Good work God always will reward.  
 The devil notes all idleness  
 And sows his seeds in wickedness.  
 One cause of sinfulness is sloth,  
 The Israelites it rendered wroth.<sup>3</sup>  
 When David too was idle he  
 Did kill and do adultery.<sup>4</sup>  
 The fact that Carthage was undone  
 Cost Rome her overthrow anon;  
 Since Carthaginians were defeated  
 Worse injury to Rome was meted  
 Than in the wars that went before  
 One hundred sixteen years or more.  
 The lazy man who'd stay at home  
 Says: "Outdoors savage lions roam,"<sup>5</sup>  
 The mad dog keeps to his home station,  
 Sloth ever finds justification,  
 'Tis sloth that swings now back now fore  
 Like any hinge upon a door.

*Here witness many fools of fame,  
 They're fools and they possess the name,  
 For them the other fools feel shame.*



## 98. OF OUTLANDISH FOOLS

There are so many worthless folk  
 Whom ugly fool-hide serves as cloak,  
 Inured to folly without fail  
 And tied onto the devil's tail.  
 They can't be cured howe'er we try,

I'll keep my peace and pass them by  
 And let them hold their foolish stance  
 And not depict their ignorance,  
 Turks, pagans, Saracens—in brief  
 All those who have no true belief,  
 The heretics to boot (a plague!),  
 Who have their fool's abode in Prague;<sup>1</sup>  
 At other countries too they aim  
 And e'en Moravia they claim.  
 They don the fool's cap uglily  
 Like those who not the Trinity  
 And one true God would e'er revere,  
 Who ridicule our faith and jeer.  
 They're never simple fools and meet,  
 They have the cap beneath their feet,  
 So public is their folly that  
 They lack the cloth to make a cap.  
 Those too commit apostasy  
 And in the devil's grip we see:  
 Mad women,<sup>2</sup> evil wenches too,  
 Procurers, panders not a few  
 And other men of sinful kind  
 Who all in foolishness are blind.  
 Of those I also would have sung  
 Who've killed themselves, on gallows strung,  
 Or who abort or drown their young:  
 They earn no legal comfort here,  
 No teaching, not a taunting jeer.  
 But they are carefree fools and jolly,  
 They've earned a cap through all their folly.

*I beg you all, sires small and great,  
 Regard the common weal and fate,  
 The fool's cap leave for my poor pate.*



## 99. OF THE DECLINE OF THE FAITH<sup>1</sup>

When I regard neglect and shame  
 Which everywhere appears the same  
 Of prince and lord, of city, land,  
 No wonder then the tears do stand  
 In these mine eyes and flow so free

That one should see disgracefully  
 The faith of Christians ebb, recede.  
 Forgive me though I have indeed  
 Included e'en the princes here.  
 Luckless it is that we must hear  
 That Christians' faith has met distress,  
 For daily it diminishes.  
 At first the cruel heretic  
 Did tear and wound it to the quick  
 And then Mohammed shamefully  
 Abused its noble sanctity  
 With heresy and base intent.  
 Our faith was strong in th' Orient,  
 It ruled in all of Asia,  
 In Moorish lands and Africa.  
 But now for us these lands are gone,  
 'Twould even grieve the hardest stone.  
 We've lost and see ourselves now banned  
 From Asia Minor, Grecian land  
 And all of Greater Turkey too,  
 Which to our Faith is quite untrue.  
 'Twas where the seven churches were,  
 And John we know wrote letters there.  
 Such good and faithful countries fell,  
 One'd vow it quite impossible.  
 In Europe we've been forced to see  
 The loss but very recently  
 Of kingdoms, even empires two <sup>2</sup>  
 And mighty lands and cities true,  
 Constantinople, Trapezunt, <sup>3</sup>  
 Lands known to each and every one,

Achaea and Etolia,  
 Boeotia and Thessalia,  
 Thracia and Macedonia,  
 Attica, yes, and Mysia,  
 Triballi <sup>4</sup> too and Scordisci, <sup>5</sup>  
 Bastarnae, <sup>6</sup> also Taurici, <sup>7</sup>  
 Euboea, now called Nigrapont, <sup>8</sup>  
 Pera, <sup>9</sup> Kaffa, <sup>10</sup> also Idrunt, <sup>11</sup>  
 Not mentioning what we have lost  
 Yet otherwise at heavy cost:  
 In Morea, Dalmatia,  
 Styria, Carinthia, Croatia,  
 In Wendish march, in Hungary.  
 So strong the Turks have grown to be  
 They hold the ocean not alone,  
 The Danube too is now their own.  
 They make their inroads when they will,  
 Bishoprics, churches suffer ill,  
 Now they attack Apulia,  
 Tomorrow e'en Sicilia, <sup>12</sup>  
 And next to it is Italy,  
 Wherefore a victim Rome may be  
 And Lombardy and Romance land,  
 We have the archfoe close at hand,  
 We perish sleeping one and all,  
 The wolf has come into the stall  
 And steals the Holy Church's sheep  
 The while the shepherd lies asleep.  
 Four sisters of our Church you find,  
 They're of the patriarchic kind:  
 Constantinople, Alexandria,

Jerusalem, Antiochia,  
 But they've been forfeited and sacked  
 And soon the head will be attacked.<sup>13</sup>  
 Our sins I blame and not the others',  
 We have no patience now with brothers  
 Nor pity we their misery.  
 Each state would grow and greater be;  
 We're like the oxen famed in tale  
 Who watched the rest without avail  
 Until the wolf consumed them all,  
 The last one sweated, then did fall.  
 We find each man to his wall turning<sup>14</sup>  
 To ascertain if it is burning,  
 Not thinking e'er to quench with vim  
 The fire before it reaches him.  
 He suffers grief and penitence,  
 Discord and disobedience,  
 They do our Christian faith no good,  
 In vain we shed our Christian blood,  
 None realize how close it be,  
 They fancy they'll come off scot-free,  
 Until misfortune hounds their gate,  
 And then they stir and crane their pate.  
 For Europe's gates are open wide,  
 The foe encircles every side,  
 With sleep or rest he's not content,  
 On Christian blood alone he's bent.  
 O Rome, when kings you had to fear  
 You were a vassal many a year,  
 To freedom later you did pass  
 When ruled by men of common class,

But when you turned to haughtiness,  
 To riches, aye to mightiness,  
 And burgher facing burgher stood,  
 Not heeding any common good,  
 Your power mostly passed away,  
 O'er you an emperor held sway,  
 And in imperial glory's sheen  
 For fifteen hundred years you've been,<sup>15</sup>  
 Lost ground and made but little gain,  
 E'en as the moon begins to wane  
 And smaller grows and dimmer too,  
 And now but little's left of you.  
 Would God you'd be augmented soon,  
 In that way too be like the moon.  
 Of Roman Empire everyone  
 Desires a slice to call his own.  
 The Saracens with many a band  
 First took the Holy Promised Land  
 And then the Turks gained many a mile,  
 To tell it all would take a while.  
 Some cities now resort to war  
 And heed the emperor no more,  
 Each prince would take a slice of goose  
 And pry himself a feather loose.  
 No wonder it's a platitude  
 That now our realm is bare and nude.  
 Each one is warned that he must not  
 Demand e'en what he should have got<sup>16</sup>  
 And that with caution he avoid  
 To take from men what they've enjoyed.  
 By God, you princes, please behold



What injury there'll be untold  
 If once the empire should decay,  
 Not even you will live for ay.  
 All things have more efficiency  
 When they exist in unity  
 Than when there's discord in the world,  
 For concord's banner once unfurled  
 Will give us strength to thrive and grow,  
 But where discordance seeds may sow  
 The greatest, noblest things are razed.  
 The Germans once were highly praised  
 And so illustrious was their fame,  
 The Reich was theirs and took their name;  
 But soon we found a German nation  
 That brought its own realm ruination.  
 In studs decadent without fail  
 Each horse bites off its own poor tail.<sup>17</sup>  
 They're on the march, they have appeared,  
 Cerastes, basilisk, the feared.  
 He'll poison but himself the while  
 Who'd give our realm a poison vial.  
 But all you lords, you states and kings,  
 Do not permit such shameful things!  
 If you'll support the ship of state  
 It will not sink but bear its freight.  
 Your king is all benignity,<sup>18</sup>  
 He'll don for you knight's panoply,  
 Rebellious lands he will subdue,  
 But you must help, he needs you too.  
 The noble Maximilian,  
 He merits well the Roman crown.

They'll surely come into his hand,  
 The Holy Earth, the Promised Land,<sup>19</sup>  
 He'll undertake it any day  
 If he can trust in you and may.  
 Cast off your scorn and tauntings all,  
 God's host it is but very small.  
 We've lost a great deal, are bereft,  
 Yet many Christian lands are left,  
 Good kings, lords, men of common cares,  
 Some day the world will all be theirs,  
 They'll win, surround it quick and bold  
 If but together they will hold.  
 Faith, peace and love we do require,  
 I hope to God the end's not dire!  
 You rule the land and every place,  
 Awake, renounce all black disgrace,  
 Be not the sailor in the deep  
 Who midst his duty fell asleep<sup>20</sup>  
 The while the storm clouds gathered dark;  
 Or like a dog that does not bark,  
 Or like a guard that watches ne'er  
 And shirking duty shows no care.  
 Arise and end your dream and see:  
 The axe is truly in the tree.<sup>21</sup>  
 O God, give all our rulers sense  
 To seek Thy honor so immense  
 And not their own avail and greed,  
 Then I'll have sorrows none indeed,  
 Then soon Thou'lt give us victory,  
 For which be praised eternally!  
 I warn th' estates in every land,

Whatever be their titles grand,  
 That they should not be like a crew  
 Who disagree and battle too  
 When they are out upon the deep  
 And wind and storm the sailcloth sweep.  
 Ere on a course they can agree  
 Their worthy ship a wreck may be.  
 If you have ears then list to me:  
 Our ship is swaying frightfully,  
 If Christ doth not watch o'er us right  
 We soon will be in darkest night.  
 Ye, therefore, who through your high station  
 From God received the designation  
 To march forever at the head,  
 Let evil not of you be said;  
 Do what befits your lofty station,  
 Swell not our harm, humiliation,  
 Let not the sun and moon abate,  
 The head and limbs deteriorate,  
 For things seem bad, whate'er I scan,  
 While living I'll warn many a man.  
 The frivolous who pay no heed  
 I'll give a fool's cap, that's their meed.

*Who now can stroke the fallow steed <sup>1</sup>*  
*And dotes upon a scurvy deed*  
*Deserves a haughty courtier's meed.*



# 100. OF STROKING THE FALLOW STALLION

I wish I had a covered ship  
 Wherein all courtiers I would slip  
 And those who eat at nobles' board  
 And hobnob with a mighty lord  
 So that they may be undisturbed

And by the rabble never curbed.  
 They're not at ease when others roam,  
 They're picking feathers, stroking comb,<sup>2</sup>  
 One coddles, whispers close to ear  
 And curries favor in a year  
 And feeds himself by licking plates.  
 A lord is he who lies and prates,  
 To whom owl-stroking's now a creed<sup>3</sup>  
 And flattering the fallow steed.  
 To flour-blowing he's inclined,<sup>4</sup>  
 He hangs his coat to suit the wind.  
 By bearing tales some men go fore  
 Who'd otherwise see but the door.  
 If you can mingle wool and hair<sup>5</sup>  
 Then stay at court, you're needed there,  
 For you a welcome there will be  
 Since courtiers need no honesty;  
 Their every action folly spells,  
 They'll never leave me cap and bells.  
 Some groom the stallion so with vim  
 They get a body blow from him  
 Or else a kick against a rib,  
 Which lands their plate into the crib.  
 The horse would do no injury  
 If men would treat it prudently.  
 If men were as they simulate,  
 Of pious and of honest state,  
 If each one acted like himself  
 Fool's caps galore would grace the shelf.

