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The Nutbrown Maid (*a reconstructed text*)

INTRODUCTION

I

THE NUTBROWN MAID has remained one of the most esteemed and popular of early Tudor poems ever since its first known appearance about 1503 in Richard Arnold's *Customs of London* (STC 782; often called "Arnold's Chronicle"). It was separately printed at an early date, probably in a quarto of twelve leaves (the text is too long for a broadside), and went through a number of editions. Though no copies of these quartos survive, their existence is attested by the fact that in 1520 the Oxford bookseller John Dorne sold a copy for a penny,¹ and that in 1558-59 John King was fined for printing the poem without license.² It was well enough known to be made the subject of a religious parody about 1537;³ in 1575 it had a place in the library of popular "matters of storie" owned by the Coventry mason Captain Cox;⁴ and in the mid-seventeenth century an abbreviated text was copied into the Percy Folio. It then dropped out of sight for a while; but in 1707 it was reprinted (from a transcript that had been made for Pepys from the 1503 edition) with an appreciative notice in the periodical called *The Muses Mercury*—an edition that inspired Matthew Prior's popular imitation, *Henry and Emma*, in 1709. Edward Capell printed it in his *Prolusions* in 1760, Bishop Percy included it in his *Reliques* in 1765, and from that time onward it has continued to be a popular selection in anthologies.

The poem is a version of the Griselda story, first given literary form by Boccaccio in the *Decameron* (x.x), redacted into Latin by Petrarch, and from Petrarch's Latin and a French translation paraphrased by Chaucer in his Clerk's Tale. It is an exemplum of the constancy of women's affection, of love that never varies however maligned. Boccaccio's version of the story moved Petrarch to tears, and the fourteenth-century author of the *Ménagier de Paris* found in it "too much cruelty, beyond reason." But the author of *The Nutbrown Maid* mitigates the pathos, for his Maid does not herself suffer; she is only presented with the prospect of suffering. It is the intention of the author to praise women by showing that they are superior in constancy to men, and by indicating that they may be

1. F. Madan, "The Daily Ledger of John Dorne," in Oxford Historical Society, *Collectanea*, First Series, ed. C. R. L. Fletcher (1885), p. 87.

2. Edward Arber, *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers*, I (1875), 93.

3. Printed by W. Carew Hazlitt in *Remains of the Early Popular Poetry of England*, III (1866), 2-22.

4. *Robert Laneham's Letter*, ed. F. J. Furnivall, Ballad Society (London, 1871), p. 30.

even higher than men in the eyes of God, who "sumtyme provith such as he lovith." As Chaucer, following Petrarch, had said, every person "sholde be constant in adversitee," for God "preeveth folk al day." This is in accordance with the doctrine of St. Augustine's *De Patientia*, which quoted the Book of Wisdom iii.4-6: "And though they suffer pain before men, yet is their hope full of immortality . . . for god proveth them and findeth them meet for himself, he trieth them as the gold in the furnace." Nevertheless, Dr. Johnson's condemnation, in his life of Prior, of the moral confusion of that poet's imitation, applies equally to the original—the Maid's resolve "to follow an outlawed murderer . . . deserves no imitation," and the Man's expedients to try her constancy are "such as must end either in infamy to her, or in disappointment to himself"—and is not convincingly negated even by the larger religious perspective given by the end of the poem.

The Nutbrown Maid was first commended in *The Muses Mercury* in 1707 as a poem that will affect the "Minds of those that are to be touch'd by the Truth and Simplicity of Nature; for she cannot be better painted, if we will excuse the antique colouring"—a judgment that was substantially repeated by Percy in his *Reliques*. Child included it in the first two editions of his *Popular Ballads* (1864, 1878), but omitted it from his final edition. The poem is not a popular ballad and is not in the least an example of simple primitivism. It is a sophisticated work of art written by a poet who had a feeling for rhythm, a command of phrasing, and an ability to construct a story which were superior to those of most of his contemporaries.

The poem's great technical innovation is the application to narrative of devices from the newly developing secular drama. There had been dialogues before which told a story—such as *De Clerico et Puella*—but this poem is presented by actors who *impersonate* the characters. In the first four stanzas two actors come forward and in their own persons announce to the audience (see l. 16) that they will perform a piece to illustrate the virtues of women, and show that they have been unjustly maligned in the current attacks against them. The actors then assume the roles of Squire and Puella, and conduct a dialogue that develops and resolves a situation in the ensuing stanzas 5-29. In the last stanza the actors drop their dramatic roles, and, again in their own persons, comment in unison on the episode they have just performed. This technique is similar to that of Henry Medwall's *Fulgens and Lucrece*, c. 1487, which is almost the earliest example of purely secular drama in England. Medwall's play is primarily a debate on the qualities of true nobility. It begins with the actors, A and B, stepping out from among the audience and announcing the subject of the play; they then assume roles within the play as servants, and the action and debate proceed when the other principals enter. *The Nutbrown Maid*, then, has many of the characteristics of the earliest interludes, especially the element of *impersonation* by actors. A plot is unfolded which rises to a climax and has a surprising reversal at the end: all this is conveyed by dialogue; the only thing lacking to make it completely dramatic is physical movement of the characters during the performance. The poem may be considered as similar to the interlude, a form which its author obviously had in mind and on which he structured his piece. It does not, however, have a part in the historical development of the drama, for it is modelled on the already developed secular drama. Chambers, who classes the poem with carols and lyric, remarks that it might have been treated under the heading of drama; Warton had properly called it a "dramatic dialogue."⁵

5. E. K. Chambers, *English Literature at the Close of the Middle Ages* (1945), p. 121; Thomas Warton, *History of English Poetry*, III (1781), 140.

The poem is also notable for its competent handling of an intricate verse form and a sure sense of rhythm unusual for its time. The line is a septenary with double internal rhyme, and six lines are combined to form a stanza *aaaabB*, with a recurrent refrain. The form is found in Latin in the thirteenth century, and often in English from the fourteenth century onwards.⁶ In contrast to much other verse at the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century, the rhythm has a sure flow. The basic pattern is iambic, but variety is introduced by substituting two unstressed syllables for a single unstressed syllable in any position. Only in four places (ll. 83, 99, 104, and 153) do headless part-lines occur, and these could be the result of textual corruption.⁷

II

Though the poem has been many times reprinted, there has been general uncertainty regarding its text, most editions of which have been eclectically emended. In 1760 Edward Capell, the first person to attempt a scholarly edition, reprinted the text of 1521 (the only one he knew of) with thirty-one acknowledged and fourteen unacknowledged conjectural emendations. In 1871 W. W. Skeat, in his *Specimens of English Literature 1394-1579*, produced a corrected version of the 1503 text, emended in thirty-six places by conjecture or with readings from the Balliol MS; and this eclectic procedure has been followed by the more recent editors F. Sidgwick and E. K. Chambers. No one heretofore has tried to determine the lines of descent and the relationships of the extant substantive texts, though ever since 1868, when F. J. Furnivall provided a *literatim* print of the Balliol and Percy Folio MSS in *Bishop Percy's Folio MS* (III, 174-86), most of the evidence has been publicly available. What has not been perceived heretofore is that Treveris' edition of Arnold's *Customs of London*, about 1521, was not a literal reprint of the first edition of about 1503, but was extensively corrected from another source, perhaps one of the lost quarto editions; and that even the late Percy Folio of about 1650, though it has suffered serious corruption, nevertheless retains readings which are of assistance in determining the earlier state of the text. It is time, therefore, to reassess the textual evidence and to attempt to reconstruct the wording of the original version of the poem.

