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English Scholar's Library of
Old and Modern Works,

The History of REYNARD the Fox.

TRANSLATED BY

WILLIAM CAXTON.

1481.

Edited by Edward Arber, F. S. A.

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A 3. 33

15/301

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June 1481.



Edited by EDWARD ARBER,

HON. FELLOW OF KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON; F.S.A.
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2704. G. 5 = E. 2. 102

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The Action of this History. 5-120

∴ Events anterior to the Action, together with the parables, tales, and other principal speeches, are set in *Italic type*.

[PART I.]

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[PART II.]

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<i>"Nay, cousin," said he, "be not afraid. I understand this business. I will cite the Archdeacon, and bring you an absolution against his will. Go to Court, where you shall find RUKENAW my wife, her two sisters, my three children, and many more of our lineage, who will gladly do somewhat for their friends"</i>	70
<i>"And if you be so overcharged that you may have no right, send to me night and day to the Court of Rome; and let me have knowledge thereof; and [This was REYNARD'S boldest lie] all those that be in the land—is it King or Queen, Wife or Man—I shall bring them all in the Pope's curse. For the Cardinal of PUKE GOLD has my niece for his concubine"</i>	70
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<i>Without the ring was a stone of three manner of colours.</i>	
<i>the one part was RED, and the shining of the stone made as great a light at night as midday.</i>	
<i>another part was WHITE and could cure any outward sickness, or if the stone was laid in the water, that water being drunk would cure any inward sickness.</i>	
<i>and the last part was GREEN like glass, but there were some sprinkles therein like purple, that made the possessor of it beloved even by his enemies.</i>	
<i>But he must be a noble gentleman and have no churl's conditions, and therefore I sent it to my dear Lord the King. I found this ring in my father's treasure [which he had stolen, p. 39]</i>	82
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Which REYNARD denies	94
ERSWYND tells of the trick REYNARD served her at the well	96
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He tells the King <i>The parable of the Dog with the scalded haunches</i>	113
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THE PERSONAGES, &c., OF THIS HISTORY.

HERR ERNST MARTIN's edition of *REINAERT—WILLEMS Gedicht van den vos REINAERDE*. Paderborn, 1874. 8vo.—besides a fuller, though corresponding text, in *verse*, contains an excellent glossary, the mere perusal of which shows clearly how much nearer the Low German is related to the English than to the present German. For many of the words may be rightly guessed at offhand by an ordinary Englishman to whom the German equivalents would be quite unintelligible. The Text reprinted by Herr MARTIN we will, for our present purpose, designate as WILLEM's Text.

Then we have the Low German *prose* version, the printing of which GERARD LEEU finished at Gouda in Holland on the 17th of August 1479. We shall here call this LEEU's Text. It is possibly a rude prose account of WILLEM's Text.

There is then CAXTON's Text; which, for all that he says in the Epilogue, is not a precise translation, but has, in places, omissions from and abridgments of the "Dutch" or Low German copy.

By the help of Herr MARTIN's glossary we are able to give the names—generic and personal—of most of the Animals in this story.—

Animals who speak or act.

	WILLEM.	LEE U.	CAXTON.	PAGE.
<i>The Lion, King of all beasts</i>	NOBEL	NOBEL	NOBLE	<i>passim</i>
<i>The Lioness, the Queen.</i>		[No personal name]		57
<i>The Leopard.</i>	FIRAPEEL	FIRAPEEL	FIRAPEEL	57
<i>The Panther.</i>		[No personal name.]		5, 30
<i>The Bear.</i>	BRUUN	{ BRUNINCK BRUUN BRUYN }	BROWNYNG BRUIN	12 <i>passim</i>
<i>The Wolf.</i>	ISENGRIJN	YSEGRIM	ISEGRIM	<i>passim</i>
<i>his wife.</i>	{EERSWIJN or HAERSINT }	EERSWIJN	ERSWYND	<i>passim</i>
<i>The Fox.</i>	REINAERT	REYNAERT	KEYNARD	<i>passim</i>
<i>his wife.</i>	{ERMELINE or HERMELINE }	ARMELINE	ERMELINE	24
<i>their eldest son.</i>	REINAERDIJN	REYNAERDIJN	REYNARDYN	69
<i>their second son.</i>	ROSSEEL	ROESEL	ROSSEL	25
<i>their youngest son.</i>	REINAERDINE	REYNKEN	REINIKIN	25
<i>The Badger.</i>	GRIMBEERT	GRYMBERT	GRIMBERT	<i>passim</i>
<i>his wife.</i>	SLUPECADE	SLOPECADE	SLOPECADE	37, 112

x THE PERSONAGES, &c., OF THIS HISTORY.

	WILLEM.	LEEU.	CAXTON.	PAGE
<i>The Cat.</i>	TIBEERT	TYBERT	TIBERT { <i>passim</i> in Part I. & 87	
<i>The Hare.</i>	CUWAERT	KYWAERT	KYWERT	7, 42
<i>The Cony</i> [Rabbit].	LAMPREEL	LAMPREEL	LAMPREEL	55
<i>The Ram.</i>	BELIJN	BELLIJN	BELLIN	30, 48-53
<i>his wife.</i>	HAWI	OLEWY	OLEWEY	30, 53
<i>The Hound.</i>	CORTOIS	CORTOIS	COURTOIS	6
<i>The Cock.</i>	CANTICLEER	CANTENKLEER	CHANTECLEER	9
<i>his daughter.</i>	COPPE	COPPEN	COPPEN	9
<i>his other daughter.</i>	CANTAERT	CANTART	CANTART	9
<i>his third daughter.</i>	CRAEIANT	CRAEYANT	CRAYANT	9
<i>The Raven.</i>	TIECELIJN	TYSELIJN	TYSELYN	44
<i>The Ape.</i>	MERTIJN	MARTIJN	MARTIN	68
<i>The She Ape.</i>	RUKENAU	RUKENAW	RUKENAW	73-112
<i>their elder daughter.</i>	BITELUUS	BITELUYS	BYTELUYS	79, 112
<i>their son.</i>	VUULROMP	VULROMP	FULROMPE	79, 112
<i>their younger daughter.</i>	HATENET	HATENETTE	HATENETTE	79, 112
<i>The Rook.</i>	CORBOUT	CORBANT	CORBANT	55
<i>his wife.</i>	SCHERPENEBBE	SCHERPENEBBE	SHARPBECK	55
<i>The Camel</i>		[No personal name.]		31
<i>The Goose</i>	BRUNEEL	BRUNEEL	BRUNEL	31
<i>The Ass</i>	BOUDEWIJN	BOUDEWIJN	BOUDEWYN	31
<i>The Bull</i>	BORREEL	BORRE	BORRE	31
<i>The Cow</i>	[omitted]	HARMEL	HAMEL	31

Animals who are mentioned (often without any personal name) but who neither speak nor act.