*He goes a careless, frivolous way  
 Who credits what the others say,  
 A prater many can betray.*



101. OF BLOWING  
 INTO EARS

A fool who puts into his head  
 And credits things that men have said,  
 He is a dunce that merits jeers,  
 With sensitive and spacious ears.  
 All honesty those persons lack

Who would assail behind one's back  
 And strike without e'er warning him,  
 With chance of fending very slim.  
 To lie in ambush men like these  
 Do now esteem a masterpiece,  
 It can't be warded off, prevented,  
 By everyone it is attempted,  
 With lying tales, with calumny,  
 With many kinds of perfidy  
 That can be dressed and colored high  
 So men may better cheat and lie  
 And make us credit what we hear  
 But to defendants lend no ear.  
 His doom will many a man attend  
 Who never could himself defend  
 And prove that he is innocent,  
 He's trapped and bagged with base intent.  
 Haman would deal Mordecai death,<sup>1</sup>  
 Slave Zeba duped Mephiboseth<sup>2</sup>  
 And Alexander was extolled<sup>3</sup>  
 Since he believed not what was told  
 By those who slandered Jonathan.  
 Oh woe betide the credulous man!  
 Adam'd been blessed did he believe  
 No false and tempting word of Eve,  
 And Eve no word the serpent said.  
 The credulous to crimes are bred.  
 Trust not a man in any wise,  
 The world is false and full of lies;  
 The raven's black 'neath any skies.

*In alchemy it's plain to see,  
 As 'tis in vinous chemistry,  
 What falsity on earth there be.<sup>1</sup>*



## 102. OF FALSITY AND DECEPTION

Deceivers many, cheats I see,  
 They join the dunce's revelry.  
 False counsel, love, false friends, false gold,  
 The world is full of lies untold.  
 Fraternal love is dead and blind,



Each one conspires to cheat his kind,  
 That he may never lose, but gain,  
 Though hundreds suffer ruin, pain.  
 No honesty is anywhere  
 No matter how the soul may fare,  
 On shirking, slacking one is bent,  
 Though thousands die in this event.  
 Much meddling now there is with wine,  
 One tries deception all the time.  
 Saltpeter, sulphur, bones of dead,  
 Potash, milk, mustard, herbs ill-bred <sup>2</sup>  
 Through bungs are pushed into the kegs.  
 The pregnant women drink these dregs,  
 That they bear children premature,  
 A wretched sight one can't endure.  
 From out such drink diseases grow,  
 Some people to the churchyard go.  
 Lamé horses now are shod and braced  
 That on the sick-cart should be placed,  
 In felt their feet are then imbedded,  
 As though at night for matins headed.  
 Although they totter weak and lame,  
 They're traded for immoderate gain.  
 We suffer from this cheating game.  
 The weights and measures now are small,  
 The ell-stick's not an ell at all,  
 The shops are dark, with lights so tiny,  
 One cannot see the cloth is shiny.  
 While one admires with friendly air  
 The foolkins on the table there, <sup>3</sup>  
 The seller gives the scale a shove,

That toward the ground it lunge and move  
 And asks: "How much of this, I pray?",  
 And with the meat his thumb does weigh.  
 The road is plowed and sowed with corn,  
 The coin is old and badly worn,  
 'Twould break in any hand that had it  
 If baser metals weren't added.  
 Coins ne'er are worth their value stated,  
 False money crops up unabated,  
 False counsel too; monk, priest, Beguine, <sup>4</sup>  
 Lay brothers, they are false, unclean,  
 For wolves in sheep clothes now are seen.  
 But let there not forgotten be  
 Our quite deceptive alchemy:  
 Pure gold and silver doth it yield  
 But this in ladles was concealed.  
 Their trickery is sly but ample,  
 They start by offering a sample  
 And soon a toad comes into play, <sup>5</sup>  
 Some men the cuckoo drives away. <sup>6</sup>  
 Who used to live in happiness  
 He pours and fills the monkey glass  
 And then a powdery mass will burn  
 So that himself he can't discern.  
 For most it's worked destructively  
 And few have gained prosperity.  
 'Twas Aristotle, he did say:  
 "The form of things persists for ay."  
 Full many catch this dread disease  
 But little profit comes to these.  
 The copper takes the place of gold,

Mouse dirt for pepper corns is sold,  
 The pelts and furs are dyed so crude  
 And dressed with little aptitude  
 So that the fur will shed and tear  
 And not a quarter year will wear.  
 The muskrats give an odor vile  
 So one can smell it half a mile,  
 Bad herrings smuggled by a bold,  
 Shrewd merchant oft for fresh are sold.  
 In every street the hucksters stand,  
 The peddler reaps a profit grand.  
 The old with new can be diluted,  
 Nowhere can cheaters be disputed.  
 No trade is what it's claimed to be,  
 Men sell their wares with falsity,  
 Dispose of them with zealous skill  
 Although their quality be nil.  
 Blesséd no doubt is every man  
 Who'd guard against deceit and can.  
 The child deceives its relatives,  
 No heed to kin the father gives;  
 The host the guest, the guest the host,  
 Bad faith and guile the many boast.  
 The Antichrist it doth forbode,  
 His dealings take a devious road,  
 His thoughts and acts and words forsooth  
 Are turned to falsehood, base untruth.



### 103. OF THE ANTICHRIST<sup>1</sup>

I've sent the vanguard on ahead  
 Of those to falsehood born and bred,  
 Yet many are there left who trip  
 And prance about the dunces' ship,

Themselves and others they would twit  
 By falsifying Holy Writ.  
 Our faith is kicked by them and cursed,  
 The paper ship is then immersed,<sup>2</sup>  
 Each tears away a bit of border,  
 'Twill sink the ship in shorter order.  
 The oars and straps are snatched away  
 That it be wrecked without delay.  
 Some think they are so very shrewd  
 That sense enough they have indued  
 That now by all their subtle wit  
 They can interpret Holy Writ:  
 In this they fail in many a wise,  
 Their wrongful teaching we chastise.  
 From other writings they could cull  
 (Of which the earth is very full)  
 Much knowledge too and information,  
 But zealous they of such a station,  
 They would be first in each respect,  
 That's how the ship will soon be wrecked.  
 Such men must be intoxicated,  
 They know the truth and right when stated,  
 And yet the ship they would capsize<sup>3</sup>  
 To show their light to others' eyes.  
 These prophets false one ought to flay,  
 God warns against them every day.  
 Who twist the Holy Writ and preach  
 What th' Holy Ghost would never teach,  
 Their scale is wrongful, false, and ill,  
 They weigh with it whate'er they will,  
 Make one thing heavy, one thing light,

So faith's indeed in sorry plight.  
 We stand 'mongst pervers everywhere,  
 The scorpion begins to stir  
 Through schemers base of whom did tell  
 The prophet, famed Ezekiel.<sup>4</sup>  
 The men who violate the law<sup>5</sup>  
 For Antichrist's great wealth have awe,  
 A treasure he has laid away  
 But short and measured is his day,  
 Though numerous his friends may be  
 Who go with him in falsity.  
 His retinue will be untold,  
 And when he pays his shining gold  
 And shows that he's not treasureless  
 He will not have to use duress,  
 They'll come and join of their accord,  
 And money coaxes more aboard.  
 They'll help him wherewith well he may  
 Enlist good people every day,  
 But brief and sad will be their trip,  
 They will be wrecked with skiff and ship,  
 Though traveling everywhere for ay,  
 Distorting truth in every way,  
 Yet truth will live and ever be,  
 Expelling all their falsity  
 Which now from no estate is banned,  
 I fear the ship will never land.  
 St. Peter's ship is swaying madly,  
 It may be wrecked or damaged badly,  
 The waves are striking 'gainst the side  
 And storm and trouble may betide.

But little truth is now asserted  
 And Holy Writ is quite perverted,  
 It's now defined some other way  
 From what the tongue of truth would say.  
 Forgive me, you whom I may hit.  
 In th' large ship Antichrist does sit,  
 He's sent a message out to man,  
 False things he spreads where'er he can,  
 Creeds, dogmas false in every way  
 Now seem to grow from day to day.  
 The printers make the case more dire,  
 If some books went into the fire  
 Much wrong and error would be gone.  
 Some think of profits now alone.  
 They look for books in every clime,  
 But ah, corrections take no time.  
 They muse: How shall we cheat th' elect?  
 For many print, but few correct.  
 It's evil, yet they deem it fine  
 If they can copy line for line.<sup>6</sup>  
 They stain themselves with base intent,  
 Some print their way to banishment.<sup>7</sup>  
 These men the vessel cannot bear,  
 A fool's cart theirs, so let them fare,  
 That one may chase the other there.  
 The time comes, that it comes is clear,  
 The Antichrist is very near.  
 And mark this well at my behest:  
 Upon three things our faith does rest:  
 On absolution, doctrine, books,  
 To these foundations no one looks.

The books are published ton on ton,  
 Because there's too much printing done.  
 In our times all those books come forth  
 Which long ago our parents wrought.  
 So numerous are they here and there,  
 They count for nothing anywhere  
 And no one pays to them much heed,  
 So 'tis with science, so with creed.  
 In number schools were ne'er so great,  
 As now are found in every state,  
 And scarce a city now is known,  
 That calls no higher school its own.  
 There many scholars now are trained  
 Who nowadays are quite disdained,  
 And knowledge gets a scornful glance,  
 Most men do look at it askance.  
 The scholars needs must feel a shame  
 For studies, gown, their very name.  
 The peasants now attain the fore,  
 And scholars hide behind the door.  
 Men say: "These lazy apes,<sup>8</sup> these beasts,  
 The devil's cursing us with priests!"  
 That's ample evidence that science  
 Lacks honor, love and breeds defiance.  
 'Tis thus that studies will be wrecked,  
 For knowledge prospers through respect,  
 And when no honor's paid to science  
 Most men will view it with defiance.  
 Yes, absolution stands no higher,  
 For it no man has great desire,  
 It's sought by none, and what is worse,



Some even shun it as a curse.  
 For absolution naught they'd spend  
 If home to them we had it sent.  
 But finally 'twill reach you ay  
 In Aix or farther e'en away.<sup>9</sup>  
 By us 'tis hated just as well  
 As manna was by Israel.<sup>10</sup>  
 Israel manna did contemn,  
 They said 'twas valueless to them,  
 Their soul despised it bitterly  
 And made of it a mockery.  
 Thus absolution is at once  
 Despised and hated by the dunce.  
 From this a lesson I'd indite:  
 Our faith today is like a light,  
 Before 'twould be extinguished quite  
 It flickers, then it flares up bright.  
 I'm tempted candidly to say:  
 We do approach the Judgment Day,  
 Since mercy's held in cold despite  
 We're now approaching total night,  
 Such things have never happened yet,  
 The vessel sways, it may upset.<sup>11</sup>

*If pushed by flattery, by threat,  
 Your truthfulness can be upset,  
 The Antichrist will snatch you yet.*



#### 104. CONCEALING TRUTH

A fool is he who'd be inclined  
 To sore annoyance if he'd find  
 Himself accosted, forced forsooth  
 To hush and palliate the truth,  
 Deserting wisdom under stress  
 To take the path of foolishness

Which he without a doubt doth fare  
 Whoe'er for threatening words has care,  
 Since God is always on his side  
 And doth protect him every tide  
 Who's wed to stern veracity  
 So that he ne'er does injury  
 To his foot; who with truth will stay  
 Will soon drive all his foes away.  
 A wise man stands by truth, though he  
 The ox of Phalaris may see.<sup>1</sup>  
 Canst stand beside veracity?  
 Then travel with stupidity.  
 If Jonah'd had no lying whim  
 The whale would not have swallowed him.<sup>2</sup>  
 Elijah set on truth no price,<sup>3</sup>  
 Hence he arrived in paradise.  
 John fled the fools' meandering,  
 Hence Jesus saw the baptizing.  
 A man who's punished lovingly  
 In him ill will at first you'll see  
 But later he may change his mood  
 And offer naught but gratitude.  
 He'll speak more praise for words that sting  
 Than he'll for those of pleasant ring.  
 No gifts would Daniel take that day  
 When 'gainst Belshazzar he did say<sup>4</sup>  
 And spoke the truth with little dread:  
 "Thy gifts bestow thyself," he said.  
 The angel 'twas that did prevent  
 Balaam from taking presents sent,<sup>5</sup>  
 Likewise from violating truth,

So he was foiled and balked forsooth.  
 The ass chastises him who's riding.  
 Two things can never be in hiding,  
 The third will always be abiding:<sup>6</sup>  
 A city built on lofty land,  
 A fool if he sit, walk, or stand  
 Will show his foolish quality,  
 But truth is seen eternally  
 And will not spoil though laid away,  
 However fools may shriek all day.  
 All men respect veracity;  
 Fools thrive on scorn and mockery.  
 Full often have I been maligned  
 Because this ship I have designed:  
 They tell me that I ought to paint it  
 And that no bark of oak should taint it,<sup>7</sup>  
 But let some linden sap refine it<sup>8</sup>  
 And spruce it up right well and shine it.  
 But I would let them freeze forsooth  
 Ere saying anything but truth,  
 For truth lives on eternally,  
 A beacon light that men can see  
 E'en when this book in shreds may be.  
 Truth's stronger far than persons vile  
 Who me or e'en themselves revile.  
 If I should heed what they may say  
 I'd be as great a fool as they  
 Whome'er my ships will bear away.