As I have indicated, documentary evidence shows that a separately printed edition of *The Nutbrown Maid*, probably in quarto form, was produced as early as 1520 and reprinted about 1558, and that probably other editions were issued, possibly before and certainly after those dates; but no copy of any of these survives. There are extant, however, five early printed and MS sources to be taken into account in constructing a critical text: the earliest extant print in the first edition of "Arnold's Chronicle" about 1503 (which I will

6. Arthur K. Moore, *The Secular Lyric in Middle English* (Lexington, Ky., 1951), pp. 183-86.

7. I have resisted the temptation to create metrical regularity by emending lines 83 and 99 (against the testimony of all the substantive texts) to read "from deth many [a] one" and "Made of [fine] threde and twyne"; adopting the unique reading of *o3* in line 104, "Ne may not faylle"; or preferring *21-03* "fynd me" in 153 against *B-P*. However, where omissions adversely affect the sense and also produce headless lines, I have adopted *21-03* readings at 48 and 66 against *B*, and the *o3-P* reading at 143 against *B-21*.

refer to as *03*); the corrected reprint of this about 1521 (*21*); the transcript made shortly before or after 1521 in Balliol College Oxford MS. 354 (*B*); a religious parody, *The New Notborune Mayd vpon the Passion of Cryste*, printed about 1537 (*N*); and the corrupt and truncated transcript made about 1650 in the Percy Folio, British Museum MS. Additional 27879 (*P*). The first three texts are complete; *N* only occasionally echoes single words or phrases of its model; and the late version in *P* preserves only twenty of the original thirty stanzas. A number of unique errors in each of these texts show that none of them except *N* could descend exclusively from any other, so all four of the main texts are entirely or partly substantive.

The earliest text (*03*) is printed, incongruously, near the middle (sigs. N6–02) of a folio anthology of commercial and legal items, several of which concern a Richard Arnold, a haberdasher of London who also conducted business in the Netherlands, and who was identified as the compiler by Bale.⁸ The volume has no title, but has since been designated "Arnold's Chronicle," from its compiler and the historical annals that constitute its first item. The contents are not arranged in any logical or chronological order. The chronicle with which the collection begins extends to 1503; near the middle is a letter of exchange dated 1492; and near the end is a will dated 1473. So the compilation was probably put together in or shortly after 1503, which is accepted as the date of printing and also provides us with the latest date for the composition of *The Nutbrown Maid*. How much earlier the poem may have been composed there is no certain way of telling, though its language and style are consonant with a date of composition not long before that of the print. The British Museum Catalogue and the *STC* identify the printer as Adrian van Berghen of Antwerp. Since the text was set up by a foreign compositor, it abounds in obvious typographical and manifest verbal errors. The text of *The Nutbrown Maid*, which occupies only six pages, contains forty obvious typographical errors, and when collated with the other texts it is revealed to have fifty-one unique readings, at least a third of which are manifest errors. It is therefore an inaccurate and unreliable text. Whether Arnold copied it from a now lost MS or earlier print there is no way of knowing. Some of the verbal corruptions may have existed in his source, and others he may have introduced himself in the course of making his own MS copy; the compositor was certainly responsible for the typographical and probably for some of the verbal errors.

A second text (*21*) is the reprint of *03* published at Southwark without date by Peter Treveris.⁹ In this edition an insert of five pages extends the chronicle to 1521, but otherwise the volume is a paginary reprint of the Antwerp folio. The text of *The Nutbrown Maid*, however, was extensively revised. All but two of *03*'s obvious typographical errors were corrected, and verbal variants were introduced in 66 of the 180 lines. The compositor of *21* had certain spelling preferences of his own ("nat" for "not," "betwayne" for "betwene," etc.), but in general he reproduced fairly closely the pattern of accidentals in *03* (29 "red," 34 "wheder," etc.). It therefore appears that *21* was set up from an annotated copy of *03* rather than directly from the source from which the corrections were taken.

8. John Bale, *Scriptorum Illustrum Brytanniae Catalogus* (Basle, 1559), Centuria IX, No. x.

9. Van Berghen's edition was reprinted at Antwerp by J. van Doesborch about 1515; but a single leaf of this edition in the British Museum, which does not contain the poem, is all that survives.

This is further indicated by the imperfect correction of some of the errors in *o3*, which shows that *o3* itself served as printer's copy. For example, *o3* in line 34 has "yed one" for "ye done," an error in spacing; but *21* prints "ye one," indicating that the compositor may have misinterpreted a line inked in before the "d" as a mark of deletion rather than as an indication of spacing; and where *o3* at l. 37 has "shomwhat" for "somewhat," *21* apparently prints "lomwhat" (though "l" and long "s" are difficult to distinguish).

It is clear that Treveris recognized the inaccuracy of the *o3* text of *The Nutbrown Maid* and sought out a better original by which to correct it. This was probably one of the now-lost quarto editions, for Treveris' corrections agree overwhelmingly with *B*, which also appears to be a transcript of a printed quarto. It is also clear that, instead of using the quarto as printer's copy, Treveris collated his copy of *o3* against the quarto, and entered the corrections between the lines and in the margins of his folio. Unfortunately he did not do a thorough job of collation, and allowed a number of *o3* errors to stand uncorrected (some of the more obvious are 29 "whan" for "what," 40 "make" for "take," 115 "y^t" for "than," 136 "dede" for "rede," and 158 "of" for "in"). In addition, his annotations must have been difficult to decipher and his compositor worked carelessly, so that his text, though correcting *o3* in many places, contains sixteen new typographical errors and twenty-one new unique readings, all of which appear to be errors.¹⁰

Since *21* was set up from an annotated copy of *o3*, it cannot be depended upon as an independent authority where it agrees with *o3*, because in those passages it may merely repeat the testimony of *o3*. Therefore *21* is properly taken as substantive only where it differs from *o3*; but even in those passages its testimony is uncertain, because without corroborative evidence it is difficult to tell whether its variants are genuine corrections taken from an authoritative source, or merely new errors introduced by the *21* collator or compositor.