<i>The Squirrel.</i>	Eenkoorn	eechorn	squyrel	79
<i>The (?) Weasel.</i>	Muushont	muushont	musehout	31, 79
<i>The (?) Pole Cat.</i>	Fluwijn	fluwijn	fychews	79, 112
<i>The Marten.</i>	Maerter	marter	martron	79, 112
<i>The Beaver.</i>	Bever	Beuer	Beuer	79, 112
<i>with his wife.</i>	OORDEGALE	ORDEGALE	ORDEGALE	79, 112
<i>The Genet Cat.</i>	Ghenet	genette	genete	79
<i>The (?)</i>	Oostrale	ostrole	ostrole	79, 119
<i>The (?) Pole Cat.</i>	Bunsinc	Boussinc	boussyng	79
<i>The Ferret.</i>	Foret	foret	fyret	79, 112
<i>The Otter.</i>	Otter	Otter	oter	79, 104, 112
<i>with his wife.</i>	PANTHECROTE	PANTECROET	PANTECROET	79, 112

THE PERSONAGES, &c., OF THIS HISTORY. xi

	<i>WILLEM.</i>	<i>LEEU.</i>	<i>CAXTON.</i>	<i>PAGE</i>
<i>A She Ape. Dame.</i>	AELCROTTE	ATROTE	ATROTE	79
[<i>her sister.</i>	QUANTESKIEVE	quante en sleiue	omitted]	79
<i>The Weasel.</i>	Wesel	wesel	wesel	79
<i>The Ermine.</i>	Hermel	hermel	hermel	79
<i>The Hedgehog.</i>	Eghel	egel	<i>translated as the</i>	
			asse	79
<i>The Flitter Mouse.</i>	vledermuus	vledermuijs	<i>translated as the</i>	
			backe	79, 112
<i>The Water Rat.</i>	Waterrat	water rotte	watreratte	79
[<i>The Bittern.</i>	Watermael	water hoen	omitted]	79

Subordinate human characters.

<i>The King's clerk.</i>	BOTSAERT	BOEKERT	BOK[W]ART	52
[? man or animal]				

The following peasants, &c., inhabiting a village near the Fox's Castle.

<i>The strong Carpenter.</i>	LAMFROIT	LANTFERT	LANTFERT	14, 15, 16
<i>The Priest.</i>		[<i>No personal name.</i>]		15, 16
<i>his wife.</i>	JULOCKE	JULOK	JULOK	15
<i>their son.</i>	MARTINET	MARTINET	MARTINET	22
<i>with the crooked leg.</i>	HUGHELIJN	HUGELIJN	HUGHELYN	16
<i>with the broad long nose.</i>	LUDOLF	LUDOLF	LUDOLF	16
<i>the long.</i>	LOTTRAM	OTTRAM	OTTRAM	16
<i>with the long fingers.</i>	BERTOUT	BERTOLL	BERTOLT	16
	ABEL QUAC	ABELQUAC	ABELQUAK	16
<i>Dame.</i>	BAVE	BAVE	BAUE	16

On the *minutiae* of criticism, as to original Low German spelling &c., CAXTON's text is of little value. His own English will however be better understood by references to the language from which he translated ; but it is nevertheless, for the most part, strongly idiomatic. WILLEM's has the best spelling of names, &c., in the three Texts. Meanwhile for the present impression, this comparison will suffice to foreacquaint the readers with the principal Actors in this History.

The names of the places are after the Low German forms ending in *-loo, -ing*, and so forth : but all precision as to locality in Flanders is most carefully avoided ; though places beyond, as Montpelier, Akon [*Aachen* or *Aix-la-Chapelle*], are introduced to give local effect.

CAXTON is responsible for making ISEGRIM going to Oxford &c., *p.* 62, which is a fair instance of his adapted translation of the whole book.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

A. General critical Study.

The Literature of the Reynardine History, already very large, is ever growing. One cannot better begin the study of it than with Mr. THOM'S *Introductory Sketch of the Literary History of the Romance* prefixed to No. 4, below, and with the many works of which he there gives the titles. Since that was written, the study has gone on, fresh manuscripts have been discovered, and the following works, which may be consulted with advantage, issued.

1863. Groningen. 8vo. M. W. J. A. JONCKBLOET. *Etude sur le Roman de RENART.*

1872. Basle. 8vo. Herr ERNST MARTIN. *Examen Critique des Manuscrits du Roman de RENART.* A masterly brochure, which describes the principal known MSS. in Europe.

1874. Paderborn. 8vo. Herr ERNST MARTIN has also published *REINAERT. WILLEMS Gedicht van den vos Reinaerde, und die umarbeitung und forsetzung REINAERT'S Historie.*

Subsequent to its original composition in Flanders in the 12th century, this History was (like the Arthurian Romances) taken in hand by other writers of different nations, and expanded in various directions: so that the entire Cycle of the Romance now comprises some 41,000 verses containing 39 Branches or Stories, the titles of which Herr MARTIN gives in his *Examen.* We may hope from that patient and accomplished Scholar a complete edition of the whole Cycle.

B. Editions of the unexpanded Story.

ISSUES IN TRANSLATOR'S LIFETIME.

1. 17 Aug. 1479. Gouda 4to. *Hystorie van Regnaert die vos.* [COLOPHON] Hier cyndet die hystorie van reynaert die vos, ende is gheprent ter goude in hollant by mi gheraert leeu den seuentienden dach in augusto Int iaer M.CCCC. en LXXIX.

Of earlier date than any other printed *REYNARD* in any language whatsoever. The copy in the Greville Collection is thought to be the only one in existence.

2. June 1481. Westminster 4to. The printing of CAXTON'S translation finished, See p. 120. Very rare.

3. [1489. Westminster 4to.] A second Edition printed by CAXTON. Without printer's name, or place, or date. The only known copy is in the Pepysian Library, Cambridge. See *Catalogue of Caxton Celebration*, 1877, p. 21. No. 156.

∴ The popularity of the Work accounts for the rarity of these copies. These early editions were thumbed out of existence.

ISSUES SINCE HIS DEATH.

Many other Versions, of course, exist in English: but we here confine ourselves to reprints of CAXTON'S Translation,

4. 1844. London 8vo. *Percy Society. The History of Reynard the Fox.* Ed. by W. J. THOMAS, F.S.A., with the excellent *Introductory Sketch* above referred to.

5. 15 Aug. 1878. Southgate, London, N. The present impression.

∴ The comparative study of *REYNARD* and the cognate Romances of its time would prove a fascinating inquiry for any active intelligence now idle. Englishmen sadly need vivid conceptions of foreign life and manners from 900 to 1200 A.D.



INTRODUCTION.



THE story of *Reinecke Fuchs*, or to give it the original Low German name, *Reineke de Fos*, is, more than any other, a truly European performance : for some centuries, a universal household possession and secular Bible, read every where, in the palace and the hut ; it still interests us, moreover, by its intrinsic worth, being on the whole the most poetical and meritorious production of our Western World in that kind ; or perhaps of the whole World, though, in such matters, the West has generally yielded to, and learned from the East. THOMAS CARLYLE. *German Lit. &c.* Foreign Quarterly Rev. No. XVI. p. 381. Ed. 1831.