*The man who would on truth insist  
Must meet this, that antagonist  
Who'll try and force him to desist.*



# 105. PREVENTION OF THE GOOD

A fool is he in flesh and blood  
Who'd keep another man from good  
And seek to fend, ward off, prevent  
What brings himself no detriment,  
Applauding others who like him

In idiots' broth must sink or swim.  
For fools have evermore intrigued  
'Gainst those who with the good are leagued.  
One fool dislikes another fool  
And yet a man from folly's school  
Is usually glad that he  
Is not the only fool there be,  
And so he always tries to find  
Some men of his own fatuous kind  
And plans how he be not alone.  
The bauble is the dunce's own.  
When fools see one who would forsooth  
Be righteous and abide in truth  
They say: "A bigot is this man,  
He'd fain be a Carthusian!"<sup>1</sup>  
Hypocrisy is that man's share  
And in our Lord he would despair.  
To us too God will once decree  
A death that full of grace will be,  
Albeit he by night and day  
On knees reclines to wake and pray,  
He'd fast and build him hermit huts,  
To God and world his heart he shuts.  
By heaven we were not created  
That monks or priests we should be rated,  
We'd not abjure the world as foul,  
For we would never wear a cowl  
Or cap unless it tinkled too.  
Behold the fool, the base cuckoo,  
Much good on earth he would have done  
And even more reward have won

Had he but learned judiciousness  
 And gone the road of blessedness  
 And never groveled like a beast  
 And lived in cell to feed and feast.  
 So many things he doth renounce,  
 He has no joy, no single ounce.  
 If just like this man everyone  
 Should put Carthusian garments on,  
 Who would increase the population  
 And give men wisdom, information?  
 Of God's desire he makes abuse  
 Who treats himself like this recluse  
 And thinks but of himself alone."  
 Such incantations fools intone.  
 The earth is their entire vocation,  
 They never seek the soul's salvation.  
 Fool, listen, e'en if you were wise  
 There'd still be fools enough to prize;  
 Though you should have a monkish air  
 Fools plenty here on earth would fare.  
 If all men spoke such sentiment  
 No one to heaven would be sent.  
 E'en if your mind should function well  
 Some men would always go to hell.  
 If I did have two souls in me <sup>2</sup>  
 To fools I'd give the one soul free,  
 But since I have one soul alone  
 There's need for me to guard the one,  
 God loves not Belial as His own.

*Who lights his lamp here, warm and bright <sup>1</sup>  
 And lets the oil give cheering light,  
 That man shall ever have delight.*



# 106. REFRAINING FROM GOOD WORKS

A fool is he who, if he lives,  
 When God His final judgment gives,  
 To self-blame and culpation's bound  
 Because he has suppressed his pound  
 Which God did give him once of yore,



Wherewith he should acquire more.  
 From him God takes his pound away,  
 He suffers pain by night and day.  
 So they who have their lamp upset  
 Or not their oil have lighted yet  
 And go to seek oil everywhere  
 When far away the soul would fare.  
 Four creatures small on earth we find,<sup>2</sup>  
 They're wiser far than human kind:  
 The ant, that never shirks its work,  
 And conies that in rocks do lurk,  
 The locusts, that no kings command,  
 They sally forth in martial band,  
 The spider ay on hands does fare,  
 Yet lives with rulers anywhere.  
 If you find honey, sharp combs too,<sup>3</sup>  
 Eat only what is good for you  
 And never eat too much of sweet,  
 Lest you may have to vomit it.  
 Although a sage die suddenly,  
 Destroyed his soul will never be.  
 The fool, however, who's unwise<sup>4</sup>  
 Doth perish while his frame resides  
 Fore'er in darksome grave, a hole;  
 He leaves to others goods and soul.  
 No greater fool was fashioned ay  
 Than one who recks no future day  
 And only goes his temporal way.  
 Some trees do burn in hell below  
 On which good fruit would never grow.

*While o'er the right one finds the crown,  
 The fool's cap o'er the left is shown.  
 All fools the selfsame way have gone,  
 They're castigated, they're forlorn.*



#### 107. OF REWARD FOR WISDOM

Some fools seek knowledge high and higher,  
 To M.A., Ph.D. aspire,  
 Though people deem them very bright,  
 These fools can't understand aright

How they'd attain that knowledge rare  
 Wherewith to heaven they may fare,  
 And that all wisdom 'neath the sun <sup>1</sup>  
 To God is folly men should shun.  
 Some think they have the proper way  
 But lose the path and go astray  
 And miss the life that's true and rare.  
 Blest he who'd never stray and err  
 When he has found the proper way;  
 The side road often leads agley  
 And takes a person off the street  
 Unless God thinks it is not meet.  
 Young Hercules was wont to brood  
 What road by him were best pursued,<sup>2</sup>  
 The road of joy and vain delight  
 Or that of wisdom clear and bright,  
 There came to him amid such thought  
 Two women whom, though saying naught,  
 On seeing he did recognize:  
 The one was full of lust and vice  
 And well adorned with phrases sweet,  
 She gave him hope of joyful treat,  
 But in the end he'd die with pain  
 And neither joy nor pleasure gain;  
 The other one seemed pale, hard, sour,  
 Her mien was joyless every hour,  
 She said: "No joy I promise you,  
 No rest, and labors not a few,  
 On virtue you will virtue heap  
 And recompense eternal keep."  
 Then Hercules went where she led,

Joy, idleness, delight he fled.  
 Would God, as we do always seem  
 To wish for life to suit our dream,  
 That we might also crave for us  
 A life that's ever virtuous,  
 We'd truly flee from many a way  
 That over fool's road leads agley,  
 But since no one of us has scanned  
 The place where we will later land  
 And blinking we live in night,  
 We do not heed the road that's right  
 And often lack the knowledge where  
 The steps we take will make us fare,  
 And that's the reason why it's true  
 We oft repent whate'er we do.  
 If we succeed with grief and pain  
 We crave yet more with heart inane.  
 'Tis best explained by mortals having  
 An inbred, yes, a natural craving  
 For what is right and good on earth,  
 We crave it ever since our birth.  
 But since, alas, that cannot be  
 (We err in dark obscurity)  
 The Lord has given us the light  
 Of wisdom, making all things bright.  
 To darkness wisdom puts an end  
 If but to wisdom we attend.  
 It shows us too the difference  
 'Twixt folly's course and prudent sense.  
 Such precious wisdom these did prize:  
 Pythagoras, Plato the wise,

And Socrates, who through their creed  
 Won lasting fame and honor's meed  
 Yet could not picture bright and clear  
 The real wisdom dwelling here,  
 Wherefore of them the Lord did say: <sup>3</sup>  
 "Their knowledge, skill I'll toss away  
 And wisdom too, who here are wise,  
 Let children have it—this their prize."  
 To children only wisdom's taught,  
 Which they from heavenly regions brought.  
 Whoever's learned so wise to be  
 Is honored for eternity  
 And sparkles like the firmament.  
 Those who on righteousness are bent  
 And teach themselves the proper way  
 And others too, they shine for ay  
 Like Lucifer in Orient  
 And Hesperus in Occident.  
 Bion,<sup>4</sup> the master, makes us see:  
 As the suitors of Penelope  
 Could win her not by escapades  
 And then began to court her maids,  
 So those men too who cannot quite  
 Appreciate true wisdom's light  
 Come close to it through virtuous grace  
 (The maids) but never see its face.  
 All worldly joys have gruesome end,  
 Let each one watch where he may wend.

*You fellows, come and be on hand,  
 We're headed for Schluraffen land <sup>1</sup>  
 And yet we're stuck in mud and sand.*



# 108. THE SCHLURAFFEN SHIP

Think not we fools are all alone,  
 For brothers large and small we own  
 In every country everywhere,  
 Our ranks are swelled beyond compare,

We travel far to every land  
 From Narbon to Schluraffen land,  
 From there we go to Montflascon<sup>2</sup>  
 And reach the land of Narragon.<sup>3</sup>  
 Each port, shore we investigate  
 And travel far with dreadful fate,  
 As yet however we've not scanned  
 The port where we would like to land,  
 Our traveling will never end  
 For no one knows to where he'd wend.  
 We find no rest by day or night,  
 For none of us sees wisdom's light,  
 And many a comrade with us errs,  
 They're satellites and courtiers,<sup>4</sup>  
 They follow us where'er we go,  
 The last are they on shipboard though,  
 And come along in hope of gain.  
 They're heedless, senseless, quite inane,  
 With much precariousness we fare,  
 For no one heeds or glances e'er  
 At compass, map or hourglass  
 Or watches how the time doth pass.  
 The constellations heed we little,  
 Boötes, Ursa not a tittle,  
 Arcturus not, nor Hyades,  
 And so we strike Symplegades.<sup>5</sup>  
 Our vessel suffers quite a stiff  
 Bump when it runs against the cliff,  
 The cliffs destroy the hull and deck  
 And few can swim to clear the wreck.  
 We billow through the stormy main

And hardly get to land again  
 Through Scylla, Syrtis, and Charybdis  
 And know not where the proper course is.  
 Of wonders all this is the least:  
 We spy full many a marvelous beast,  
 Dolphins and sirens do we meet,  
 Who sing us many a ditty sweet  
 And make of us a sleepy band  
 So ne'er we have a hope to land,  
 And we discover by and by  
 The Cyclops with the cyclic eye.  
 Ulysses stabbed this eye in turn  
 So Cyclops never might discern  
 Him, doing him no injury,  
 Except to bellow furiously  
 Just like an ox that feels a blow.  
 Away Ulysses then did go  
 And let him bellow, weep, and groan  
 And tossed at him full many a stone.  
 That Cyclops eye it grew again  
 As he espied this foolish train,  
 So widely opened he his eye,  
 His countenance was hid well-nigh.  
 His mouth it reached from ear to ear,  
 He swallowed fools both far and near.  
 The others who escaped that hour  
 Antiphates them did devour<sup>6</sup>  
 With all his Laestrygonians  
 Who deal with fools of many brands,  
 For nothing else these people eat  
 Day in, day out but dunce's meat



And drink their blood instead of wine.  
 The fools will live there like the swine.  
 This tale by Homer was invented  
 That men with wisdom be contented  
 And not go blithely out to sea.  
 He lauds Ulysses heartily  
 Who gave good counsel, wise plans taught,  
 While war at Troy was being fought,  
 And how for ten years then with pluck  
 He plied all seas, enjoying luck.  
 When Circe with a magic drink  
 Turned men to beasts that never think,  
 Ulysses was uncanny shrewd  
 That he took neither drink nor food  
 Until the sorceress he deceived  
 And all his comrades he relieved  
 With herbs called "Moly," 'tis believed.  
 Thus many a hardship he'd elude  
 By wisdom sage, by counsel shrewd,  
 But since untiring he would fare  
 Luck could not bless him everywhere,  
 For one day came an evil blast  
 That wrecked his sturdy ship at last,  
 And all his comrades had to drown,  
 His rudder, ship, and sail went down.  
 Again his prudence aided him,  
 Alone and naked he did swim  
 And yet misfortune came again  
 When by his son the man was slain<sup>7</sup>  
 While knocking at his rightful door,  
 His prudence could not help him more.