Fortunately this corroborative evidence is provided by a third text, *B*, which has every appearance of being a careful and accurate transcript of an authoritative original. This was transcribed in an anthology of poetry shortly before or after 1521 by the London merchant Richard Hill, probably directly from one of the lost printed quartos. Instead of long septenary lines extending across a folio page, it is copied in half lines, suggesting derivation from an original of smaller format. It is also the only text to preserve the speech headings of "Squire" and "Puella." Where *o3* has forty and *21* has seventeen obvious typographical errors, *B* contains no more than three obvious transcriptional errors (25 "it" for "is," 57 "deuyoyed" for "deuoyd," and 178 "be be" for "be"). Also, where *o3* contains fifty-one, and *21* contains twenty-one, unique verbal variants, all or most of which are errors, *B* contains unique readings in only twenty-four lines, no more than six of which are demonstrable errors.¹¹ Therefore *B* is the most accurate and dependable of all the early texts.

A fourth early witness, the religious parody *N* printed about 1537, is of no value in constructing a critical text. Though in each of its thirty stanzas it repeats the last phrase of the refrain and two or more rhyme words, within the lines it only occasionally echoes single

10. See in the apparatus lines 1, 9, 32, 34, 40, 59 (2), 61, 82, 86, 87 (2), 112, 116, 122, 158, 170, 174, 176, 177, and 179.

11. See in the apparatus lines 23, *25, 29, 40 (2), 45, *48, 49, 50, 52, *53, 57, *66, 68, 82, *91, *99, 116, 127, 130, 136, 147, 148, 176, 178 (2)—asterisks indicate errors.

words or phrases from its model. Most of its echoed words or phrases are invariant in the other texts, so only five passages provide possible evidence of textual relationships. In l. 1 *N* agrees in error with *P* against the other texts, "Ryght and no wrong," but this must be an accidental result of the independent substitution of similars. In two lines *N* agrees with *o3* against *B-21-P* (25 "Wherfore moche," 136 "wycked dede"), and in two other lines omitted by *P* it agrees with *o3* against *B-21* (41 "loo," 79 "Full well"). Since all four of these readings are probably errors in *o3*, the agreements indicate that *N* was modelled directly upon *o3* itself, and so is a derivative and not a substantive text. But even if it were substantive, *N*'s echoes of its model are so erratic and infrequent that its testimony would have to be ignored as textually insignificant.

The fifth text, in the Percy Folio (*P*), a century or more later in date than the others, was copied either from a late and corrupt lost quarto or from some other corrupt intermediary. It preserves only twenty of the original thirty stanzas and has verbal variants in almost every line. But though it is more of a paraphrase than a copy, it nevertheless preserves the main features of its ultimate original, and its testimony is overwhelmingly in favor of the readings of *B* against those of *o3* or *o3-21*. It agrees with *B-21* against *o3* in lines 6, 11, 18, 25, 36, 71, 98, 102, 113, 117, 123, 126, 136, and 163; and with *B* against *o3-21* in lines 7, 32, 87, 115 ("then"), 150, and 153. At 115 ("woman hood") *P* agrees in error with *o3* against *B-21*, at 139 it reads "vpbraid" with *o3* against *B-21* "owt brayde," and at 174 it reads "Thus" with *o3* against *B-21* "Than"; these are probably accidental resemblances resulting from the independent substitution of similars. But at 143 *P* preserves with *o3* the correct reading "me" which *B-21* omit, and at 176 it preserves with *o3* a part-line which *21* omits and which *B* transcribes wrongly as the result of an eye-skip. *P* also corroborates the readings of *B* at 32, 87, 115, 143, and 150, and partially corroborates it at 147, 153, and 163. Therefore, despite its late date and corruption, *P* offers occasional evidence useful in the choice of readings.¹²

Of the four primary texts (*o3*, *21*, *B*, *P*), all except *B* abound in manifest errors. But when these manifest errors are eliminated, we find that the four texts fall into two groups identified by slight variations in phrasing in some fifty lines. The earliest group (represented by *o3*), I designate *X*; the later group (represented by *B*, the corrections in *21*, and *P*), I designate *Y*. I list below the salient readings of *B* and *o3* that distinguish *Y* and *X*.

12. In the earlier stages of my analysis I thought it might be possible to establish a precise stemmatic line of descent of the extant texts: *o3* and *N* from *X* (they agree together against the other texts at 25, 41, 79, 136); *P* from *Y* (*P* agrees with or approximates *o3* against *B-21* at 113, 115, 139, 142, 174, 176); *B* and *21* from *Y* via *Z* (they agree together against *P* and *o3* at 104, 113, 143, 174). But the evidential weight of these few scattered readings is slight indeed, especially when we take into account the phenomenon of independent substitution of similars. My final conclusion is the pattern of relationships described in the body of this essay: *o3* from *X* (or from an earlier print of the lost quarto *Y* via a scribally revised intermediary); *N* probably from *o3*; *B* and the corrections in *21* directly from *Y*; *P* from *Y* via corrupt intermediaries.

(B reading given first; 03 reading second)

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 6 from : and | 87 and wete : or wete |
| 7 wreten : writ | 95 shortly gon : soone agone |
| 11 whan . . . cam . . . to her : | 98 Nether : nor drinke |
| from . . . whan . . . he cam | 104 May not : Ne may not |
| 23 tell me : telle | 107 or : er |
| 25 wherof gret : wherfore moche | 110 your Knee : the knee |
| 32 the . . . darke : My . . . derked | 113 yff that . . . Do it as shortly as : |
| 40 you owght : ye nought | And . . . doo it shortely as |
| 41 to : loo | 116 myn here : my here |
| 45 bide : leue | 117 I haue : haue I |
| 50 of olde : and olde | 123 like as : right as |
| 52 for your : from your | 127 it is : yet is |
| 59 to Shewe : And sure | 130 ye proved . . . ye loved : |
| 65 wherby : By whiche | you proued . . . you loued |
| 67 I say : I Thinke | 136 by my cursed Rede : be wyked dede |
| 68 to for sake : for your sake | 139 owt brayde : vpbraid |
| 75 socowrs : rescous | 141-2 be as ye said / ye were . . . leue me : |
| 76 ye . . . ffor fere wold draw : | as the sayde / Be so . . . leue |
| you . . . shul drawe for fere | 145 you went : ye went |
| 78 I will to / the grenwod go : | 147 more fayre : fayrer |
| I too . the woode wyl goo | 153 me fynd / softe : fynde . me softe |
| (also 102, 126, 150) | 160 that ye shuld : you shuld |
| 79 Right . . . but : Ful . . . ful | 163 more gladder : more glad |
| 80 it is : is it | 170 Sith ye : sith you |
| 81 with . . . or : amonge . . . and | 171 myn herytage : my herytage |
| 82 To helpe you with my : | 174 Than : Thus |
| to greue them as I | 178 God : Whiche |