. . . So much for the outward fortunes of this remarkable Book. It comes before us with a character such as can belong only to a very few ; that of being a true world's-Book, which through centuries was every where at home, the spirit of which diffused itself into all languages and all minds. The quaint Æsopic figures have paired themselves in innumerable heads ; that rough deep-lying humour has been the laughter of many generations. So that, at worst, we must regard this *Reinecke* as an ancient Idol, once worshipped, and still interesting for that circumstance, were the sculpture never so rude. We can love it, moreover, as being indigenous, wholly of our own creation : it sprang up from European sense and character, and was a faithful type and organ of these.

But independently of all extrinsic considerations, the fable of *Reinecke* may challenge a judgement on its own merits. Cunningly constructed, and not without a true poetic life, we must admit it to be : great power of conception and invention, great pictorial fidelity, a warm, sunny tone of colouring, are manifest enough. It is full of broad, rustic mirth ; inexhaustible in comic devices ; a World-Saturnalia, where Wolves tonsured into Monks, and nigh starved by short commons, Foxes pilgriming to Rome for absolution, Cocks pleading at the judgment-bar, make strange mummery. Nor is this wild Parody of Human Life without its meaning and moral : it is an Air-pageant from Fancy's Dream-grotto, yet Wisdom lurks in it ; as we gaze the vision becomes poetic and prophetic. A true Irony must have dwelt in the Poet's heart and head : here, under grotesque shadows, he gives the saddest picture of Reality ; yet for us without sadness ; his figures mask themselves in uncouth, bestial vizards, and enact, gambolling ; their Tragedy dissolves into sardonic grins. He has a deep, heartfelt Humour sporting with the world and its evils in kind mockery ; this is the poetic *soul*, round which the outward *matériel* has fashioned itself into living coherence. And so, in that rude old Apologue, we have still a mirror, though now tarnished and time-worn, of true magic reality : and can discern there, in cunning reflex, some image both of our destiny and of our duty ; for now, as then, " Prudence is the only virtue sure of its reward," and Cunning triumphs where Honesty is worsted ; and now, as then, it is the wise man's part to know this, and cheerfully look for it, and cheerfully defy it :

Ut vulpis adulatio
Here thro' his own world moveth,
Sic hominis et ratio
Most like to REYNARD proveth.

If *Reinecke* is nowise a perfect Comic Epos, it has various features of such, and, above all, a genuine Epic spirit, which is the rarest feature.—*Idem.* p. 385.

. . . . Nevertheless, the old Low-German original has also a certain charm, and simply as the original would claim some notice. It was reckoned greatly the best performance that was ever brought out in that Dialect ; interesting, moreover, in a philological point of view, especially to us English ; being properly the language of our old Saxon Fatherland ; and still curiously like our own, though the two, for some twelve centuries, have had no brotherly communication.—*Idem.* p. 388.



THE scene of the Low German Version of this History from which CAXTON made his translation is laid in the midst of Flanders, "between the Elbe and the Somme," *p.* 39. The Lion's feast is held at Stade at Whitsuntide; and the whole action is comprised in that one feast; which however was extended for twelve days longer on account of the King's temporary love for the Bear and the Wolf. *p.* 54.

The Action consists of Two Parts, containing Three Occurrences.

The first Occurrence is the Summons, *pp.* 11-24, Shrivings, *pp.* 25-28, Trial, *pp.* 29-40, and Acquittal, *pp.* 41-44, of REYNARD for injuries offered to ISEGRIM, *p.* 5; robbery from COURTOIS, *p.* 6; the attempted murder of KYWART, *p.* 7; and the successful murder of COPPEN, *p.* 9.

The Second Occurrence is on pretty much the same ground, though with fresh incidents. It is the Warning (by GRIMBERT), *p.* 58, Shrivings, *pp.* 60-66, Trial, *pp.* 66-92, and Acquittal, *pp.* 93-94, of REYNARD, for the murders of KYWART, *p.* 49, and of SHARPBECK, *p.* 55, and the assault on LAPREEL, *p.* 54.

The Third Occurrence is the Complaint of ISEGRIM against REYNARD, *pp.* 94-101, followed by his challenge, *p.* 101. Then comes the spirited Fight between them, so graphically told at *pp.* 102-112, in which REYNARD by dishonest craft wins the day, *p.* 112, "has the worship," and is finally exonerated from all his crimes.

So that the Story is the History of the Three fraudulent Escapes of the Fox from punishment, the Record of the Defeat of Justice by flattering lips and dishonourable acts.

The lying is so witty, cunning, and clever, that we do well perpetually to remember the evil deeds of which it is the cloak. Ravin and violence are in all REYNARD's *acts*; whatever he may say.

The Second Part is not however wholly consistent with the First, as—

GRIMBERT is REYNARD's "susters sonne" at *p.* 7, his "brother sonne" at *p.* 58.

REYNARD's father hangs himself at *p.* 39, but Master REYNARD is the King's physician and crowned with flowers at *p.* 90.

TIBERT, a prominent actor in the First Half; disappears in the Second, except in REYNARD's story at *p.* 87.

REYNARD's rape on ERSWYND was before her marriage with ISEGRIM at *p.* 8, but after it at *p.* 94.

Malyperdu is in a wood at *p.* 12, but on a heath at *p.* 61.

The description of the marvellous virtue of the magic comb made of a Panther's bone at *p.* 83 is made in forgetfulness that a Panther is a speaker at *p.* 6. And so on.

In the First Part, too, the speeches are shorter, the action more rapid,

and the expression purer. In the Second Part there is perhaps both more subtlety, and more moral reflection in the talk.

All this points to the supposition that the Continuator of the Second Part was not the Author of the original Story.

II.



HE subtlety of the book is marvellous. Take two instances. In the First Half, GRIMBERT, unwilling to see his uncle hanged, leaves or, as the Text has it "rooms" the Court. REYNARD takes unpremeditated advantage of his unexpected absence to colour his fiction of the pretended Conspiracy to make BRUIN the King, by the inclusion of his relative GRIMBERT among the plotters, which no one in his nephew's absence was able to controvert.

In the Second part, REYNARD, at his wits' end, sees RUKENAW, the She Ape at the Court; whereupon he also feigns the story of having met with her husband MARTIN the Ape, and of the instructions he had given through him to her to befriend him. The whole of his subsequent deliverances are owing to RUKENAW's advocacy and counsel: yet as REYNARD had never met MARTIN, she was as much deluded as any in the Court.

And so through not a few other instances, the action all turns on Credence in circumstantial but uncorroborated Assertions. The verisimilitude of the accounts given by REYNARD bewilders us until we check them by the facts of the antecedent story; and then we see that it is all only the affiance of simple Honesty in the wiles of Craft.