Him no one knew on native grounds  
 Except the faithful baying hounds,  
 And so he died since no one would  
 Confess they knew him, as they should.  
 With this I touch our native plane,  
 In deepest mire we look for gain,  
 We'll suffer shipwreck, plain to see,  
 Mast, sail, and rope will shattered be,  
 We cannot swim in such a sea,  
 The waves are high as high can be.  
 When someone thinks he sits on top  
 They dash him downward, let him drop.  
 The wind will drive them up and down,  
 The ship and all the fools will drown  
 When once it's sunk with all of them,  
 For we lack sense and stratagem  
 To swim ashore and leave the deck,  
 As did Ulysses midst the wreck.  
 Though naked, he with more did come  
 Than he had lost or had at home.  
 We travel, risking many a slip,  
 The waves engulf the sturdy ship  
 And take full many from the crew;  
 The passengers will mourn and rue,  
 The owner suffers losses great,  
 The vessel sways, waves ne'er abate,  
 And probably a gale will follow  
 Both ship and passengers to swallow.  
 Help, counsel wise from us have fled  
 And finally we'll all be dead.  
 The wind drives on with violence,

Oh stay at home, ye men of sense  
 And let our fate a lesson be:  
 Don't go to sea with levity,  
 Or else with winds you'll have a fray  
 As did Ulysses every day.  
 But though his ship went under fast  
 Ulysses reached the shore at last.  
 Hence fools are drowning more and more.  
 Let each one haste to wisdom's shore  
 And take the rudder firm in hand,  
 So that he's conscious where he'll land.  
 Who's wise will get to shore with ease,  
 We've fools enough apart from these.  
 The best is he who'll always know  
 What he should do and what forego,  
 Whom no one needs to drill and teach,  
 Since wisdom he himself does preach.  
 Good he too who no other spurns  
 And discipline and wisdom learns,  
 But who of these is not aware  
 With all the other fools must fare.  
 But if perchance he's missed the ship  
 Upon the next one will he slip.  
 To cronies easily he'll cling  
 And with them "Gaudeamus" sing.<sup>8</sup>  
 Or else the dunce's melody.  
 We've many brothers left at sea  
 And eke this ship a wreck will be.<sup>9</sup>

*A fool is he who does not see,  
 When dogged by mishap he may be,  
 That wisely he must be resigned;  
 Misfortune will not be declined.*



# 109. CONTEMPT OF MIS- FORTUNE

Misfortune makes sighs numerous  
 And yet it's sought by many of us,  
 Hence never should a man complain  
 When boats are wrecked in stormy main.

Misfortunes may be small, I own,  
 But rarely one arrives alone.  
 An ancient proverb used to say:  
 Ill luck and hair grow every day.<sup>1</sup>  
 'Tis better ne'er to start a thing,  
 One knows not what its end will bring.  
 Whoe'er would travel o'er the sea  
 To luck and weather let him see.  
 He'll make false headway rapidly  
 Who travels 'gainst the wind at sea.  
 With friendly wind the wise man sails,  
 A fool upsets his ship and fails.  
 The wise man firmly holds in hand  
 The rudder, then he reaches land.  
 A fool has learned no navigation  
 And often suffers ruination,  
 A wise man pilots friends and all;  
 Ere he's aware, a fool will fall.  
 Had Alexander used no care,  
 When out to open sea he'd fare,  
 Which tossed his ship from side to side,  
 Had he not heeded time and tide  
 He would have perished mid the brine  
 And not been poisoned drinking wine.  
 Pompey won great celebrity  
 By forcing robbers off the sea.  
 He drove away the pirates all,  
 In Egypt, though, he took a fall.  
 Those prizing wisdom, virtue grand,  
 Though naked, they will swim to land,  
 Thus speaks Sebastianus Brant.

*Some chide all men for this or that  
 And hang the bells upon the cat<sup>1</sup>  
 Yet hesitate to own to that.*



#### 110. SLANDER OF THE GOOD

Full many a man will have delight  
 In all the fools of whom I write  
 And useful lessons too will learn,  
 How fatuousness he may spurn,  
 But some resent the implication,  
 They think I've prejudiced their station

But dare not say it openly.  
 They scold the poem more than me  
 And on the cat the bells they place  
 Which once their fool-ears used to grace.  
 A mangy horse for long can't bear  
 The curry comb upon his hair.  
 Toss out to many dogs a bone,  
 The one that's hit will howl alone,  
 For knowingly I'd fain admit:  
 All fools will censure me and twit,  
 And say: This man it can't behoove  
 To censure fools and e'er reprove,  
 And show why each is far from good,  
 For each one says whate'er he would  
 And moans about a pinching shoe.  
 My fool's book, does it anger you?  
 I beg of you to pass it by,  
 I ask no one to come and buy  
 Unless you'd enter wisdom's state  
 And take the cap from off your pate.  
 I've made an effort mine to doff,  
 It will not come entirely off.  
 You chide what ne'er you comprehend?  
 Then you require this book, my friend!  
 Each man to what he would desire,  
 To what he fondly would aspire;  
 Who'd contradict veracity  
 And would be wise, a fool is he.<sup>2</sup>

*To play the fool would e'er be fun  
 If one could stop when he'd begun,  
 But who would try it soon will learn  
 That he'll be blocked at every turn.*



### III. APOLOGY OF THE POET

A fool is he, a silly loon,<sup>1</sup>  
 Who pays a workman far too soon,  
 He never plies an honest trade  
 Who ere he's finished would be paid.



The pay for work that's scarce begun  
 Is seldom earned by anyone.  
 All work will slowly go ahead  
 Rewarded with devoured bread.  
 If they had paid me in advance  
 To spare the fools my savage glance,  
 I'd heed them not and tell them how  
 The payment had been spent by now,  
 And I would not be satisfied,  
 For things on earth will ne'er abide,  
 They're useless folly, idle, vain.  
 Had I writ this for earthly gain  
 I fear the meed had been but small,  
 I'd not have written this at all,  
 But since I've done it, as I should,  
 For godly honor, worldly good,  
 No coin or empty favor could  
 E'er tempt me, nor the temporal lust,  
 So help me God, in whom I trust.  
 And yet I know I'll find much blame  
 For things I've written o'er my name.  
 From good men I will not resent it,  
 I'll take the censure if they've meant it.  
 Heaven my witness here: If I  
 Have mentioned aught in which I lie  
 Or contradict our Lord's intents,  
 The soul's salvation, honor, sense,  
 Such censure I will gladly bear,  
 I'd guard our faith here, anywhere.  
 Of every man I pray but this:  
 That he will take it not amiss

And will not scold me angrily  
 Nor think of me disgracefully.  
 I wrote it not with such design,  
 But well I know what fate is mine.  
 From flowers blessed with fragrance sweet  
 The bee takes honey, 'tis her meat,  
 But when the spider comes to feed,  
 She looks for poison, that's her meed.  
 This no one's spared: That we're inclined  
 To act as does our very kind,  
 Where nothing good doth lie about  
 No good can e'er be taken out.  
 Who pays no heed to wisdom's cry  
 Will slander me and pass me by,  
 But by his utterance he'll be shown  
 To be an idiotic clown.  
 For many a fool I've seen who'd try<sup>2</sup>  
 To elevate himself on high  
 Like Lebanon's green spreading tree,  
 Who thought of folly he was free.  
 I waited long, I heard him not,  
 I sought him, yet he answered not.  
 That place one finds nor far nor wide  
 Where that same fool did once reside.  
 If you have ears, then mark and hear!  
 I'm silent, but the wolf is near.  
 A fool chides many a man before  
 He realizes what's in store.  
 If you could shadow every neighbor  
 You'd see the cares with which they labor.  
 Peruse this dunce's book or no,

Why my shoe pinches I do know.  
 If men should scold me, saying: "Please,  
 O doctor, cure your own disease,  
 For you are also foolish, odd—"  
 I know it, I confess to God,  
 Of folly I was never free,  
 I've joined the fool's fraternity.  
 I pull the cap which I would doff,  
 Yet my fool's cap will not come off,  
 But I've applied great industry,  
 And much have learned, as you may see,  
 That numerous arrant fools I know,  
 And hope, if God but wills it so,  
 That I'll improve in time through wit  
 If God will grant such benefit.  
 Let each one guard lest he may fail  
 And lest fool's curry comb prevail  
 And lest the wand grow old in hand.  
 Let every fool this understand,  
 So speaks Sebastianus Brant,  
 Who urges men to wisdom's state  
 No matter what be their estate.  
 Good workers never come too late.

*Of fools such tidings I did tell  
 So that all men would know them well;  
 But if you're prudent through and through,  
 Read Vergil's words, they're meant for you.<sup>1</sup>*



## 112. THE WISE MAN

A good, wise man of prudence rare,  
 As one can find scarce anywhere  
 In all the world, is Socrates—  
 Apollo gave him gifts like these—  
 His own judge he, and wisely taught.

Where he lacks wisdom, fails in aught,  
 He gives himself the acid test,  
 Heeds not the nobleman's behest  
 Nor things the common herd would beg.  
 He's oval-shaped, is like an egg,  
 That never alien blemish may  
 Adhere to him in slippery way.  
 How long in Cancer days are bright,<sup>2</sup>  
 How long in Capricorn the night,  
 He plans with wisest industry  
 That e'er his house in order be,  
 That every syllable he'd say  
 May fair be deemed in every way,  
 That e'er the T-square will be true  
 And firm what he may measure too  
 And ward off all adversity  
 Which off in distance he may see.  
 Ere welcome sleep doth bless his eyes  
 He thinks and would himself chastise  
 For what he's done the livelong day  
 And what he's failed to do or say  
 And what betimes he should have done  
 And what untimely he's begun;  
 Why this he did without a reason,  
 Without decorum, out of season,  
 Or wasted time quite uselessly  
 Or stuck to something stubbornly  
 Which better might have been corrected,  
 Or why the paupers he neglected,  
 Wherefore his heart was oft not free  
 Of sorrow, base antipathy,

And why this deed he did not shun  
 But left the other one undone  
 And why himself he'd often bleed,  
 Preferring gain to honor's meed,  
 Oft doing wrong in word, mien, deed,  
 And giving honesty no heed,  
 And letting nature play her part,  
 But disciplining not his heart.  
 Thus work and word he ponders ay  
 From morning e'en to end of day  
 And musing things in pensive mood,  
 Rejecting evil, praising good;  
 The path it is of wisdom's brood.  
 'Tis such a man that's limned for us  
 In verse by famed Vergilius.  
 The man who'd live like that on earth  
 In God's eyes he would merit worth,  
 True wisdom he would understand,  
 'Twould take him home to fatherland,  
 May God place that in every hand,  
 I hope, Sebastianus Brant.

*Deo gratias.*

*Here ends the Ship of Fools, which for profit, salutary instruction, admonition and pursuit of wisdom, reason and good manners, also for contempt and punishment of folly, blindness, error, and stupidity of all stations and kinds of men, with special zeal, pains, and labor is compiled by Sebastianus Brant, doctor in both laws. Printed at Basel at the Shrovetide which one calls the Fool's Festival, in the year after Christ's birth one thousand four hundred ninety-four.*

1494

*Nothing without Cause*

JO. B. VON OLPE

# COMMENTARY

## A PROLOGUE TO THE SHIP OF FOOLS (EIN VORRED IN DAS NARREN SCHYFF) 57

Probably all three cuts are by the Master of the Bergmann shop (cf. Introduction, p. 20). The words "har noch" (cut 2) mean "come along." For Dr. Griff, see note 12 to chap. 76, p. 381.

1. For the reasons why *land* vehicles are introduced, see Introduction, p. 11 f. Under the third cut verses 23-27 of Psalm 107 (Vulgate, Psalm 106) are quoted in Latin, viz., "Hi sunt qui descendunt mare in navibus," etc.

2. Original: *der ist fatuus der gfatter min*, a pun on *fatuus*, Latin for "foolish," and German *gfatter*, "godfather."

3. Terence *Andria* I. 1. 41: "veritas odium parit."

4. Frankfurt was famous for its fairs (*Messen*).

## 1. OF USELESS BOOKS (VON UNNUTZEN BUCHERN) 62

The cut is by an inferior artist.

1. The three (sometimes four) lines are the motto to the chapter which follows; often though not always they describe the woodcut under it.

2. The original has a pun: *des tütschen ordens*, referring to the famous German Order of Knights and to those ignorant of Latin.

3. *Gucklus*, a variant of the classical Latin *cuculus*.

## 2. OF GOOD COUNCILORS (VON GUTEN RETEN) 64

Woodcut: Inferior artist.

1. The reference is to young, inexperienced councilmen who have no opinions of their own and become the tools of their older, often unscrupulous colleagues. Cf. lines 9 and 10 of the text below. Barclay translates: "Such is as wyse a man/As he that wolde seeth a quycke Sowe in a Pan."

2. II Sam. 16 and 17. Chusi is Hushai. In many of his biblical references Brant may have used other sources not known to us.