Most of the variants characterizing these two groups make almost equally good sense in context, and neither set can be clearly differentiated as an improvement over the other. Many of the variants are merely sense substitutions of one synonymous expression for another (as, for example, 45 *bide B* : *leue 03*; 65 *wherby* : *By whiche*; 75 *socowrs* : *rescous*; 95 *shortly gon* : *soone agone*; 107 *or* : *er*; 123 *like as* : *right as*; 136 *cursed* : *wyked*; 139 *owt brayde* : *vpbraid*). Variations of this sort are too inconsequential to be the result of systematic authorial revision. Therefore one or the other set must be the work of a creative scribe who reproduced the general meaning rather than the specific wording of the text before him and frequently indulged in sense substitutions. If the scribe who made the substitutions wrote *X*, then *Y* best represents the lost author's original; if he wrote *Y*, then *X* would preserve the readings of the original.

It is, however, difficult to determine with certainty whether *X* or *Y*, the *03* or *B* variants, are authorial or the substitutions of a creative scribe. On impressionistic grounds fewer than a dozen *03* readings and a slightly larger number of *B* readings might appear preferable to an individual reader, but most of the other variants seem indifferent. Objective criteria are difficult to establish, though internal consistency of usage might be an indication of authorial readings. Uses of "my" and "mine," regularity of rhythm, and consistency of the

refrain are examples. *B* always writes "mine" before a vowel; *o3* usually does, but in one place (71) has "my." *B* usually has "mine" before "h," but in one place (29) has "my"; *o3* is erratic and in two places (71, 101) has "mine," but in two other places (116, 171) has "my." The rhythm of the poem is in general remarkably regular for its time, and only in two places (83, 99) do headless part-lines occur in both *o3* and *B*; elsewhere *o3* has seven headless part-lines (16, 36, 49, 113, 136, 143, 178), all but the first, fourth, and sixth of which result from fairly obvious omissions; and *B* has only six headless part-lines (48, 66, 91, 104, 143, 153), all but the fourth and sixth of which result from fairly obvious omissions. In *B* the refrains of the Puella are invariant, except in 48 where "my" is obviously omitted; in *o3* the refrains of the Puella are also invariant, except in 36 where "my" is obviously omitted, and 60 where the substitution of "But" is a manifest error that destroys the sense. Except for the opening phrase, the refrains of the Squire are invariant in *B*; but in *o3* they vary in four stanzas (78, 102, 126, 150):

wherfor I will to / the grenwod go / alon a banysshed man. (*B*)

Wherfore I too / the woode wyl goo / alone a banysshed man. (*o3*)

Here *o3* substitutes "woode" for the otherwise invariant "grenwod." I cannot see that any purpose is served by maintaining the refrains of the Puella invariant, but varying the refrains of the Squire in four places as is done in *o3*. But since we have no other works of the unknown author to compare, we cannot be certain whether he himself was entirely consistent in his use of "my" and "mine," whether his sense of rhythm would lead him always to avoid a headless part-line, or whether he wished to keep all but the opening phrase of his Squire refrains verbally identical. However, the testimony of both *o3* and *B* indicates a considerable tendency on the parts of both their originals toward internal consistency, and since *B* is more consistent than *o3*, it may preserve the original author's reading more accurately than does *o3*.

There is the further fact that in several passages apparently acceptable variant synonyms in *o3* occur in combination with manifest errors. Thus in 68, though *o3*'s "for your sake" makes sense, the following "as ye haue said" indicates a misunderstanding of the structure of the sentence (see textual note); in 76 *o3*'s transposition of the phrase is acceptable, but its "shul" is an error for "shuld"; and in 136, though *o3*'s "wyked" is as appropriate in the context as *B*'s "cursed," its omission of the preceding "my" and its substitution of "dede" for "rede" are demonstrable errors (see textual note). We are therefore led to suspect that the *o3* synonyms that make sense may be scribal substitutions to the same extent that the manifest errors are. And finally there is the fact that in 1521 the printer Treveris rejected most of the *X* readings in *o3* and substituted *Y* readings for them.

However, none of these arguments is absolutely conclusive in proving authorial readings; and the final choice of the original to be constructed, *X* or *Y* (the original of *o3* or the original of *B*), must be made on pragmatic grounds. The only surviving witness to *X* is *o3*, a manifestly unreliable text which can be corrected only by conjectural emendation. It is impossible to reconstruct *X* with any certainty, because with only one text as a witness we cannot tell whether its variants from *Y* derive from the original *X* or are unauthoritative substitutions introduced by *o3* itself. On the other hand, the readings of *Y* are attested throughout by *B*, which contains remarkably few manifest errors, and are attested in part by the corrections in *21* and by *P*; the independent errors of *B* can be detected by the concurrence of *21-P* and *o3*, and therefore the readings of *Y* can be reconstructed with a high probability of accuracy.

So the readings of *Y*, the lost quarto, the text that was most widely read in the sixteenth century, are the object of the present reconstruction. How accurately the critical text that follows reflects the wording of the author's earlier lost original remains to some extent problematic, though the balance of the evidence suggests that whatever deviations from the author's original may remain are minor.

III

From the above discussion, the principles upon which the critical text should be reconstructed are self-evident. *B* should be the copy text, because it contains fewer manifest errors than the others and because, since it is probably a direct transcript of the lost quarto, it is more likely to preserve the accidentals of its original than the others, which are demonstrably at further removes from their respective originals. The readings of *B*, where not manifestly in error, should be accorded primacy where variants occur in the other substantive texts. Second in order of authority are those passages of *21* that vary from *03*, because only the variant passages have an adequate likelihood of being substantive. Third in order of authority is *03*, and fourth *P*, because their general level of accuracy is demonstrably lower. The occasional testimony of *N* should be ignored because it is probably a derivative text.