There are many touches of fine humour, keen observation, and strong satire in the work. The Author's Epilogue, at *p.* 119, is the offspring of an innocent mirthful wit. REYNARD's brains are necessary for his own efficient hanging at *p.* 32. The strong contrast between his real nature and home life very briefly sketched out at *pp.* 12, 17, 24, 25, 48, 49, 54, 58-60; and his character, appearances and speeches at Court, which occupy most of the book. The scathing satire on the prelates and rich curates at *p.* 64, with Bishop PREDELOR [*? Taker of Gold*] and Sir RAPIAMUS his official, at *p.* 46, and the Cardinal of PURE GOLD and his concubine at *p.* 71.

The whole history is brimful of intention. Every personal name, every movement in it, has a meaning, and is worthy of our attention. In the framework of it, the murders and injuries are inflicted on the lesser animals, in order that the greater ones may speak and carry on the action.

There is a studied irrelevance mixed with a crafty conveyance in REYNARD's speeches. The slightest and most incidental allusion or illustration of one sentence (when he wishes it) becomes the main theme of the next, and so he wanders away on and on from his point to the

bewildering of all his hearers. On the other hand, in all this irrelevancy, he contrives that his speeches, whether pertinent or irrelative, shall tend to the discredit of his enemies.

III.



ASTLY, we can but touch on the strong moral purpose of the work. Rightly to understand this we must remember that the King is endowed with irresistible might, from which there is no appeal whatever. REYNARD says, "I may not escape yow. we stonde all vnder your correccion. ye be mighty and stronge." *p.* 30. The Courtiers, or Barons, are all strong-fisted thieves, who "make unright go aboue right," *p.* 65. The Story is therefore that of the struggle between the power of Words and the power of Blows, a conflict between Mind and Matter. It was necessary for the physically weak to have Eloquence; the blame of REYNARD is in the frightful misuse he makes of it. The Author's spiritual purpose comes out

1. In the exposure of the Gospel of Lying according to REYNARD. The mere statement of such principles as these was their condemnation.

Who otherwise will now haunt and use the world than devise a leasing in the fairest wise, and that bewimple with kerchiefs about in such wise that men take for a truth, he is not run away from his master. This man may do wonders. He may wear scarlet, &c. *p.* 64.

Who can give to his leasing a conclusion and pronounce it without tattling, like as it were written before him, and that he can so blind the people that his leasing shall be better believed than the truth—that is the man. *p.* 65.

2. In his observations that—

There is in the world much seed left of the Fox, which now over all groweth and cometh sore up, though they have no red beards. Yet there be found more foxes than ever were heretofore. The righteous people be all lost. Truth and Righteousness be exiled and fordriven; and for them abide with us Covetousness, Falsehood, Hate, and Envy. These reign now much in every country. *p.* 117.

3. And in his final reflections—

And herewith will I leave. For what have I to write of these misdeeds. I have enough to do with mine own self: and so it were better that I held my peace and suffer. And the best that I can do is to amend myself now in this time. And so I counsel every man to do here in this present life, &c. *p.* 118.

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TRANSLATED AND PRINTED BY

WILLIAM CAXTON.

June 1481.

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Hyper begynneth th[e h]ystorpe of reynard the fore

IN this historye ben wreton the parables/goode lerynge/and dyuerse poyntes to be merkyd/by whiche poyntes men maye lerne to come to the subtyl knoweleche of suche thynges as dayly ben vsed and had in the counseyllys of lordes and prelates gostly and worldly /and /also emonge marchantes and other comone peple /And this booke is maad for nede and prouffyte of alle go[o]d folke /As fer as they in redyng or heeryng of it shal mowe vnderstande and fele the forsayd subtyl deceytes that dayly ben vsed in the worlde /not to th[e]entente that men shold vse them but that euery man shold eschewe and kepe hym from the subtyl false shrewis that they be not deceyuyd /Thenne who that wyll haue the very vnderstandyng of this mater /he muste ofte and many tymes rede in thys boke and earnestly and diligently marke wel that he redeth /ffor it is sette subtylly / lyke as ye shal see in redyng of it /and not ones to rede it ffor a man shal not wyth ones ouer redyng fynde the ryght vnderstandyng ne comprise it wel /but oftymes to rede it shal cause it wel to be vnderstande /And for them that vnderstandeth it /it shall be ryght Ioyous playsant and prouffitable



How the lyon kynge of alle bestis sent out his
mandementis that alle beestis sholde come to his feest
and court capitulo primo



T was aboute the tyme of penthecoste or whytsontyde / that the wodes comynly be lusty and gladsom / And the trees clad with leuys and blossoms and the ground with herbes and flowris swete smellyng and also the fowles and byrdes synge melodyously in theyr armonye / That the lyon the noble kynge of all beestis wolde in the holy dayes of thys feest holde on open Court at stade / whyche he dyde to knowe ouer alle in his lande / And commanded by straye conmyssyons and maundements that euery beest shold come thyder / in suche wyse that alle the beestis grete and smale cam to the courte sauf reynard the fox / for he knewe hym self fawty and gylty in many thynges ayenst many beestis that thyder sholde comen that he durste not auenture to goo thyder / whan the kynge of alle beestis had assemblid alle his court / ther was none of them alle / but that he had complayned sore on Reynart the foxe

The first complaynt made Isegrym the wulf on
Reynart capitulo ij



Isegrym the wulf wyth his lynage and frendes cam and stode to fore the kynge / And sayde hyc and myghty prynce my lord the kynge I beseche yow that thurgh your grete myght / ryght / and mercy that ye wyl haue pyte on the grete trespas and the vnresonable mysdedes that reynart the foxe hath don to me and to my wyf that is to wete he is comen in to my hows

ayenst the wylle of my wyf / And there he hath be pyssed my chyl dren where as they laye in suche wyse as they therof ben woxen blynde / wherupon was a day sette / and was Iudged that reynart sholde come and haue excused hym hierof / and haue sworn on the holy sayntes that he was not gylty therof / And whan the book wyth the sayntes was brought forth / tho had reynart bythou[g]ht hym other wyse / And wente his waye agayn in to his hole / as he had nought sette therby / And dere kynge this knowen wel many of the bestes that now be comen hyther to your court / And yet hath he trespaced to me in many other thinges / he is not lyuyng that coude telle alle that I now leue vntolde / But the shame and vyllonye that he hath don to my wyf / that shal I neuer hyde ne suffre it vnauengyd but that he shal make to me large amendes /

The complaynt of Courtoys the hounde capitulo iij

Whan thyse wordes were spoken so stode there a lytyl hounde and was named courtoys / and complayned to the kynge / how that in the colde wynter in the harde froste he had ben sore forwynterd / in such wyse as he had kepte nomore mete than a puddyng / w[h]yche puddyng reynard the foxe had taken away from hym

Tho spak thybert the catte

Wyth this so cam Tybert the catte wyth an Irous moed / and sprang in emonge them and sayde My lord the kyng / I here hier that reynart is sore complayned on / and hier is none but that he hath ynnowh to doo to clere hym self / that courtoys hier complayneth of that is passyd many yeres goon / how be it that I complayne not / that pudyng was myne / ffor I hadde wonne it by nyghte in a mylle / The myllar laye and slepe / yf courtoys had ony parte hieron / that came by me to[o] /