3. Matt. 7: 2. 4. Prov. 21: 30.

## 3. OF GREED (VON GYTIKEIT) 66

Woodcut: Inferior artist. The words "gnad her" (mercy, sir) are a greeting.



4. OF INNOVATIONS (VON NUWEN FUNDEN) 68  
Woodcut: The older fool is Uly or Ueli, a notorious tippler, and *stouffen* means "goblet." Since the chapter does not refer to drinking, the cut may be an older cartoon, revived for this chapter and later dated 1494. *Ungeschaffen* means "ugly."  
1. St. Lienhart was the patron saint of prisoners.  
2. *Schusselkorb* seems to be a medieval hairdresser's appliance for setting and shaping curls.
5. OF OLD FOOLS (VON ALTEN NARREN) 70  
Woodcut: Inferior artist. "Haintz Nar" means "Henry Fool."  
1. Susanna: cf. *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*, with introductions and critical and explanatory notes to the several books edited in coöperation with many scholars by R. H. Charles. Vol. I, Apocrypha. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1913, p. 650 ff.
6. OF THE TEACHING OF CHILDREN (VON LER DER KIND) 71  
Woodcut: Master.  
1. I Sam. 4.  
2. According to Plutarch *Paidagogia* vii. 3, Phoenix was the teacher of Achilles. The following examples are from the same source.  
3. *Winterbutz*, a strawman representing winter, who is routed by spring.
7. OF CAUSING DISCORD (VON ZWYTRACHT MACHEN) 76  
Woodcut: Master.  
1. II Sam. 15. 2. Num. 16.  
3. I Macc. 7. Charles, *Apocrypha*, p. 91.  
4. II Sam. 1. 5. II Sam. 4.
8. OF NOT FOLLOWING GOOD ADVICE (NIT VOLGEN GUTEM RATT) 78  
Woodcut: Master.  
1. Tob. 4: 19. Charles, *Apocrypha*, p. 213.  
2. Gen. 19: 26. 3. I Kings 12. 4. Dan. 4.  
5. Macc. 9. Charles, *Apocrypha*, p. 96. The allusion to Joram is not biblical. See I Esd. 1: 19. Charles, *Apocrypha*, p. 21.  
6. II Sam. 17. Brant means not Saul but Absalom and Hushai.
9. OF BAD MANNERS (VON BOSEN SYTTEN) 80  
Woodcut: Inferior artist.  
1. The story of the man who bit off his father's nose for rearing

him as a gallows bird is as old as Aesop, but no known source before Brant mentions the son's name.

10. OF TRUE FRIENDSHIP (VON WORER FRUNTSCHAFFT) 82  
Woodcut: Master.  
1. That is, Damon. 2. I Sam. 31: 5. 3. Matt. 22: 39.  
4. The closest biblical references would be Num. 11: 11 and 14: 11. But perhaps Brant had another source.
11. CONTEMPT OF HOLY WRIT (VERACHTUNG DER GSCHRIFT) 84  
Woodcut: Inferior artist. Note the bier, the snakelike club, and the books.  
1. In 1476 a shepherd and piper of Niklashausen on the Tauber, Hans Behem, asserted that he had seen the Holy Virgin. He was finally burned as a sorcerer. See *Haupts Zeitschrift*, VIII, 312 ff.  
2. We follow Zarncke, but *ertoubt* may mean merely "deaf."  
3. We might see in this a startling prophecy of the approaching two hundred years of religious strife which Germany was facing with the advent of the Reformation.
12. OF HEEDLESS FOOLS (VON UNBESINTEN NARREN) 86  
Woodcut: Inferior artist.  
1. I Macc. 12: 42 ff. Charles, *Apocrypha*, p. 113.  
2. II Macc. 8: 10. Charles, *Apocrypha*, p. 142.  
3. The Jews are meant. 4. II Sam. 2: 17.
13. OF AMOURS (VON BUOLSCHAFFT) 88  
Woodcut: Master.  
1. For other instances of the use of this idea, cf. H. Bluhm in *Modern Language Notes*, LVI, 139.  
2. Cf. Ovid *Metam.* i. 468 ff.  
3. Medea did not burn either child, she slew them both.  
4. Judg. 19: 20.  
5. Read "Bath-Sheba." The form in the text is from the Basel Vulgate of 1490. Cf. II Sam. 11.  
6. That is, Delilah. Judg. 16. 7. I Kings 11.  
8. II Sam. 13. 9. Gen. 39.  
10. Aristotle was ridden by Phyllis, according to medieval legend.  
11. The sorcerer Vergil was suspended in a basket by a concubine, according to medieval legend.

14. OF INSOLENCE TOWARD GOD (VON VERMESSENHEIT GOTZ) 92  
Woodcut: Master.
15. OF FOOLISH PLANS (VON NARRECHTEM ANSLAG) 94  
Woodcut: Master.  
1. Cf. Luke 14: 28-30. 2. Dan. 4: 26-30.  
3. Gen. 10: 8-10 and 11: 9.  
4. It is not clear why Brant associates labyrinths with the Nile.
16. OF GLUTTONY AND FEASTING (VON FULLEN UND PRASSEN) 96  
Woodcut: Master.  
1. Gen. 9: 20. 2. Gen. 19: 33.  
3. Matt. 14. But the drunkenness of Herod is not stated.  
4. Exod. 32. 5. Isa. 5: 11.  
6. Told by Herodotus and Justinus. 7. I Kings 20: 16.  
8. When he killed Clitus. 9. Luke 16: 19 ff.  
10. Prov. 23: 34. 11. Prov. 23: 31-32.
17. OF USELESS RICHES (VON UNNUTZEM RICHTUM) 100  
Woodcut: Inferior artist.
18. OF SERVING TWO MASTERS (VON DIENST ZWEYER HERREN) 101  
Woodcut: Inferior artist.
19. OF IDLE TALK (VON VIL SCHWETZEN) 104  
Woodcut: Inferior artist.  
1. Prov. 18: 13. 2. I Sam. 25. 3. Prov. 29: 11.  
4. Examples from Plutarch *Paidagogia* xiv.
20. OF FINDING TREASURES (VON SCHATZ FYNDEN) 108  
Woodcut: Perhaps Master.  
1. Brant means Achan. Cf. Josh. 7. Achor is the valley in which Achan was stoned.
21. OF CHIDING AND ERRING ONESELF (VON STROFFEN UND SELB TUN) 110  
Woodcut: Inferior artist.  
1. Cf. Matt. 7: 4 and 5.  
2. Gentilis (eighth century) and Mesue (fourteenth century) were physicians who wrote treatises on fever. Brant's sources for their mode of death are not known.  
3. Cf. Juvenal *Satires* viii. 140.  
4. Judg. 20. The sin of the Israelites does not follow clearly from the biblical text. Perhaps Brant thinks that they sacrificed to God too late. See verse 26.

22. THE TEACHING OF WISDOM (DIE LER DER WISHEIT) 112  
Woodcut: Master.  
1. For this chapter, cf. Prov. 8.
23. OF VAUNTING LUCK (VON UBERHEBUNG GLUCKS) 114  
Woodcut: Inferior artist.
24. OF TOO MUCH CARE (VON ZU VIL SORG) 116  
Woodcut: Inferior artist.
25. OF BORROWING TOO MUCH (VON ZUO BORG UFF NEMEN) 118  
Woodcut: Inferior artist.  
1. Promissory notes will bring the wolf to your door, but he will not relieve your distress by eating up the notes. The woodcut refers to this.  
2. Prov. 22: 26 and 27.
26. OF USELESS WISHING (VON UNNUTZEN WUNSCHEN) 120  
Woodcut: Inferior artist.  
1. Cf. Ovid *Metam.* xi. 102 ff. Brant does not reproduce accurately the story of Ovid. The cut follows Brant's text.  
2. Juvenal *Satires* x. 3. Gen. 34.  
4. Juvenal *Satires* x. 360, but modified by Brant.
27. OF USELESS STUDYING (VON UNNUTZEM STUDIEREN) 124  
Woodcut: Master.  
1. In his notes, pp. 346-55, Zarncke has an excursus on the tortures to which students were exposed.  
2. Ridiculous examples of the sophistic method of teaching.  
3. *Homil.* iv to chapter 7 of Exodus.  
4. Strobel believes that it means: the unsuccessful student turns waiter.
28. OF SPEAKING AGAINST GOD (VON WIDER GOTT REDEN) 126  
Woodcut: Inferior artist.  
1. Num. 14. 2. Rom. 11: 34, 35.
29. WHO JUDGES OTHERS (DER ANDER LUT URTEILT) 128  
Woodcut: Inferior artist.
30. OF TOO MANY BENEFICES (VON VILE DER PFRUNDEN) 130  
Woodcut: Inferior artist.  
1. The abuses in filling church offices were a subject for much discussion. See Zarncke, pp. 359-62. But Brant does not consider the evil in its political aspects.  
2. II Kings 4: 40.

3. Simon, the magician; Acts, 8. For Gehasi, see II Kings 5.  
 4. A "presence" was the profit from a residential benefice, an "absence" (according to Brant, at least) that from one enjoyed *in absentia*. The latter were more lucrative.
31. OF SEEKING DELAY (VON UFFSCHLAG SUCHEN) 131  
 Woodcut: Master.  
 1. Latin for "tomorrow." Note the cut.
32. OF GUARDING WIVES (VON FROWEN HUETTEN) 134  
 Woodcut: Master. "huet fast" means "guard well."  
 1. Ovid *Metam.* iv. 610 ff. 2. Ovid *Her.* xvi, xvii, also vii.  
 3. *Frömd*, lecherous, lewd.
33. OF ADULTERY (VON EEBRUCH) 136  
 Woodcut: Inferior artist.  
 1. The best explanation of the cat is that she represents the wife, who soon learns to enjoy adultery, as the cat learns to enjoy catching mice. Tickling the husband's nose with a reed means lulling him off his guard through flattery.  
 2. Brant refers to the *Lex Julia* of Emperor Augustus.  
 3. Cato the Younger. Cf. Plutarch's life of him, chap. 25.  
 4. Lucretia. 5. Juvenal *Satires* vi. 345.  
 6. Gellius xvii. 18. 7. Gen. 20: 18. 8. Judg. 19, 20.  
 9. Esther 7: 8. 10. Gen. 20: 2.  
 11. That is, suffer the fate of a sparrow, in whose nest the cuckoo places its eggs to be hatched.
34. FOOLS NOW AS BEFORE (NARR HUR ALS VERN) 140  
 Woodcut: Master.  
 1. Exod. 2; Acts 7: 22.
35. OF READY ANGER (VON LUCHTLICH ZYRNEN) 141  
 Woodcut: Master.  
 1. Valerius Maximus iv. 1.  
 2. The examples are from Plutarch *Paidagogia* xiv. 14.
36. OF COMPLACENCY (VON EYGENRICHTIKEIT) 144  
 Woodcut: Master.  
 1. II Pet. 2: 5, and I Pet. 3: 19 and 20. 2. Num. 16.  
 3. Translation of *singularis ferus* in Psalm 80.  
 4. Refers to the indivisibility of the Church.

37. OF CHANCE (VON GLUCKES FALL) 146  
 Woodcut: Master.  
 1. Cf. Schiller, *Wilhelm Tell*: "Wer Tränen ernten will, muss Liebe säen."
38. OF PATIENTS WHO DO NOT OBEY (VON KRANCKEN DIE NIT VOLGEN) 148  
 Woodcut: Master. In the first edition this accompanied No. 55 by error.  
 1. Ovid *Amores* 91, 92, 115, 116.  
 2. I Macc. 4, 9 and 10, and chaps. 8 and 9. Charles, *Apocrypha*, p. 79. But there is no basis for Brant's notion that Judas died because of his alliance with the Romans.  
 3. II Kings 20. 4. Matt. 9: 2.
39. OF OPEN PLANS (VON OFFLICHEM ANSCHLAG) 152  
 Woodcut: Master.  
 1. II Macc. 14: 30 ff. Charles, *Apocrypha*, p. 152.
40. TAKING OFFENSE AT FOOLS (AN NARREN SICH STOSSEN) 154  
 Woodcut: Master.  
 1. He strokes his own beard and is a fool.  
 2. A pun is involved, for *an narren sich stossen* means also "to bump against fools."  
 3. Cf. Ovid *Metam.* x. 561 ff.  
 4. I Kings 13: 33, and 14: 10 and 11.
41. PAYING NO HEED TO TALK (NIT ACHTEN UFF ALL RED) 156  
 Woodcut: Master.  
 1. That is, pay no heed to a maligner; he is like a hammerless bell.  
 2. Is Brant thinking of his friend a Lapide, who entered the Carthusian monastery in 1487—a step which Brant may often have been inclined to take himself? See Zeydel in *Modern Language Quarterly*, IV, 209 ff.
42. OF SCORNERS (VON SPOTT VOGELN) 158  
 Woodcut: Master.  
 1. This entire chapter is based upon chap. 9 of Proverbs.  
 2. II Sam. 25. 3. Nehem. 4: 1 ff. 4. II Kings 2: 23 f.  
 5. II Sam. 16: 5 ff.
43. CONTEMPT OF ETERNAL JOY (VERACHTUNG EWIGER FREYT) 160  
 Woodcut: Master.