Where variants occur, manifest errors should of course be discarded. Where variants in two or more texts make sense and are appropriate in their contexts, the agreement of *B* and any other text should be preferred against the agreement of the two remaining texts. Thus *B-21* should be preferred to *03-P*, *B-03* to *21-P*, and *B-P* to *03-21*. Where *P* omits a passage in question, *B* alone should be preferred against the agreement of *03-21*, because *21* was printed from a partially corrected copy of *03* and where it agrees it may only be repeating the testimony of *03*. When these principles are applied, it is found that *B* requires emendation in only thirteen passages. Three of these are obvious transcriptional errors in *B* (25, 57, 178), five others are manifest verbal errors in *B* (91, 99, 127, 148, 176), in four sense or rhythm indicate the superiority of *21-03* to *B* or *B-P* (48, 53, 66) or of *03-P* to *B-21* (143) and in one *21-03* supported by *P* outweigh an indifferent reading of *B* (147). Except for ten passages, all other readings in *B* are supported by the consensus of two or more authorities in accordance with the principles enumerated above.¹³

In the critical text that follows the copy text is *B* (Balliol College Oxford MS. 354, fols. 210v-213v), which is printed by generous permission of the Master and Fellows of Balliol College. The copy text is transcribed *literatim*, except that abbreviations are expanded and the thorn is transcribed "th." Punctuation, word division, and capitalization are editorial (there are only a few random capitals in the copy text, and the only punctuation in any of the originals is a virgule or period after the internal rhymes). The line numbering indicates complete septenaries, but each septenary is printed as two lines, which is the way the text was probably printed in the lost quarto and was transcribed in *B* and *P*, and which makes for greater ease in reading.

13. *B* alone is preferred against *21-03* in only nine passages (23, 29, 45, 49, 50, 52, 66, 68, and 178); *B-P* is preferred against *21-03* in only six passages (7, 32, 115, 145, 150, 171); and *B* alone is preferred against *21-03-P* on the basis of rhyme usage in one word (136 "rede"). All other passages in the critical text are supported by *B-21*, *B-03*, or a combination of three or all four of the substantive texts.

In the apparatus all substantive departures from the copy text and all verbal variants in 21 and 03 are listed. *P* is so late and corrupt that its complete verbal variants are listed only for the first stanza for illustrative purposes, and elsewhere only where variants occur in the other texts, because only in those cases may *P* readings be of textual significance. In order to eliminate insignificant detail from the apparatus, obvious typographical errors in 03 and 21 that would be automatically corrected by any reader or copyist are not listed but are separately enumerated below:

Forty Obvious Typographical Errors in 03

1 cōplaiue, 4 fouour, 6 though, 7 bat, 9 witues, 14 too . . . they, 28 au, 29 her ttrewe, 34 yed one, 37 shomwhat, 46 neyer . . . lone, 48 lone bnt yon, 51 wantou, 57 lone . . . denoyd, 58 yonr, 63 mnst, 64 lyeue, 69 huute, 76 shul, 79 fyght, 83 oue, 87 ou, 88 a bowe, 93 snre, 97 yEf, 98 before, 99 aud, 110 yout, 115 lougeth, 118 duth, 124 iu, 125 moman, 127 yEf, 128 lonid, 135 farest, 145 yEf, 158 iu . . . ener, 164 seeu, 170 destende, 173 cau.

Seventeen Obvious Typographical Errors in 21

2 wayne, 6 tought, 16 your, 25 as, 35 where, 37 lomwhat, 47 all thought, 53 and ylle, 59 Towe, 77 Where, 94 were, 98 befor, 101 whan, 105 Sall, 130 Yed, 142 You, 174 and yerles.

The critical text I print is not perfectly consistent internally, because I have not posited a perfectly consistent author. I have tried to follow the lead of the four substantive authorities, even when their evidence results in slight textual inconsistencies. Perhaps I should have emended 83, 99, 104, and 153 to remove all headless lines, and 71 to make the use of "mine" before "h" absolutely consistent, and perhaps I should have printed "ye" as subject and "you" as object throughout. But poets at the turn of the century were seldom so precise.

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THE NUTBROWN MAYDE

[210v]

[1 First Player]

Be it right or wronge, thes men amonge
 on wymen do complayn,
 affermyng this, how that it is
 a labowre spent in vayn
 to love them well, for neuer a dele
 they love a man agayn.
 For late a man do what he can
 ther favowre to attayn,
 5 yet yf a newe to them pursue,
 ther ferste trew lover than
 labowreth for nowght, for from her thought
 he is a banysshed man.

[2 Second Player]

I say not nay, but that all day
 it is both wreten and said
 that woman's feyth is, as who seyth,
 all vtturly decayde;
 but neuerthelesse, right good witnes
 in this case myght be layde,
 10 that they love trew and conteneue:
 recorde the Nutbrown Mayde,
 which whan her love cam her to prove,
 to her to make his mone,

Title: The Nutbrown mayde *B*; A ballade of the notbrowne mayde 21 03
Table of Contents; The nutt browne mayd *P*.

- 1 Be it right or *B* 21 03; Right & noe *P*. on *B* 21 03; as *P*. wymen *B* 03 *P*;
 woman 21.
 2 how that *B* 21 03; what a thing *P*. a *B* 21 03; of a *P*.
 3 omit *P*.
 4 late *B* 21 03; lett *P*. attayn *B* 21 03; obtaine *P*.
 5 yet *B* 21 03; & *P*. ther *B* 21 03; the *P*.
 6 labowreth *B* 21 03; he labours *P*. for from *B* 21; and from 03; fur from *P*.
 he *B* 21 03; for he *P*.
 7 wreten *B P*; writ 21 03.
 8 womans *B* 03; womens 21 *P*.
 9 this *B* 03 *P*; his 21.
 11 whan . . . cam . . . to her *B* 21; from . . . whan . . . he cam 03; whan . . . came . . . he
 come *P*.

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wolde not departe, for in her hart
she loved but hym alone.

[3 First Player]

Than betwen vs let vs discvsse
what was all the maner
betwen them two; we will also
tell all the payn in fere
15 that she was in. Now I begyn,
so that ye me answerere.
Wherfor all ye that present be,
I pray you geve an ere;
I am the knyght; I com by nyght
as secrete as I can,
saying, "Alas, thus stondith the caas,
I am a banysshed man."

[4] Puella

And I your will for to fulfill
in this will not refuce,
20 trustyng to shew, in wordes fewe,
that men haue an yll vse
to ther own shame wymen to blame,
and caverselesse them accuse.
Therfor to you I answerere now,
all wymen to excuse:
"Myn own hart dere, with you what chere?
I pray you tell me anon,
ffor in my mynd of all mankynd
I love but you alon."

[5] Squyre

25 "It stondith so: a dede is doo
wherof gret harme shall grow.

12-17 omit P.

16 wherfor all B 21; Wherefore 03.

18 caas B; case 21 P; cause 03.

19-24 omit P.

23 tell me B; tell 21 03.

25 is 21 03 P; it B. wherof gret B 21; wherfore moche 03; wherby great P.

13 maner: mode of action

14 in fere: together

18 caas: case; cf. l. 167

My destynye ys for to dye
 a shamfull deth I trow,
 or elles to flee; the on mvste be.
 Non other way I know,
 but to withdraw as an owtlawe
 and take me to my bow.
 Wherfor adewe myn own hart trew,
 non other rede I can;
 30 ffor I mvste to the grenwode go,
 alon, a banysshed man."