Thenne spak panther / Thynke ye Tybert that it were good that reynard sholde not be complayned on / he is a very murderer / a rouer / and a theef / he loueth noman so wel / not our lord the kyng here that he wel wold that he shuld lese good and worshyp / so that he myght wyne as moche as a legge of a

fat henne / I shal telle yow what I sawe hym do yesterday to
Cuwaert the hare that hier standeth in the kynges pees and
saufigarde / he promysed to Cuwart and sayde he wold
teche hym his credo / and make hym a good chapelayn / he
made hym goo sytte bytwene his legges and sange and cryde
lowde Credo. Credo. my wayelaye ther by there that I herde this
songe / Tho wente I ner and fonde maister reynard that had
lefte that he fyrst redde and songe / and bygan to playe his
olde playe / ffor he had caught kywaert by the throte / and had
I not that tyme comen he sholde haue taken his lyf from hym
like as ye hiere may see on kywaert the hare the fress[h]e
wounde yet / ffor sothe my lord the kyng yf ye suffre this
vnpunyshyd and lete hym go quyte that hath thus broken
your peas / And wyl do no right after the sentence and
Iugement of your men / your Chyldren many yeris herafter
shal be myspreysed and blamed therfore /

Sykerly panther sayd Isegrym ye saye trouthe / hit were
good that right and Iustyse were don / for them that wolde
fayn lyue in peas /

**How grymbart the dasse the fores susters sone
spack for reynart and answerd to fore the
kyng. capitulo. .iiij.**

Tho spack Grymbart the dasse / and was Reynarts
suster sone with an angrey moed / Sir Isegrym that
is euyl sayd it is a comyn prouerbe An Enemyes
mouth / saith seeld wel / what leye ye / and wyte ye
myn Eme Reynart / I wold that ye wolde a venture that who
of yow tweyne had moste trespased to other sholde hange
by the necke as a theef on a tree / But and yf he were as wel
in this court and as wel wyth the kyng as ye be / it shold not be
thought in hym / that it were ynowh / that ye shold come and
aske hym forgyuenes ye haue byten and nypte myn vncler wyth
your felle and sharp teeth many mo tymes than I can telle /
yet wil I telle some poyntes that I wel knowe / knowe not
ye how ye mysdeled on the plays / whiche he threwe down fro
the carre / whan ye folowed after fro ferre / And ye ete the
good plays allone / and gaf hym nomore than the grate or

bones / whyche ye myght not ete your self / In lyke wyse dyde ye to hym also of the fatte vlycche of bacon / whiche sauourd so wel / that ye allone ete in your bely / and whan myn Eme askyd his parte / tho answerd ye hym agayn in scorne / Reynart fayr yonglyng I shal gladly gyue you your part / but myn eme gate ne had nought / ne was not the better / Notwithstandyng he had wonnen the flycche of bacon wyth grete drede / ffor the man cam and threw hym in a sacke / that he scarsely cam out wyth his lyf / Suche maner thynges hath reynart many tymes suffred thurgh ysegrym.


O ye lordes thynke ye that this is good / yet is ther more / he complayneth how that reynart myn eme hath moche trespaced to hym by cause of his wyf / Myn Eme hath leyn by her but that is wel seuen yer to fore / er he wedded her / and yf reynart for loue and curtosye dyde with her his wille / what was that / She was sone heled therof / hierof by ryght shold be no complaynt were Isegrym wyse. he shold haue lefte that he doth to hym self no worshyp thus to sklaundre his wyf / She playneth not / now maketh kywaert the hare acomplaynt also / that thynketh me a vyseuase / yf he rede ne lerned a ryght his lesson / sholde not reynard his maister bete hym therefore / yf the scolers were not beten ne smyten and reprised of their truantrye / they shold neuer lerne /


Now complayneth Courtoys that he with payne had gotten a puddyng in the wynter / at suche tyme as the coste is euyl to fynde Therof hym had be better to haue holde his pees / for he had stolen it / Male quesisti et male perdidisti hit is ryght that it be euil loste / that is euil wonne who shal blame Reynart / yf he haue taken fro a thief stolen good hit is reson who that vnderstandeth the lawe and can discerne the right / and that he be of hye burthe as myn Eme reynart is whiche knoweth wel how he shal resseyue stolen good / yet al had he courtoys hanged whan he fonde hym with the menowr / he had not moche mysdon no trespaced / Sauf ayenst the crowne / that he had don Iustyse wythoute leue wherfore for the honour of the kynge he did it not / all hath he but lytyl thanks / what skathed it hym that he is thus complayned on / Myn Eme is a gentil and a trewe man he may suffre no falshede / he doth nothyng but by his prestes counseyl And I

saye yow syth that my lorde the kynge hath do proclaimed his pees he neuer thoughte to hurte ony man / ffor he eteth no more than ones a day / he lyueth as a recluse / he chastiseth his body and wereth a sherte of heer / hit is more than a yere that he hath eten no flesshe / as I yesterday herd saye of them that cam fro hym he hath lefte and geuen ouer his Castel maleperduys / And hath bylded a cluse / theryndwelleth he / and hunteth nomore / ne desyreth no wynnynge but he lyueth by almesse and taketh nothyng but suche as men gyue hym for charyte and doth grete penance for his synnes / and his is woxen moche pale and lene of prayeng and wakyng ffor he wolde be fayn wyth god /

Thus as grymbert his eme stode and preched these wordes / so sawe they comen doun the hylle to hem chauntecler the cock and brought on abiere a deed henne of whom reynart had byten the heed of [f] / and that muste be shewed to the kynge for to haue knowleche therof.

How the Cocks complayned on reynart capitulo .v°.

Hauntecler cam forth and smote pyteously his handes and his fetheris and on eche side of the byer wenten tweyne sorouful hennes that one was alled cantart and that other goode henne Crayant they were two the fayrest hennes that were bytwene holland and arderne / These hennes bare eche of them a brennyng tapre whiche was longe and strayte / These two hennes were coppens susters / And they cryed so pitously / Alas and weleaway for the deth of her dere suster coppen / Two yonge hennes bare the byere which kakled so heuyly and wepte so lowde for the deth of coppen their moder that it was ferre herde / thus cam they to gydre to fore the kynge /

nd chantecleer tho seyde / Mercyful lord / my lord the kynge pleseth yow to here our complaynte / And abhorren the grete scathe that reynart hath don to me and my children that hie stonden / it was so that in the begynnyng of appryl whan the weder is fayr / as that I as hardy and prowde / bycause of the grete lynage that I am comen of and also hadde / ffor I had viij fayr sones and seuen fayr daughters whiche my wyf had hatched. and they were alle stronge

and fatte and wente in ayerde whiche was walled round
a bouthe/In whiche was a shadde where in were six grete
dogges whiche had to tore and plucked many a beestis skyn
in suche wyse as my chyldren were not aferd/On whom
Reynart the thief had grete enuye by cause they were so sure
that he cowde none gete of them/how wel oftymes hath this
fel thief goon rounde aboute this wal/and hath leyde for vs
in suche wyse that the dogges haue be sette on hym and haue
hunted hym away/ And ones they leep on hym vpon the banke/
And that cost hym somewhat for his thefte/I saw that his
skyn smoked neuertheles he wente his waye/god amende it/