44. NOISE IN CHURCH (GEBRACHT IN DER KIRCHEN) 161  
Woodcut: Master.  
1. Matt. 21: 12 f.
45. OF COURTING MISFORTUNE (VON MUTWILLIGEM UNGEFELL) 164  
Woodcut: Master. "In geschicht recht" means "It serves him right."  
1. A variant of these lines is found in some of the Faust books.
46. OF THE POWER OF FOOLS (VON DER GEWALT DER NARREN) 166  
Woodcut: Master.  
1. Prov. 28: 26. 2. Eccles. 10: 17. 3. Eccles. 10: 16.  
4. Eccles. 4: 13. 5. Prov. 28: 28. 6. Prov. 28: 12.  
7. Eccles. 28: 21. 8. Prov. 24: 23.  
9. That is, the spiritual as well as the temporal power.  
10. Sallust *Bell. Jug.* 35. 11. Exod. 18.  
12. Judg. 3: 16 ff. 13. Judg. 16: 5 ff.  
14. II Macc. 4: 32 ff. Charles, *Apocrypha*, p. 137.  
15. I Kings 15: 18 ff. 16. I Macc. 12: 43. Charles, *Apocrypha*, 113.
47. ON THE ROAD OF SALVATION (VON DEM WEG DER SELIKEIT) 170  
Woodcut: Master.  
1. Exod. 12: 37. 2. Joshua and Caleb.
48. A JOURNEYMAN'S SHIP (*No title in original*) 171  
Woodcut: Master. The coat-of-arms on the sail is that of Basel.  
1. Plutarch *Paidagogia* ix. 20.  
2. Trading was reputed to be particularly sharp in Köln, and bids there were notoriously low.
49. BAD EXAMPLE OF PARENTS (BOS EXEMPEL DER ELTERN) 176  
Woodcut: Inferior artist.  
1. Cf. chapter 6. 2. Juvenal *Satires* xiv. 41.  
3. Plutarch *Paidagogia* iii. 3.
50. OF SENSUAL PLEASURE (VON WOLLUST) 178  
Woodcut: Master.  
1. Prov. 7: 10 ff.  
2. The original has *wollust* for "pleasure." In Brant's day this did not quite mean "lust" as yet, at least according to Zarncke.  
3. Prov. 7: 22, 23. 4. Horace *Epistles* i. 2, 55.  
5. Prov. 5: 4.

51. KEEPING SECRETS (HEYMLICHEIT VERSWIGEN) 180  
Woodcut: Inferior artist.  
1. Cf. chapters 9 and 39 above. 2. Servius *Ad Aen.* iv. 455.  
3. I Kings 21.  
4. Isa. 24: 16. The Vulgate has: *Secretum mihi, secretum meum mihi.*
52. MARRYING FOR THE SAKE OF GOODS (WIBEN DURCH GUTZ WILLEN) 182  
Woodcut: Master.  
1. Prov. 21: 19. 2. Athaliah. II Kings 11.  
3. According to Tobit 3: 8 ff., Asmodeus is the devil of marriage. Charles, *Apocrypha*, p. 209.  
4. Cf. the Book of Ruth.  
5. "I accuse you, I am scratched (pig Latin) by you."
53. OF ENVY AND HATRED (VON NYD UND HAS) 184  
Woodcut: Master. The key to this cut is found in the medieval Neithart Fuchs collection (Kürschner's *Deutsche National-Litteratur*, VII, 163, 189)—see the two cuts there—where Neithart, dispensing wine, releases bees to plague the peasants. Cf. also *ibid.*, p. 165: "Da lag ich in den vasz verschmogen, etc." Neithart is mentioned in line 3 of the motto. A fire on top of a hill in the background probably refers to the raging of hatred and envy as described in line 1 of the triplet. Bees and wasps also mean envy.  
1. Aglauros: Ovid *Metam.* ii. 730 ff.
54. OF IMPATIENCE OF PUNISHMENT (VON UNGEDULT DER STRAFF) 186  
Woodcut: Master.  
1. The instrument of fools; harps and lutes were of higher caliber.  
2. Eccles. 7: 6.
55. OF FOOLISH MEDICINE (VON NARRECHTER ARTZNY) 188  
Woodcut: Master. In the first edition this was erroneously placed with chap. 38.  
1. *Krüterbüchlin* (herb book) was the regular term for a medical book.  
2. The reference may be either to a salve box or to a book of receipts. Archer Taylor, *Problems in German Literary History*



of the *Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, p. 71, believes the reference is to the unnamed woman who anointed the feet of Jesus in the house of Simon, the leper, at Bethania.

3. Supposedly a notorious quack who practiced in Basel.

56. OF THE END OF POWER (VON END DES GEWALTES) 190

Woodcut: Same as No. 37.

1. That is, Darius Hystaspes. But the reference should be to Darius Codomannus.

2. Jth. 1. 3. Cf. chap. 109, lines 7-8, p. 356.

4. I Kings 21 and 22. 5. I Kings 16: 9 ff.

57. PREDESTINATION OF GOD (FURWISSENHEYT GOTTES) 194

Woodcut: Master.

1. Striped clothes were a sign of worldliness and distinction, as opposed to the clerical and learned states.

2. That is, they do not get further than the first two words of Psalm 1.

3. A reference to the land of milk and honey later connected with the *Schluraffenland*. Cf. chap. 108 and Introduction, p. 9.

4. Cf. Daniel. Brant cites from *Decretum* ii. 23, 4, 22.

5. Matt. 20: 1-16.

58. OF FORGETTING ONESELF (SYN SELBS VERGESSEN) 198

Woodcut: Master.

1. Terence *Andria* iv. 1, 12.

59. OF INGRATITUDE (VON UNDANCKBERKEYT) 200

Woodcut: Master.

60. OF SELF-COMPLACENCY (VON IM SELBS WOLGEFALLEN) 202

Woodcut: Inferior artist.

1. Juvenal *Satires* ii. 99 ff. 2. Terence *Heaut. Tim.* ii. 2, 11.

3. Upon the old bridge over the Neckar at Heidelberg stood the figure of an ape, with humorous verses mocking vain passers-by.

4. Cf. Ovid, *Metam.* x. 243 ff.

5. Ovid, *Metam.* iii. 407 ff.

61. OF DANCING (VON DANTZEN) 204

Woodcut: Master.

1. The first mass at which a young priest officiates—an occasion for celebration.

62. OF SERENADING AT NIGHT (VON NACHTES HOFYEREN) 206

Woodcut: Master.

1. The reference, missed by Zarncke and the other commentators, is to an old Strassburg custom, forbidden by City Council in 1466, whereby fishermen held a procession every Whitmonday, bearing fish in vats and making much noise, ridiculing and insulting passers-by and spreading scandal. Cf. Stöber's review of Zarncke's edition in *St. Galler Blätter*, xv (1855).

63. OF BEGGARS (VON BETTLEREN) 208

Woodcut: Master.

1. Beggars gave the authorities in the Middle Ages much trouble. Basel regulated their life and traffic well and established a camp for them at the Kohlenberg, where they had special privileges.

2. Brant puns on the word, making it "Bettelheim" (beggars' home).

3. The next twelve lines contain examples of underworld slang. They cannot all be adequately translated.

4. The heraldic poets, like Suchenwirt, who glorified nobles and their families.

5. That is, to write heraldic poetry.

6. St. James of Compostella in Spain.

7. Rivoglio, an Italian wine.

8. This chapter, now usually referred to as the argot (*Rotwelsch*) chapter, was used by Gengenbach in his *Liber vagatorum*.

64. OF BAD WOMEN (VON BOSEN WIBERN) 212

Woodcut: Same as No. 35.

1. Prologue, 1. 123 ff. 2. That is, Athaliah. II Kings 11.

3. The father of the Pierides who challenged the Muses and were turned into magpies. Ovid *Metam.* v. 295 ff.

4. Ovid *Metam.* vi. 146. The mother of the children was Niobe.

5. Calphurnia, so called by some, by others (e. g., Valerius Maximus, 8, 3) Gaja Afrania, is a legendary woman whose chattering in court is supposed to have prompted the practice of debarring women from speaking in court. Perhaps the name Calphurnia was suggested by that of Caesar's shrewish wife.

6. Ovid *Metam.* vi. 587.      7. Eccles. 7: 26, 27.
  8. Prov. 30: 15 ff. Brant takes up verse 21 first.
  9. Esther 1: 11 ff.      10. Juvenal *Satires* vi. 638.
  11. *Ibid.* vi. 620.      12. *Ibid.* vi. 655.
  13. Ovid *Ibis* 321. The reference is to Alexander of Pherae.
  14. The concubine of Alexander the Great.
65. OF ATTENTION TO THE STARS (VON ACHTUNG DES GSTIRNS) 216  
Woodcut: Master.
1. This chapter becomes more amusing when we consider that Brant himself, in his shorter poems, often revealed faith in portents. Eberth, *Die Sprichwörter in Seb. Brants Narrenschiff*, however, believes that Brant's superstitiousness was only feigned.
  2. *Decretum.* ii. 26.
  3. Cf. Gen. 15. But Brant must have had other sources.
  4. I Sam. 28.
66. OF EXPERIENCE OF ALL LANDS (VON ERFARUNG ALLER LAND) 220  
Woodcut: Inferior artist.
1. This chapter, interesting because of the reference to the first voyage of Columbus, also throws light upon Brant's geographical concepts.
  2. *Um die ganz welt.* In the Middle Ages generally it was held that the earth is round.
  3. Ca. B. C. 320.      4. That is, the equator.
  5. A land in the far north.      6. Is Lapland meant?
  7. Assuming that "in Portugal" and "in Hispania" are characteristically loose expressions, we interpret these lines as a reference to the recent discoveries of Columbus, of which Brant knew, having collaborated with the publisher Bergmann in editing the famous Columbus letter.
  8. Pliny the Elder *Hist. Natur.* ii. 1.
  9. The friend and partner of Bacchus.
  10. Brant thinks that the popular "Berchtentag" observed in South Germany on January 6, when masked processions take place, has something to do with Bacchus.
  11. Cf. Eccles. 7: 1, and Psalm 144: 4.
  12. It is not clear where Brant got this information.

13. Appollonius of Tyana, who lived ca. A. D. 100.
67. NOT WISHING TO BE A FOOL (NIT WELLEN EYN NARR SYN) 226  
Woodcut: Inferior artist.
1. Prov. 27: 22.
  2. Concepts for "delusion" and "deception" found also in Reinmar von Zweter (thirteenth century) and Boner (fourteenth century). The words *won* (Wahn, delusion) and *btrieg*, *betriegen* (*Betrug*, *betrügen*, deception, deceive) are involved.
  3. That is, the gout.
68. NOT TAKING A JOKE (SCHYMPF NIT VERSTON) 230  
Woodcut: Master.
1. Or: If you would bowl you must pay the fee.
  2. Esther 3: 2 ff.
69. DOING EVIL AND NOT BEING ON GUARD (BOS DUN UND NIT WARTEN) 232  
Woodcut: Master.
1. Judg. 1: 6.
  2. Ovid *Trist.* iii. 11. 39 ff., and *Ars Amat.* i. 653.
  3. Cf. Ovid *Ars Amat.* i. 645 for Busiris. Diomedes of Thrace is meant, who fed human beings to his horses. For Phalaris see the references under Berillus above.
  4. Esther 7: 10.
  5. Proverbial: *Fides nimia equum abegit.*
  6. Prov. 23: 6 and 7.
70. NOT PROVIDING IN TIME (NIT FURSEHEN BY ZYT) 234  
Woodcut: Master.
1. Perhaps Brant's idea of hibernation.
  2. Prov. 10: 5.
  3. Prov. 20: 4. This applies more to the climate of Palestine than to that of Germany.
  4. Prov. 6: 6-8.
71. QUARRELING AND GOING TO COURT (ZANCKEN UND ZU GERICHT GON) 236  
Woodcut: Master.
1. In Brant's letter of dedication to the *Panormia* (1499) of Ivo of Chartres, he complains in a similar vein.
  2. *Petterle* might also stand for "legal blank"—*in petitorio*.