[6] Puella

"O lorde what is this worldes blis
 that changith as the mone?
 The somer's day in lusty May
 is darke beffore the none.
 I here you say ffarewell; nay, nay,
 we departe not so sone.
 Why say ye so? Whether will ye go?
 Alas, what haue ye done?
 35 All my welfare to sorow and care
 shuld chaunge, yf ye were gon;
 ffor in my mynde of all mankynd
 I love but you alon."

[7] Squyre

"I can beleve it shall you greve
 and sumwhat you dystreyne;
 but afterward your paynes harde
 within a day or twayn
 shall sone aslake, and ye shall take
 conforte to you agayn.

27 on B 21 P; ton 03.

29 Myn own B; my owne 21 03 P.

31 changith B 03 P; chaunged 21.

32 the B 21 P; My 03. darke B P; derked 21 03. none B 03 P; mone 21.

34 ye done B; ye one 21; yed one 03; you done P.

36 in my B 21 P; in 03.

38-85 omit P, except that 71-72 are substituted for 95-96.

29 *myn own*: The testimony of B alone is here preferred to 21-03-P "my owne," because elsewhere B-21-03 always have "mine" before a vowel—cf. ll. 23, 149, 157

40 Why shuld you owght? For to take thowght
 your labowre were in vayn.
 And thus I doo, and pray you to,
 as hartely as I can;
 ffor I mvste to the grenwode go,
 alon, a banysshed man."

[8] Puella

"Now sith that ye haue shewed to me
 the secrete of your mynde,
 I shall be playn to you agayn,
 lyke as ye shall me fynde.
 45 Sith it is so that ye will go,
 I will not bide behynde;
 shall it neuer be said the Nvtbrown Mayd
 was to here love vnkynde.
 Make you redy, for so am I,
 althowgh it were anon;
 ffor in my mynd of all mankynd
 I love but you alon."

[9] Squyre

"Yet I you rede to take good hede
 what men will thynk and say;
 50 of yong, of olde, hit shall be told
 that ye be gon away

40 *you owght* B; *ye ought* 21; *ye nought* 03. *take* B; *make* 21 03.

41 *to* B 21; *loo* 03.

45 *bide* B; *leue* 21 03.

46 *it neuer* B 21; *neyer* 03.

48 *my* 21 03; *omit* B.

49 *to* B 21; *omit* 03. *what* B; *whan* 21 03.

50 *of olde* B; *and olde* 21 03.

40 *you owght*: *you* [do] *ought*; 21-03 read "ye" for "you," but the distinction between "ye" as subject and "you" as object is not consistently kept by either B or 03—see variants in ll. 76, 130, 145, and 170

45 *bide*: 03 "leue" (meaning "remain") is probably a sense substitution uncorrected by 21
 48 B's omission of "my" produces a headless line (see n. 7 above), and furthermore all other Puella refrains are invariant; thus the omission is a manifest B error

50 *of yong, of olde*: The B reading is accepted on the principle of *durior lectio* and because B is generally more authoritative than 21-03. Line 55 echoes this line with the commonplace locution "of olde and yonge"

your wanten will ffor to fulfill
 in grenwode you to play,
 and that ye myght for your delite
 no lengar make delay.

Rather than ye shuld thus for me
 be called an ylle woman,
 yet wold I to the grenwod go,
 alon, a banysshed man."

[10] Puella

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- 55 "Though it be songe of olde and yonge
 that I shuld be to blame,
 thers be the charge that speke so large
 in hurtyng of my name;
 ffor I will prove that feythfull love
 hit is deuoyd of shame,
 in your distresse and hevynesse
 to parte with you the same,
 to shewe all tho that do not so
 trew lovers ar they non;
 60 ffor in my mynd of all mankynd
 I love but you alon."

[11] Squyre

"I cownsail you remembre how
 hit is no maydyn's lawe
 nothyng to dowte; but to renne owt
 to wode with an owtlawe,
 ffor ye mvste ther in your hond bere
 a bowe redy to drawe,

52 for B; from 21 03.

53 an ylle 03; a mysse B; and ylle 21.

57 deuoyd 21; deuyoyed B; denoyd 03.

59 to shewe B 21; And sure 03. tho B 03; to 21. trew B 03; Towe 21.

60 ffor B 21; But 03.

61 no B 03; omit 21.

63 Redy to B 21; to bere and 03.

52 for: B preferred for the same reasons as in l. 50

53 an ylle woman: B's "a mysse woman" (a woman astray) is a possible form, but is not recorded in the OED; also "ll" in print can be misread as long "ss," so B may have misread

58 parte: share

59 tho: those

62 to dowte: to fear

and as a theff thus mvst ye leve
 ever in drede and awe,
 65 wherby to you gret harm myght grow;
 yet hade I lever than,
 that I had to the grenwod go,
 alon, a banysshed man."

[12] Puella

"I say not nay but as ye say,
 yt is no maydyn's lore;
 but love may make me to forsake,
 as I haue sayd beffore,
 to cum on fote, to hunte and shote,
 to get vs mete in store;
 70 ffor so that I your company
 may haue I aske no more,
 ffrom which to parte it makyth my harte
 as colde as any ston;
 for in my mynde of all mankynd
 I love but you alone."

[13] Squyre

"For an owtlawe this is the lawe:
 that men hym take and bynde,
 withowt pite hangid to be
 and waver with the wynde.

65 wherby *B* 21; By whiche *03*.

66 I had 21 *03*; I *B*.

67 say not *B* 21; Thinke not *03*.

68 to forsake *B*; for your sake 21 *03*. I *B* 21; ye *03*.

69 in store *B* 21; and store *03*.

71 my harte *B* 21 *P*; myn herte *03* (71 appears as 95 in *P*).

73-85 omit *P*.

64 leve: live; cf. l. 149

66 had: *B*'s omission of this word produces a headless line—see n. 7 above

67 I say not nay: cf. l. 7 lore: so spelled for rhyme; it echoes "lawe" in l. 61

68 to forsake: to withdraw (from the civilized world)—"as I have sayd before" refers to l. 45, "I wille not bide behind"; also the infinitive construction is in parallel with "to cum," "to hunte," and "to get." So *B* is preferable to the erroneous *03* and the only partly corrected 21 readings

69 in store: in reserve. "Store" in the phrase "mete and store" would refer to clothing and other household supplies, which would not all be got by shooting; so *03*'s "and" is an error

71 my harte: Elsewhere (ll. 101, 116, 171) *B* has "myn" before "h," but I have allowed the inconsistency to stand here because of the superior weight of *B-21* against *03*

75 Yf I had nede, as god forbede,
 what socowrs cowld ye fynde?
 Forsoth I trow, ye and your bowe
 ffor fere wold draw behynde;
 and no mervayle, ffor littill avayle
 were in your cownsell than.
 Wherfor I will to the grenwod go,
 alon, a banysshed man."