Thus were we quyte of reynart a longe whyle/atte laste
cam he in lyknes of an heremyte/and brought to me a
lettre for to rede sealed wyth the kynges seal/in whiche
stode wreton that the kyng had made peesoueral in his royame/
and that alle maner beestis and fowlles shold doo none harme
ner scathe to ony other/yet sayd he to me more/that he was
a cloysterer or a closyd recluse be comen/And that he
wolde receyue grete penance for his synnes/he shewd me
his slauyne and pylche and an heren sherte ther vnder/and
thenne sayd he/syr Chaunteclere after thys tyme be no more
aferd of me ne take no hede/ffor I now wil ete nomore
flesshe/I am forthon so olde/That I wolde fayn remembre
my soule I will now go forth/for I haue yete to saye my
sexte/none/and myn euensonge/to god I bytake yow/Tho
wente reynart thens sayeng his Credo/and leyde hym vnder
an hawthorn/Thenne/was I glad and mery/and also toke
none hede/And wente to my chyldren and clucked hem to
gydre And wente wythout the wal for to walke wherof is
moche harme comen to vs/for reynart laye vnder a busshe
and cam krepynge bitwene vs and the yate/so that he ca[u]ght
one of my chyldren and leyd hym in his male/wherof whe
haue had grete harme/for syth he hath tasted of hym/ther
myght neuer hunter ne hounnde saue ne kepe hym from vs/
he hath wayted by nyghte and daye in suche wyse that he
hath stolen so many of my chyldren that of .xv. I haue but
foure/in suche wyse hath this thief forslongen them/And yet
yesterday was copen my doughter that hier lyeth vpon the
byer with the houndes rescowed This complayne I to yow
gracious kyng/haue pyte on myn grete and vnresonable
damage and losse of my fayre chyldren/

How the kyng spack touchyng this complaynt
ca. vj:

THenne spack the kyng / Syre dassé here ye this
wel of the recluse your Eme he hath fasted and
prayde that yf I lyue a yere he shal aby[d]e it /
Nowe herke chauntecler / your playnt is ynough
your doughter that lyeth here dede / we wyl gyue to her the
dethes right we may kepe her no longer / we wil betake
her to god / we wylle synge here vygyllie / and brynge her
worshipfully on erthe / and thenne we wille speke wyth these
lordes and take counseyl how we may do ryght and Iustyse of
thys grete murdre / and brynge this fals theef to the lawe /

Tho begonne they placebo domino / with the verses that to
longen whiche yf I shold saye / were me to longe / whan this
vigilye was don and the commendacion / she was leyde in
the pytte / and ther vpon was leyde a marble stone polished
as clere as ony glas and theron was hewen in grete letters
in this wyse coppe chanteklers doughter / whom Reynart
the fox hath byten lyeth hier vnder buryed / complayne ye
her ffor / she is shamefully comen to her deth /

after this the kyng sente ffor his lordes and wysest of
his counseyl for to take aduys / how this grete murdre and
trespaas shold be punysshid on reynart the foxe / Ther was
concluded and apoynted for the beste / that reynart shold be
sent ffore and that he lefte not for ony cause / But he cam
in to the kynges court ffor to here wat shold be sayd to hym /
And that bruyne the bere shold do the message.

the kyng thought that alle this was good and saide to
brune the bere syr brune I wyl that ye doo this message /
but see wel to for your self / ffor reynart is a shrewe / and
felle and knoweth so many wyles that he shal lye and
flatre / and shal thynke how he may begyle deceyue and
brynge yow to some mockerye /

tho sayd brune what good lord late it allone / deceyueth
me the foxe / so haue I ylle lerned my casus / I trowe he shal
come to late to mocque me / Thus departed brune meryly
fro thens / but it is to drede that he cam not so meryly agayn /

how brunne the beere was sped of Reynart the
fore/ capitulo .viij^o.

Now is brune goon on his waye toward the foxe wyth astowte moede/ whiche supposed wel that the foxe sholde not haue begyled hym/ as he cam in a derke wode in a forest were as reynard had a bypath whan he was hunted/ ther bysyde was an hie montayne and lande/ and there muste brune in the myddel goon ouer for to goo to maleperduys/ for reynart had many a dwellyng place/ but the castle of maleperduys was the beste and the fastest burgh that he had/ Ther laye he Inne whan he had nede and was in ony drede or fere. Now whan bruyn was comen to maleperduys he fonde the yate faste shette/ tho wente he to fore the yate and satte vpon his taylle and called Reynart be ye at home I am brownyng/ the kynge hath sente me for yow that ye sholde come to court/ for to plete your caas/ he hath sworn there by his god/ come ye not/ or brynge I yow not with me for t[o]abyde suche right and sentence as shal be there gyuen/ it shal coste you your lyf he wyl hange you/ or sette you on the ratte/ reynart doo by my counseyl and come to the court/

Reynart laye within the gate as he ofte was wonte to doo for the warmth of the sonne/ whan reynart herd bruyn tho wente he Inneward in to his hole/ for maleperduys was ful of hooles/ hier one hool and there an other and yonder an other/ narowe. crooked and longe wyth/ manyweyes to goo out/ whiche he opend and shette after that he had nede/ whan he had ony proye brought home/ or that he wiste that ony sought hym for hys mysdedes and trespasses/ thenne he ran and hydde hym fro his enemyes in to hys secrete chambres/ that they coude not fynde hym/ by whiche he deceuyd many a beest that sought hym/ and tho thought reynart in hym self how he myght best brynge the beere in charge and nede/ and that he abode in worship/

In this thoughte reynart cam out and sayde bruyn eme ye be welcome/ I herde you wel to fore/ but I was in myn eue[n]song therefore haue I the lenger taryed a lytyl/ dere eme he hath don to you no good seruyse and I can hym no thank that hath sente you ouer this longe hylle/ for I see that ye be also wery that the swete renneth down by your chekys/

Trans. by
W. Ca ton
June 1481.

IS IT THEN EARNEST THAT YE LOVE HONEY?] 13

it was no nede / I had neuertheles comen to court to morowe
but I sorowe now the lasse / for your wyse counseyl shal wel
helpe me in the court / and coude the kyng fynde none lasse
messenger but yow ffor to sende hyther / that is grete wonder /
ffor next the kyng ye be the mooste gentyll and richest of
leuys and of lande / I wolde wel that we were now at the
court but I fere me that I shal not conne wel goo thyder /
for I haue eten so moche new mete / that me thynketh my bely
wylle breke or cleue asonder and by cause the mete was
nyewe / I ete the more /

tho spack the bere lyef neue what mete haue ye eten that
maked yow so ful /

dere eme that I ete what myght it helpe yow that yf I
tolde you / I ete but symple mete a poure man is no lord that
may ye knowe eme by me / we poure folke must ete oftymes
suche as we gladly wolde not ete yf we had better / they were
grete hony combes which I muste nedes ete for hunger / they
haue made my bely so grete / that I can nowher endure /

Bruyn tho spack anone / alas reynart what saye ye / sette ye
so lytyll by hony / me ought to preyse and loue it aboue alle
mete / lief reynart helpe me that I myght gete a deel of this
hony / and as longe as I lyue I shal be to you a tryew friende
and abyde by yow as ferre as ye helpe me that I may haue a
parte of this hony /

how bruyn ete the hony capitulo.