## 72. OF COARSE FOOLS (VON GROBEN NARREN)

238

Woodcut: Master.

1. The sow-bell is a symbol for billingsgate. So far as we know, the word *Grobian*, "ruffian," is used for the first time here in literature.

2. *Wie wol der gürtel hat kein glimpf*, lit.: "although the belt (i. e. the monk's cord) has no pendant" (or: no decency). The word *glimpf* has both meanings.

3. In the original she sings the "Moringer" song, a folksong. Brant interprets it as a sow's song because the word *mor* also means "sow." The pun is not apt because the "Moringer" song is not indecent.

4. A notorious priest under Otto the Jovial who played his pranks in and near Vienna in the fourteenth century. His escapades are narrated in the *Narrenbuch*.

5. A prankster featured in the late medieval epic, *Der grosse Rosengarten*.

6. As described in the third book of Persius.

7. See chap. 14, line 1, p. 92.

8. A pun is involved, *filz*, "felt," also meaning a rude peasant.

9. Corrupted French for "faites grande chère et belle chère"—eat, drink, and be merry.

10. Cf. chap. 11, lines 7 ff, p. 85, line 2.

## 73. OF BECOMING A PRIEST (VON GEYSTLICH WERDEN)

241

Woodcut: Same as No. 27.

1. That is, notoriously clumsy.

2. These lines remind us of Luther's sentiments.

3. Exod. 19: 13. 4. II Sam. 6: 7. 5. Num. 16.

## 74. OF USELESS HUNTING (VON UNNUTZEM JAGEN)

246

Woodcut: Same as No. 18.

1. Gen. 10: 9. 2. Gen. 25: 27.

3. Hubertus and Eustachius are patron saints of hunters.

## 75. OF BAD MARKSMEN (VON BOSEN SCHUTZEN)

248

Woodcut: Inferior artist.

1. Usually the first prize.

2. He will go home empty-handed. 3. I Sam. 20: 36.

4. Servius *Ad Aen.* iii. 402. See also Archer Taylor, *Problems in Literary History*, p. 71.

## 76. OF GREAT BOASTING (VON GROSSEM RUEMEN)

251

Woodcut: Inferior artist.

1. A boasting old nobleman; see line 20.

2. That is, as a humble barrel maker.

3. The people of Mainz had a reputation as prevaricators.

4. A Swiss city in the canton of Bern (German: Pruntrut). In the Burgundian War this town fought on the Burgundian side against Basel. The incident is said to have occurred in the battle of Murten (1476).

5. These lines give an ironical description of an imaginary coat-of-arms of a would-be nobleman.

6. A suburb of Strassburg, selected here possibly because of the association of *benne*, a peasant's cart, or because it typifies a "backwoods" town.

7. A notorious amusement resort near Strassburg.

8. *Achten*. It means not "respect," but "censure" (MHG *ächten*, *achten*).

9. This is one of the keynotes of German literature, chiefly the creation of the middle classes, from Brant's time to the present.

10. Some of the sources for Roman and canon law.

11. The bagpipe, as usual the fool's instrument.

12. He is a favorite character of Brant. His name, banner, and picture appear also in the woodcuts of the Prologue, repeated in the cut to chap. 108. Perhaps Brant identifies himself with the castigating doctor. See Zeydel in *Modern Language Notes*, LVIII, 340 ff.

## 77. OF GAMBLERS (VON SPYLERN)

255

Woodcut: Perhaps Master.

1. Personified hatred. See No. 53.

2. In the poem *De Ludo*, formerly ascribed to Vergil.

3. The original Latin is: "Initio furiis ego sum tribus addita quarta" (I, gambling, have been added as the fourth to the three Furies). Brant's rendering of this is quaint.

## 78. OF OPPRESSED FOOLS (VON GDRUCKTEN NARREN)

259

Woodcut: Inferior artist.

1. Cf. above, chap. 33, line 71, p. 139, line 3.

79. KNIGHTS AND CLERKS (RUTER UND SCHRIBER) 261  
Woodcut: Master.  
1. The original: He must have eaten the liver (*die leber gessen*), i. e., be the scapegoat.  
2. A fee was paid to the lord for safe passage through his domain. This was lucrative. Here Brant is outspoken in his criticism of the authorities for winking at a flagrant abuse.
80. FOOLISH NEWS (NARREHTE BOTTSCHAFFT) 263  
Woodcut: Inferior artist. Note the Basel coat-of-arms.  
1. The meaning of these obscure lines seems to be: Holds the envelope of the letter cautiously in his mouth so that the seal will not break.  
2. Simrock in his translation (p. xiii) calls attention to the tradition that the most famous of the processional carnival "ships" started its voyage over land from Aachen (Aix la Chapelle). Archer Taylor, in the *Journal of American Folk Lore*, XLVII, 11, believes the phrase in the text (*hie zwischen Ach*) means "nowhere." See also Taylor in *Studies in Honor of John Albrecht Walz*, Lancaster, 1941, p. 29.  
3. Cf. Prov. 25: 13.
81. OF COOKS AND WAITERS (VON KOCHEN UND KELLER) 263  
Woodcut: Master.  
1. The butlers, etc., are speaking.  
2. A mixture of vinegar and honey—a cooling drink.  
3. Gen. 40.  
4. II Kings 25: 8. Neither biblical reference is appropriate.
82. OF PEASANTS' SQUANDERING (VON BURSCHEM UFFGANG) 264  
Woodcut: Master. "Er muss dryn" means "It must go in."  
1. *Bannen und verlüten*. One could be excommunicated because of debts.  
2. *Dri spitz*. The words are also used to refer to a mantrap. The proverbial expression is supposed to mean: "The impossible is attempted nowadays." The illustration, however, shows not a *dri spitz* in the literal sense, but a *vier spitz*.
83. CONTEMPT OF POVERTY (VON VERACHTUNG ARMUT) 271  
Woodcut: Same as No. 3.  
1. I Kings 21.  
2. Horace *Odes* i. 22. 9, and Juvenal *Satires* x. 22.

3. M. Curius Dentatus, ob. B.C. 270, conqueror of the Samnites and of Pyrrhus.  
4. Mark 10: 24, and Matt. 5: 3. 5. Prov. 21: 6.  
6. Prov. 22: 16. 7. Prov. 23: 5.
84. OF PERSISTING IN THE GOOD (VON BEHARREN IN GUTEM) 276  
Woodcut: Same as No. 8.  
1. Luke 9: 62. 2. Exod. 16: 3.  
3. That is, food spewed up and eaten again. Cf. Prov. 26: 11, and II Pet. 2: 22.  
4. Rev. 3: 15 ff. 5. Gen. 19: 26.
85. NOT PROVIDING FOR DEATH (NIT FURSEHEN DEN DOT) 278  
Woodcut: Master. "Du blibst" means "you stay."  
1. Wine drunk as a solemn confirmation of a business deal or contract, here referring to man's contract with Death.  
2. Horace *Odes* i. 4. 13.  
3. The spirit of the passage, typical of the late Middle Ages, reminds one of the colloquy *Der Ackermann aus Böhmen*.  
4. Two popular dances.  
5. Probably Diodorus is Brant's source.  
6. Herodotus ii. 175 ff. and iii. 10.  
7. According to Diodorus, Strabo, and Pliny.
86. OF CONTEMPT OF GOD (VON VERACHTUNG GOTTES) 284  
Woodcut: Inferior artist.  
1. Cf. chap. 23 above. 2. Gal. 6: 7. 3. II Kings 20.  
4. Dan. 5. 5. *Mene tekel upharsin*.  
6. Nebuchadnezzar. Dan. 4.
87. OF BLASPHEMING GOD (VON GOTTESLESTERN) 287  
Woodcut: Master.  
1. Parts of the body of Christ by which it was not uncommon to swear.  
2. Lev. 24: 16. 3. II Kings 19. 4. Ovid *Metam.* i. 198.  
5. Vergil *Aen.* vii. 648.  
6. II Macc. 9: 5 ff. Charles, *Apocrypha*, p. 144.
88. OF TORTURE AND PUNISHMENT BY GOD (VON PLAG UND STROF GOTS) 289  
Woodcut: Master.  
1. Eccles. 34: 28. Charles, *Apocrypha*, p. 436.  
2. Ezek. 14: 13.



89. OF FOOLISH TRADING (VON DORECHTEM WECHSEL) 291  
Woodcut: Master.  
1. Cf. chap. 66, line 51, p. 222, line 15.
90. HONOR FATHER AND MOTHER (ERE VATTER UND MUTTER) 293  
Woodcut: Master.  
1. Prov. 20: 20. 2. II Sam. 15: 18. 3. Gen. 9: 20 ff.  
4. Is this based upon a misinterpretation of Daniel, 4 and 5, or did Brant have some other source? Beltheshazzar is meant.  
5. II Chron. 32: 21.  
6. Tob. 4: 3. Charles, *Apocrypha*, p. 211. 7. I Kings, 2: 19.  
8. Jer. 35: 2. They were praised by God through the prophets.  
9. Exod. 20: 12.
91. OF PRATTLING IN CHURCH (VON SCHWETZEN IM CHOR) 295  
Woodcut: Master.  
1. A comical figure on the organ pipes of the Strassburg Cathedral; it expanded and contracted its features and raised its arms comically while the organ played. Sometimes a priest, too, would ascend and join in the antics.
92. PRESUMPTUOUSNESS OF PRIDE (UBERHEBUNG DER HOCHFART) 297  
Woodcut: Master.  
1. C. Schmidt, *Histoire littéraire de l'Alsace*, I, 300, has a plausible explanation. He says it refers to Pierre de Coignet or Coingnet, a grotesque figure that the clergy of Paris placed in the Cathedral of Notre-Dame to mock Pierre de Cugnières, who in 1329 under Philippe VI had sided with the laity against the hierarchy. A German alluding to the Parisian localism might easily convince his fellow-countrymen that he had actually studied in Paris.  
2. This was indeed the worst vice of the Germans. Literature is full of references to it.  
3. The young owl was used as a decoy in fowling. The stick (*klob*) is a split slab of wood, identical with the devil's trap mentioned above in the introduction to the chapter and seen in the cut.  
4. Num. 22: 13. 5. Jth. 10. Charles, *Apocrypha*, p. 259.  
6. II Kings 9: 30.  
7. Eccles. 9: 8. Charles, *Apocrypha*, p. 346.  
8. II Sam. 11. Bath-Sheba is meant.

9. Gen. 34: 1. But she went out to see the daughters of the land, not the men!  
10. Wisd. of Sol. 5, 8, and 9. Charles, *Apocrypha*, p. 542.  
11. Gen. 16: 4-6. 12. Exod. 4: 21, and 5: 2.  
13. Num. 16. The example of Korah is a favorite with Brant.  
14. That is, the tower of Babel. See Gen. 11.  
15. II Sam. 24.
93. USURY AND PROFITEERING (WUCHER UND FURKOUFF) 302  
Woodcut: Master.  
1. Cf. chap. 76, line 11, p. 252, line 6.
94. OF HOPE OF GETTING LEGACIES (VON HOFFNUNG UFF ERBEN) 304  
Woodcut: Master.  
1. Cf. chap. 85, line 62, p. 280, line 5 from bottom.  
2. An Italian legal scholar of the twelfth century, who survived his sons. But a different story is told of him. He had claimed that a husband surviving his wife must restore the dowry to her family. His own wife died and he promptly followed his own teaching. Zarncke, p. 437.  
3. II Sam. 15 and 18.  
4. The reference is to the birth of Isaac.  
5. Luke 2: 26.
95. OF BEING MISLED ON HOLIDAYS (VON VERFURUNG AM FYRTAG) 306  
Woodcut: Master.  
1. Cf. chap. 28, line 6, and 94, line 12 (p. 127, line 1; 305, line 7).  
2. Pointed shoes were popular, the points being stuffed with rags.  
3. The text has *frytag* (Friday) instead of *fyrtag* (holiday). If this is not a misprint, the reference is to Friday as a day of abstinence.  
4. Brant uses the term *hümpeler*. Cf. Luther's translation of Prov. 26: 10.  
5. Num. 15: 32.  
6. II Macc. 2: 16 ff. Charles, *Apocrypha*, p. 134.  
7. Exod. 16: 22 ff.
96. GIVING AND REGRETTING (SCHENCKEN UND BERUWEN) 309  
Woodcut: Master.