[14] Puella

"Right well know ye that wymen be
 but feble for to fight;
 80 no womanhede it is indede
 to be bolde as a knyght;
 yet in suche fere yf that ye were
 with ennemyes day or nyght,
 I wold withstond with bow in honde
 to helpe you with my myght,
 and you to save as wymen have
 from deth many one;
 for in my mynd of all mankynd
 I love but you alon."

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[15] Squyre

85 "Yet take good hede, for euer I drede
 that ye cowld not susteyn
 the thorny wayes, the depe valeyes,
 the snowe, the froste, the rayn,
 the colde, the hete; for drye and wete
 we mvste logge on the playn,

75 socowrs *B* 21; rescous *03*.

76 ye *B* 21; you *03*. ffor fere wold draw *B* 21; shul drawe for fere *03*.

78 will to the grenwod *B* 21; too the woode wyl *03*.

79 Right . . . but *B* 21; fVI . . . ful *03*.

80 womanhede *B* 03; women hede 21. it is *B* 21; is it *03*.

81 with . . . or *B* 21; amonge . . . and *03*.

82 helpe you with my *B*; helpe with my 21; greue them as I *03*.

86 the Rayn *B* 03; & rayne 21 *P*.

87 and *B P*; nor 21; or *03*. we *B* 03 *P*; Ye 21.

78 *03* also varies the refrain at ll. 102, 126, and 150; only at l. 150 does 21 fail to correct *03*; see p. 34 above

83 The third part of the line is headless—see n. 7 above

87 *logge*: lodge

and vs above non other roffe
 but a brake busshe or twayn;
 which sone shuld greve you I beleve,
 and ye wold gladly than,
 90 that I had to the grenwode goo,
 alon, a banysshed man."

[16] Puella

"Sith I haue here ben partynere
 with you of ioye and blisse,
 I mvste also parte of your woo
 endure as reason is.
 Yet am I sure of on pleasure,
 and shortly it is this:
 that wher ye be me semeth, parde,
 I cowlde not fare amyse.
 95 Without more speche, I you beseche
 that we were shortly gon;
 for in my mynd of all mankynd
 I love but you alon."

[17] Squyre]

"Iff ye go thyder ye mvst consider,
 whan ye haue luste to dyne,
 ther shall no mete be for to gete;
 nether bere, ale, ne wyne;
 ne shetes clen to lye betwen,
 made of threde and twyne;
 100 non other hows but levis and bowes
 to cover your hede and myne.
 Loo myn hart swete, this ill dyett
 shuld make you pale and wan;

91 of ioye 21 03; of yoye B; in Ioy P.

95-96 P substitutes 71-72. 95 shortly gon B 21; soon a gone 03.

98 Nether B 21 P; nor drinke 03.

99 lye 21 03 P; lay B.

88 *brake bushe*: An unusual form for which I find no precedent. "Brake" (*bracken* or *fern*) is not recorded as an adjective; therefore this is probably a combined form, "break-bush" (bush used as a windbreak)

99 The third part of the line is headless—see n. 7 above

wherfor I will to the grenwod go,
alon, a banysshed man."

[18 Puella]

"Amonge the wilde dere suche an archere,
as men say that ye be,
may not fayll of good vytayll,
wher is so gret plente;
105 and water clere of the rivere
shall be full swete to me,
with which in hele I shall right well
endure as ye shall see;
and or we go a bedde or two
I can provide anon;
ffor in my mynde of all mankynd
I love but you alone."

[19] Squyre

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"Loo, yet beffore ye mvst do more,
yf ye will goo with me:
110 as cute your here vp by your ere,
your kyrtyll by your knee,
with bow in honde for to withstonde
your enymyes yf nede be.
And this same nyght beffore daylight
to wodewarde will I flee;
yff that ye will all this fulfill,
do it as shortly as ye can,
els will I to the grenwode go,
alone, a banysshed man."

102 will to the grenwod *B* 21; to the wood wyl *o*3; will I to the greenwood *P*.

104 may *B* 21; Ne may *o*3; you shold *P*.

107 or we *B* 21; er we *o*3; before I *P*.

110 vp by your . . . by your *B*; aboue your . . . aboue *the* 21; vp by your . . . by *the* *o*3;
aboue your . . . aboue your *P*.

112 this *B* *o*3 *P*; the 21.

113 yff that *B* 21; And *o*3; and if *P*. as shortly *B* 21 *P*; shortely *o*3.

104 Another headless line—see n. 7 above

106 *hele*: health

107 *or*: before

110 *cute*: cut

[20] Puella

- 115 "I shall as now do more for you
 than longith to womanhede,
 to shorte myn here, a bowe to bere
 to shote in tyme of nede.
 O my swete moder, beffore all oder
 for you I haue moste drede;
 but now adewe, I mvst ensue
 wher fortune doth me lede.
 All this make ye; now lat vs flee,
 the day commeth fast vpon;
 120 ffor in my mynd of all mankynde
 I love but you alon."

[21] Squyre

- "Nay, nay, not so, ye shall not go,
 and I shall tell you whye:
 your appetite is to be light
 of love I well espye;
 for like as ye haue said to me,
 in likewyse hardely
 ye wolde answer whosoeuer it were
 in way of companye.
 125 It is said of olde 'Son whot, sone colde,'
 and so is a woman;
 ffor I mvste to the grenwode goo,
 alone, a banysshed man."

[22] Puella

- "Yf ye take hede, it is no nede
 such wordes to say by me;

115 than *B P*; That *21 03*. womanhede *B 21*; womanhod *03 P*.

116 myn here *B*.; my here *21 03 P*. a bowe to bere *B 03 P*; aboue to ere *21*.

117 I haue *B 21 P*; haue *I 03*.

119 commeth *B 21*; cum *03*; entirely different line *P*.

122 of love I well *B 03*; Of my loue I well *21*; my loue I will *P*.

123 like *B 21*; right *03*; likewise *P*.

126 ffor I mvste to the grenwode *B 21*; wherfore I too the woode wyl *03*; therefore will
 to the greenwood *P*.

127 it is no *B 21*; yet is noo *03*; you doe not *P*. by me *21 P*; to me *B*; bee me *03*.

118 *ensue*: follow

119 *make*: cause [me] to do

123 *hardely*: boldly

125 *Son whot*: soon hot

127 *by*: concerning

ffor ofte ye prayd, and long assayed,
 or I you loved, parde.
 And though that I of avncetrye
 a baron's dowghter be,
 130 yet haue ye proved how I ye loved,
 a squyre of lowe degre,
 and ever shall whatso befall,
 to dye therfor anon;
 ffor in my mynd of all mankynd
 I love but you alon."