.viii :

BRuyn eme I had supposed that ye had iaped
therwyth /
so help me god reynart nay / I shold not gladly
iape with yow /

thenne spacke the rede reynart is it thenne earnest that ye
loue so wel the hony / I shal do late you haue so moche
that ten of yow shold not ete it at one mele / myght I gete
therwith your friendship /

not we ten reyner neue sayd the bere how shold that be
had I alle the hony that is bytwene this and portyngale I
shold wel ete it allone

reynard sayde what saye ye Eme / hier by dwelleth an
husbondman named lantfert whiche hath so moche hony

that ye shold not ete it in· vij. yere whiche ye shal haue
in your holde. yf ye wille be to me friendly and helpyng
ayenst myn enemyes in the kynges court /

thenne promysed bruyne the bere to hym. that yf he
myght haue his bely full· he wold truly be to hym to fore
alle other a faythful frende /

herof laughed reynart the shrewe and sayde / yf ye wolde
haue vij hamber barelis ful I shal wel gete them and helpe
you to haue them / These wordes plesyd the bere so wel and
made hym so moche to lawhe / that he coude not wel stande

Tho thought reynart / this is good luck I shal lede hym
thyder that he shal lawhe by mesure.

Reynard sayd thenne / this mater may not be longe taryed /
I muste payne my self for you / ye shal wel vnderstande the
very yonste and good wyl that I bere to you ward I knowe
none in al my lygnage that I nou wolde laboure fore thus
sore /

that thanked hym the bere and thought he taryed longe /

Now eme late vs goo a good paas and folowe ye me / I shal
make you to haue as moche hony as ye may bere / the
foxe mente of goode strokes but the caytyf markyd not what
the foxe mente / and they wente so longe to gydre that they
cam vnto lantferts yerde / tho was sir bruyne mery /

Now herke of lantfert is it true that men saye / so was
lantfert a stronge carpenter of grete tymbre / and had
brought that other day to fore in to his yerde a grete oke
whiche he had begonne to cleue And as men be woned he had
smeten two betels the rinone after that other in suche wyse
the oke was wyde open whereof reynart was glad / for he had
founde it right as he wisshed / And sayde to the bere all lawhyng /
see nou wel sharply to / in this tree is so moche hony that it is
without mesure / asaye yf ye can come therin and ete but lytil
for though the hony combes be swete and good yet beware
that ye ete not to[o] many. but take of them by mesure. that
ye cacche no harme in your body· for swete eme I shold be
blasmed yf they dyde you ony harme.

what reynart cosyn sorowe ye not for me. wene ye that I
were a fole.

mesure is good in alle mete· reynart sayde· ye saye trouthe.
wherfore shold I sorowe· goo to the[e]nde and Crepe theryn

bruyn the bere hasted sore toward the hony. and trad in wyth his two forrest feet: and put his heed ouer his eeris in to the clyft of the tree. And reynart sprang lyghtly and brak out the betle of the tree. Tho helped the bere nether flatereng ne chydyng. he was fast shette in the tree thus hath the neuue wyth deceyte brought his eme in pryson in the tree in suche wyse as he coude not gete out wyth myght ne wyth crafte / hede ne foote /

What prouffyteth bruyn the bere that he stronge and hardy is / that may not helpe them / he sawe wel that he begyled was he began to howle and to braye / and crutched wyth the hynder feet and made suche a noyse and rumour that lantfert cam out hastely / and knewe nothyng what this myght be / and brought in his hand a sharpe hoke / bruyn the bere laye in the clyfte of the tree ingrete fere and drede / and helde fast his heed and nyped both his fore feet / he wrange he wrastled / and cryed / and all was for nought / he wiste not how he myght gete out /

reynar[t] the foxe sawe fro ferre how that lantfert the carpenter cam and tho spack reynart to the bere / is that hony good how is it now / ete not to[o] moche it shold do you harme / ye shold not thenne wel conne goo to the court whan lantfert cometh yf ye haue wel eten he shal yeue you better to drynke and thenne it shal not styke in your throte /

After these wordes tho tordned hym reynart toward his castel and lantfert cam and fonde the bere fast taken in the tree / thenne ranne he faste to his neyghbours and sayde / come alle in to my yerde / ther is a beer taken / the worde anone sprange oneral in the thorpe / ther ne bleef nether man ne wyf / but alle ranne theder as fast as they coude / eueryche wyth his wepen / some wyth a staf / some with a rake / some with a brome / some with a stake of the hegghe and some wyth a flayel / and the preest of the chirche had the staf of the crosse / and the clerk brought a vane The prestis wyf Iulok cam with her dystaf / she sat tho and spanne / Ther cam olde wymen that for age had not one toeth in her heed /

now was bruyn the bere nygh moche sorowe / that he allone muste stande ayenst them alle whan he herde alle this grete noyse and crye / he wrastled and plucked so harde and so sore /

that he gate out his heed / but he lefte behynde all the skyne
and bothe his eeris / In suche wyse that neuer man sawe fowller
ne lothyer beest / for the blode ran ouer his eyen / and or he
coude gete out his feet / he muste lete there his clawes or
nayles and this roughe hande / This market cam to hym euyl /
ffor he supposed neuer to haue goon / [h]is feet were so sore / and
he myght not see for the blode whiche ran so ouer his eyen /

Lantfert cam to hym wyth the preest and forth with alle
the parysshe / and began to smyte and stryke sore vpon
his heed and visage he receyued there many a sore
stroke / euery man beware hierby. who hath harme and scathe /
euery man wil be ther at and put more to / That was wel seen
on the bere / for they were alle fiers and wroth on the bere grete
and smal / ye[a] hughelyn wyth the croked lege and ludolf with
the brode longe noose / they were booth wroth That one had an
leden malle and that other a grete leden wapper / therwyth they
wapped and al for slyngred hym / syr bertolt with the longe
fyngers lantfert. and ottram the longe. thys dyde to the bere
more harme than al the other that one had a sharpe hoke / and
that other a croked staf wel leded on th[e]ende for to playe at
the balle / Baetkyn / ende aue abelquak my dame baue / and
the preest with his staf / and dame Iulok his wyf this
wroughten to the bere so moche harme / that they wold fayn
haue brought hym fro his lyf to deth / they smote and stacke
hym al that they cowde /

bruyn the beeresatte and syghed and groned / and muste take
suche as was gyuen to hym / but lantfert was the worthiest
of byrthe of them alle / and made moste noyse / for dame
pogge of chafporte was his moder / and his fader was Macob
the stoppelmaker / a moche stowte man there as he was
allone / bruyn receyued of hem many a caste of stones / Tofore
hem alle sprang forst lanteferts brother with a staf / and smote
the bere on the heed that he ne herde ne sawe / and there
with the bere sprange vp bytwene the bushe and the ryuer
emonge an heep of wyuis that he threwe a deel of hem in the
ryuer whiche was wyde and deep /

ther was the persons wyf one of them wherfor he was ful
of sorow whan he sawe his wyf lye in the water / hym lusted
no lenger to smyte the bere / but called dame Iuloke in the
water now euery man see to / Alle they that may helpe her / be

they men or wymen/I gyue to hem alle pardon of her penance and relece alle theyr synnes/alle they thenne lefte bruyne the bere lye/ And dyde that the preest badde