97. OF INDOLENCE AND SLOTH (VON TRAGKEIT UND FULHEIT) 311  
Woodcut: Inferior artist.
1. Prov. 10: 26.
  2. For the word *winterbutz*, cf. chap. 6, line 62; p. 74, line 26.
  3. Num. 13: 14. 4. II Sam. 11.
  5. For this and the following lines cf. Prov. 26: 13 f.
98. OF OUTLANDISH FOOLS (VON USLENDIGEN NARREN) 311  
Woodcut: Inferior artist.
1. Prague, the seat of many heretics and unorthodox sects.
  2. Probably witches, magicians, and the like. But Geiler calls them whores.
99. OF THE DECLINE OF FAITH (VON ABGANG DES GLOUBEN) 315  
Woodcut: Inferior artist.
1. This chapter is probably written with more feeling than any other in the entire work, for it deals with a subject close to Brant's heart.
  2. Constantinople and Trebizond.
  3. In *De origine et conversatione bonorum regum et laude civitatis Hierosolymae* Brant deals more fully with their loss to Christendom.
  4. Bulgarians. 5. Illyrians.
  6. To which eastern European race this refers is not clear.
  7. Taurians, inhabitants of the Crimea.
  8. Negroponte, which fell in 1471. It is mentioned in Brant's *De origine*.
  9. Pera, a suburb of Constantinople.
  10. Kaffa, a Genoese city on the Black Sea, fell to the Turks by treachery. Cf. *De origine*.
  11. Otranto, a seaport town which fell in 1481. Cf. *De origine*.
  12. That is, Sicily. 13. That is, the papacy at Rome.
  14. Horace *Epistles* i. 18. 84.
  15. Historians of the time still maintained the fiction of an uninterrupted series of emperors since Julius Caesar.
  16. The reference is probably to the so-called Capitulations, whereby candidates for imperial or ecclesiastical election agreed not to make changes after election, so that those electing them might keep their booty.
  17. A proverb. Quoted by Bobertag from Agricola: "Wañ eyn

- studt zergehen sol, so beyszt ein pferdt dem andern den schwantz ab."
18. Maximilian had been elected Roman king but not yet anointed emperor by the Pope.
  19. That is, Palestine. Maximilian actually hoped to recapture it. This is one of Brant's favorite themes in his German and Latin worldly works.
  20. Cf. chap. 16, line 57, p. 98, line 21.
  21. Matt. 3: 10.
100. OF STROKING THE FALLOW STALLION (VON FALBEN HENGST STRICHEN) 323  
Woodcut: Master.
1. One explanation is: Fallow stallions were unpopular because of their color, and stroking one was a mark of insincerity and fawning flattery. Another: Since lords sometimes had horses of that color, stroking one would be equivalent to flattering its master.
  2. Picking feathers off the master's coat and "stroking his comb" (*klubt federn, stricht kriden*) are marks of servile flattery.
  3. "Owl" is used in this expression as a contemptuous designation for "hunting bird." It is merely another indirect reference to flattery.
  4. Blowing flour from one's mouth is another expression for flattery. The meaning is: You cannot blow and still keep your mouth full of flour.
  5. That is, mingle the truth (wool) and falsehood (hair).
101. OF BLOWING INTO EARS (VON OREN BLOSEN) 325  
Woodcut: Master.
1. Esther 3. 2. II Sam. 16: 1 ff., and 19: 24 ff.
  3. Alexander Balas is meant (ca. B. C. 150). Cf. I Macc. 10: 60 ff. Charles, *Apocrypha*, p. 104.
102. OF FALSITY AND DECEPTION (VON FALSCH UND BESCHISS) 327  
Woodcut: Master.
1. The author of the anonymous *Der neuen Welt Gattung, Schlag und Eygenschaft* (1539) made use of this entire chapter without giving credit to Brant. Jacob Cammerlander

in his edition of the *Narrenschiff* (Strassburg, 1540) publishes the poem in place of chap. 102.

2. Cf. Zarncke, p. 446.

3. Mannikins or figurines set on the counter to distract the customer's attention (*was narren uf dem laden stan*).

4. Or Beghines, sisters not bound by perpetual vows, but established for devotion and charity. They enjoyed a bad reputation as beggars, intriguers, and matchmakers.

5. Alchemists were called *Unkenbrenner*, or toad-burners. They were supposed to use the ashes of toads and basilisks.

6. The word is *guckuss*. There may be a pun involved. The cuckoo might refer to the foolishness of the alchemist, to the fact that he, like the cuckoo, lays his eggs in others' nests to be hatched, and the work *gucken*, "to look" or "to peep," may also be in Brant's mind.

103. OF THE ANTICHRIST (VOM ENDKRIST)

331

Woodcut: Master.

1. With the exception of the Prologue and chap. 48, this is the only chapter in the first edition that has no triplet or quatrain as a motto. For some of the imagery Brant may have used the anonymous sermon which was discussed in the Introduction, pp. 13-14.

2. That is, the theological literature is vilified. Brant confuses his symbols in this chapter more than usually.

3. That is, the ship of true faith.

4. Ezek. 2: 6. 5. Cf. Ezek. 13 and 14.

6. That is, make exact pirated reprints of already existing books.

7. In some of the later editions an interpolation of eighteen lines at this point puts in a good word for the printers as purveyors of knowledge.

8. *Schluderaffen* > *schluraffen*, literally "lazy apes," then inhabitants of the fabled land of *Schlaraffia*, the land of milk and honey and the paradise for indolent carousers and gluttons. See chap. 108 below. The concept may be traced in some of its aspects to Lucian. The Goliards took it up. In medieval France the land was known as *Coquaigne*, in England

*Cocayne* or *Cockayne*. It also occurs in Holland and became very popular in Germany in the sixteenth century.

9. Aix-la-Chapelle, or Aachen (Brant says *Ach*), selected as a distant but famous place of pilgrimage. See note 2 on chap. 80, line 24, p. 382.

10. Num. 11.

11. The abuses of absolution, becoming more marked at this time, were ignored by Brant and Geiler.

104. CONCEALING TRUTH (WORHEYT VERSCHWIGEN)

337

Woodcut: Master.

1. Cf. chap. 69, line 16, p. 233, line 11. Berillus was roasted in the ox of Phalaris.

2. Jonah 1: 3 ff. 3. II Kings 2. 4. Dan. 5: 17.

5. Num. 22: 7 and 19 ff.

6. Cf. above, p. 153, line 15, and p. 214, line 18.

7. Indicating harshness. 8. Indicating gentleness.

105. PREVENTION OF THE GOOD (HYNDERNYS DES GUTTEN)

340

Woodcut: Same as No. 42.

1. In 1487 Brant's mentor and friend a Lapide had joined this order and retired from the world, probably with Brant's warm approval. One of Brant's Latin poems deals with the same form of hypocritical ridicule of asceticism. See Zeydel in *Modern Language Quarterly*, IV, 209 ff.

2. When a Lapide took orders (see previous note) he was chided by Junker Brandolf von Stein, who said he would have done better by preaching. A Lapide is said to have replied: "Wann er zwo seelen hätte, wollte er gnug die eine an gut Gesellen gewagt han"—"if he had two souls he would gladly have risked giving one to jolly fellows" (see W. Vischer, *Geschichte der Universität Basel von 1460-1529*, Basel, 1860, p. 165).

106. REFRAINING FROM GOOD WORKS (ABLOSSUNG GUTTER  
WERCK)

343

Woodcut: Master.

1. Cf. Matt. 25. 2. Prov. 30: 24-28.

3. The reference is to Prov. 25: 16. But what is meant by sharp (pungent?) combs—*wafen scharff*—is not clear.

4. Ps. 49: 11 and 12.

107. OF REWARD FOR WISDOM (VON LON DER WISHEIT) 345  
Woodcut: Master.  
1. I Cor. 3: 19.  
2. Xenophon *Memorabilia* ii. 1. 21 ff. In Strassburg Brant later had this parable depicted in the form of a drama.  
3. Luke 18: 16-17, and Matt. 11: 25.  
4. A Greek bucolic poet, B. C. 120.
108. THE SCHLURAFFEN SHIP (DAS SCHLURAFFEN SCHIFF) 349  
Woodcut: Same as the third cut of the Prologue.  
1. Cf. note 8 on chap. 103, line 118, where we have simply translated the term as "apes." Cf. also Introduction, pp. 9, 15.  
2. Monte Fiascone, a town between Siena and Rome, famous for its good wine and therefore a paradise for carousers and tipplers. Perhaps chosen here because it suggests *Flasche*, "flask."  
3. See note 1 to chap. 91. Much of this chapter is used by Johann Römoldt in his *Laster der Hoffart* (Vice of Pride). It is placed in the mouth of Heinz Ohnetrost (Disconsolate Henry).  
4. Especially those seeking prebends in Rome.  
5. The cliffs mentioned in the *Odyssey* xii. 61 ff., and xxiii. 327, as well as in Ovid *Metam.* xv. 337. Brant's knowledge of the wanderings of Odysseus is not derived from Homer directly, but from compendia of his own time. He hardly read Greek.  
6. The king of the Laestrygoni, who ate human flesh. Cf. *Odyssey* x. 80 ff.  
7. Here Brant narrates not according to Homer, but according to the later story, whereby Odysseus was slain by the son whom Circe bore him.  
8. The banner in the woodcut indicates the first two words of this, the fools' theme song: *Gaudeamus omnes*.  
9. Geiler delivered four sermons on this chapter.
109. CONTEMPT OF MISFORTUNE (VERACHTUNG UNGEFELLES) 355  
Woodcut: Master.  
1. Cf. chap. 56, lines 55-56, p. 192, line 19.
110. SLANDER OF THE GOOD (HYNDERRED DES GUTEN) 357  
Woodcut: Master.

1. This means to attempt something impossible, which will eventually harm the person who tries it. The idea is from a fable in which the mice deliberate about hanging a bell on a cat.  
2. In view of the great success of the work, Brant's scruples are amusing and reveal great modesty. At this point modern editions interpolate two chapters (110a, Von disches unzucht—Ill Breeding at Table, and 110b, Von fasnacht narren—Of Shrovetide Fools) which are not in the first edition of 1494, but were inserted by Brant, probably as an afterthought, in the second edition of 1495. Geiler frequently used chap. 110a, which deals with a burning problem of the day.
111. APOLOGY OF THE POET (ENTSCULDIGUNG DES DICHTERS) 359  
Woodcut: Master.  
1. In the unauthorized Augsburg edition of 1498 there is an interpolation on scribbling lovers' names and symbols on walls. Cf. chap. 15 above.  
2. Ps. 37: 35-36.
112. THE WISE MAN (DER WIS MAN) 363  
Woodcut: Same as No. 22.  
1. That is, the poem *Vir bonus*, then ascribed to Vergil.  
2. The constellation.



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# The Ship of Fools

## SEBASTIAN BRANT

Published in 1494 in Basel, *The Ship of Fools* was soon translated into every major European language. It provoked a vast number of imitations and remained steadily in print through the 18th century (with sporadic reprints after that). It still possesses an enormous vigor and vitality.

The book owes its long life to an imagination, wit, and humor rich with insights into human nature, yet neither bitter nor namby pamby. Its commentary on the boasting, pedantry, false learning, gambling, gluttony, medical folly, adultery, greed, envy, hatred, pride and other failings that mark humanity are sharp and telling, and, sadly, as relevant today as they were 450 years ago.

This translation by Professor Edwin H. Zeydel is the only accurate English translation ever published. (Barclay's version is really a pastiche written in imitation of Brant.) The form Professor Zeydel uses is verse, like the original, and he even retains the original rhyme scheme and meter. The achievement is remarkable, for it captures all the charm and movement of the original German while sacrificing nothing to readability and fluidity.

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