[23 Squyre]

"A baron's child to be begiled,
 it were a cursed dede;
 to be felowe with an owtlawe,
 almyghty god forbede.
 135 Yet better were the pore squyer
 alon to foreste yede,
 than ye shuld say another day
 that, by my cursed rede,
 ye were betrayde. Wherfor good mayd,
 the best rede that I can,
 ys that I to the grenwod go,
 alon, a banysshed man."

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[24 Puella]

"Whatever befall, I neuer shall
 of this thyng you owtbrayde;
 140 but yf ye go and leve me so,
 than haue ye me betrayde.

130 ye . . . ye B; ye . . . you 21; you . . . you 03; you . . . omit P.

136 shuld B 21 P; shal 03. by my cursed Rede B; by my cursed dede 21; be wyked dede 03; by my accursed deede P.

139 what ever B 21; what so euer 03; Let this P. owt brayde B 21; vpbraid 03 P.

130 *proved*: learned by experience

135 *yede*: went

136 *rede*: advice; 21-03-P "dede" is the rhyme word of l. 133 above; nowhere else in the poem is a word identical in form and meaning used as a rhyme

137 *rede*: decision

139 "owtbrayde" and "vpbraid" both mean "to cry out against"

Remembre you well how that ye dele,
 for yf ye be as ye said,
 ye were vnkynd to leve me behynd,
 your love the Nutbrown Mayde.

Truste me truly that I shall dye
 son after ye be gon,
 ffor in my mynd of all mankynd
 I love but you alon."

[25] S quyre

145 "If that you went ye shuld repent;
 for in the foreste nowe,
 I haue purveyde me of a mayde
 whom I love more than you,
 another fayrere than euer ye were,
 I dare it well avowe;
 and of you both eche shold be wroth
 with other, as I trowe.

It were myn eas to leve in peas,
 so will I yf I can;

150 wherfor I will to the grenwod goo,
 alon, a banysshed man."

[26] Mayd

"Though in the wode I vnderstode
 ye had a paramowre,
 all this may nowght remeve my thought
 but that I will be your;

141-42 for yf ye be as ye . . . ye were *B* 21; for yf ye as the . . . Be so 03; you are not as you . . . you are *P*.

142 leve me *B* 21; leue 03 *P*. your *B* 03 *P*; You 21.

143 Trust me 03 *P*; Truste *B* 21. I shall *B* 21; I 03; I must *P*.

145 you . . . ye *B*; ye . . . ye 03 21; you . . . you *P*.

147 Another fayrere 21 03; An other more fayre *B*; and ffairer *P*.

148 shold 21 03 *P*; will *B*.

150 will to the grenwod *B* *P*; to the wode wyl 21 03.

143 "Trust me," 03-*P*, provides a normal line; *B*-21 "Trust" is headless—see n. 7 above

147 *fayrere*: 21-03 supported by *P*, against the single testimony of *B* "more fayre"

149 *leve*: live; cf. l. 64

150 See note to l. 78 above and p. 34

and she shall me fynd softe and kynd
 and curteys euery owre,
 glad to fulfill all that she will
 comaund me to my powere.
 155 For had ye, loo, an hundreth mo,
 yet wolde I be that on;
 ffor in my mynd of all mankynd
 I love but you alon."

[27] Squyre

"Myn own dere love, I se the prove
 that ye be kynde and trewe,
 of mayde and wyf in all my lyff
 the best that ever I knew.
 Be mery and glade, be no more sade,
 the case is chaunged newe;
 160 for it were rewth that for your trewth
 that ye shuld have cawse to rewe.
 Be not dysmayde; whatsoeuer I said
 to you whan I began,
 I will not to the grenwode go,
 I am no banysshed man."

[28 Mayd]

"Thes tydyinges be more gladder to me
 than to be made a quene,
 yf I were sure they shuld endure;
 but it is often seen,
 165 when men will brek promyse they spek
 the wordes on the splene.
 Ye shape som wyle me to begile
 and stele from me I wene;
 than were the caas wors than it was
 and I more woo begon,

[213v

153 *me fynd* B; *fynd me* 21 03; *me ffind* both P.

158 In all B 03 P; of all 21.

160 *omit* P. that ye . . . cawse to B 21; you . . . causes 03.

163 *more gladder* B 21; *more glad* 03; *are gladder* P.

166 *som* B 21 P; *sone* 03.

153 *me fynd*: B is supported by P, but the second element of the line is headless; 21-03 "fynd me" provides a rhythmically normal line

ffor in my mynd of all mankynd
I love but you alon."

[29 Squyre]

"Ye shall not nede further to drede;
I will not disparage
170 you, god defende, sith ye descende
of so gret a lynage.
Now vnderstond to Westmorelond,
which is myn herytage,
I will you bryng, and with a rynge
by way of maryage,
I will you take and lady make,
as shortly as I can.
Than haue ye wonne an erle's sonne,
and not a banysshed man."

[30 Both Players]

175 Here may ye see that women be
in love meke, kynd, and stable.
Latt never man repreve them than,
or calle them variable;
but rather pray god that we may
to them be comfortable.
God sumtyme provith such as he lovith,
yf they be charytable;
for sith men wold that women shuld
be meke to them echone,

170 omit *P*. you god *B* 21; Your god 03. Sith ye *B* 21; sith you 03. a lynage *B* 03; lynage 21.

171 myn herytage *B* 21; my herytage 03; my owne heritage *P*.

174 Than *B* 21; Thus 03 *P*. ye *B* 03; you 21 *P*. not a *B* 03 *P*; no 21.

176 or calle them variable 03; yf they be Charytable *B*; omit 21; nor call them varyable *P*.

177 we may to them *B* 03; we may To hym 21; they to men may *P*.

178 God sumtyme *B*; Whiche somtyme 21 03; that haue *P*. provith such as he lovith *B*; proued such as he loued 21; preuyth suche as loueth 03; proued such as they loved *P*. be 21 03 *P*; be be *B*.

179 for sith *B* 03; Forsoth 21; but *P*.

Subscription: omit 21 03; ffinis *P*.

176 *B*'s error results from an eye-skip to l. 178

178 *God*: *B*'s single testimony preferred above 21-03; *P* is entirely different and of no evidential value here. The reference is to the Book of Wisdom iii.4-6— see p. 28 above

Subscription: Hill is the scribe, not the author

William A. Ringler Jr.

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180 moche more owght they to god obey,
and serue but hym alon.

Explicit quod Richard Hill
here endith the nutbrown mayd.