Whan bruyne the bere sawe that they ranne alle from hym and ranne to saue the wymen/ tho sprange he in to the water and swame alle that he coude/ Thenne made the preest a grete showte and noyse and ran after the bere wyth grete anger and said come and torne agayn thou false theef/ The bere swame after the beste of the streme/ and lete them calle and crye/ for he was glad that he was so escaped from them/ he cursed and banned the hony tree/ and the foxe also that had so betrayed hym/ that he had copen therein so depe that he loste bothe his hood and his eeris/ And so forth he droof in the streem wel a ij or iij myle/ Tho waxe he so wery that he wente to lande for to sitte and reste hym/ ffor he was heuy/ he groned and syghed/ and the blode lepe ouer his eyen/ he drough his breth lyke as one sholde haue deyde/

Now herke how the foxe dyde/er he cam fro lantferts hows he had stolen a fatte henne and had leyde her in his male And ranne hastely away by a by path were he wende that noman should haue comen/ he ranne toward the Ryuer that he swette/ he was so glad that he wist not whatto do for Ioye/ ffor he hoped that the bere had be dede/ he sayde/ I haue now wel spedde for he that sholde moste haue hyndred me in the court is now dede/ and none shal wyte me therof/ may I not thenne by right/ be wel glad/ with thisse wordes the foxe loked to the ryuer ward and espyed where bruyne the bere laye and rested hym/ Tho was the foxe sorier and heuyer then to fore was mery/ and was as angry and sayde In chydyng to lantfert/ alas lantfert lewde fool god gyue hym a shames deth that hath loste suche good venyson whiche is good and fatte/ and hath late hym goo whiche was taken to his hande many aman wolde gladly haue eten of hym. he hath loste ariche and fatte bere/ Thus al chydyng he cam to the ryuer/ where he fonde the beere sore wounded/ bebled/ and right seke/ whiche he myght thanke none better therof than Reynart whiche spacke to the bere in skorne/

Chiere priestre/ dieu vous garde wylle ye see the rede theef

sayde the bere to hym self/the rybaud and the felle diere
here I se hym comen/

Thenne sayd the foxe/haue ye ought forgotten at lant-
ferts/haue ye also payd hym for the hony combes that ye
stale fro hym/yf ye haue not. it were agrete shame and not
honeste/I wyl rather be the messenger my self for to goo
and paye hym/was the hony not/good/I knowe yet more of
the same prys. dere Eme telle me er I goo hens/ In to what
ordre wille ye goo. that we[a]re this newe hode/were ye
amonke or an abbot he that shoef your crowne / hath
nyped of[f] your eeris/ye haue lost your toppe And don of[f]
your gloues/I trowe veryly that ye wyl go syngre complyn'

Alle this herde bruyn the bere /and wexe alle angry and
sory for he myght not avenge hym / he lete the foxe saye
his wylle And wyth grete payne suffred it. and sterte
agayn in the ryuer /and swam down wyth the stream to that
other syde /

now muste he sorowe how that he sholde come to the court /
for he had loste his eeris /and the skynne wyth the clawes of
his forefeet /for though a man sholde haue slayn hym he coude
not go /And yet he muste nedes forth /but he wist not how

Now he[a]re how he dyde. he satte vpon his hammes /and
began to rutsele ouer his tayl /and whan he was so wery /
he wentled and tombled nyghe half a myle /this dyde he
with grete payne so longe tyl atte laste he cam to the courte.
And whan he was seen so comyng fro ferre /Some doubted
what it myght be that cam so wentelyng

The kynge atte laste knewe hym /and was not wel payd
and sayde This is bruyn the bere my frende /lord god who
hath wounded hym thus he is passyng reed on his heed. me
thynketh he is hurte vnto the deth where may he haue ben.

ther wyth is the bere come to fore the kynge and sayde /

The complaynt of the bere vpon the fore cap^o ir^o

Icomplayne to yow mercyful lorde syre kynge /
so as ye may see how that I am handled prayeng
you t[o]auenge it vpon reynart the felle beest ffor I
haue goten this in your seruyse. I haue loste bothe
my foremost feet /my chekes and myn eeris by his false deceyte
and treson

The kynge sayde how durst this fals thief Reyna[r]t doo
this/I saye to yow bruyn and swere by my crowne/I shal
so auenge you on hym/that ye shal conne me thanke /

he sente for alle the wyse beestis /and desired counseyl how
that he myght auenge this ouer grete wronge / that the foxe had
don/Thenne the counseyl concluded olde and yong/that he
shold be sente fore and dayed earnestly again for t[o]abyde
suche Iugement as shold there be gyuen on hym of alle his
trespaces And they thought that the catte tybert myght best
do this message yf he wolde /for he is right wyse /The kynge
thought this counceyl good /

**How the kynge sente another tyme tybert the catte
for the fore, and how tybert spedde with reynart the
fore/ca^o r^o**

Thenne the kynge saide sir tybert /ye shal now goo
to reynart and saye to hym this seconde tyme that
he come to court vnto the plee for to answe[r] /
for though he be felle to other beestis he trusteth
you wel /and shal doo by your counseyl. and telle yf he come
not /he shal haue the thirde warnyng and be dayed and yf
he thenne come not /we shal procede by ryght ayenste hym
and alle hys lygnage wythout mercy /

Tybert spack / My lord the kynge /they that this counseyld
you were not my frendes what shal I doo there /he wil not
for me neyther come ne abyde /I beseche you dere kynge
sende some other to hym /I am lytyl and feble /bruyn the
bere whiche was so grete and stronge /coude not brynge
hym /how shold I thenne take it on honde /

nay said the kynge sir tybert ye ben wyse and wel
lerned /Though ye be not grete /ther lyeth not on /many
do more wyth crafte and connyng /than with myght and
strengthe /

thenne said the catte /syth it muste nedes be don /I
muste thenne take it vpon me /god yeue grace that I may
wel achieue it /for my herte is heuy /and euil willed therto /

Tybert made hym /sone redy toward maleperduys /and he
saw fro ferre come fleying one of seynt martyns byrdes /tho
cryde he lowde and saide al hayl /gentyl byrde /torne thy

wynges hetherward and flee on my right side/the byrde
flew forth vpon a tree whiche stode on the list side of the
catte/tho was tybert woo/ffor he thought hit was a shrewd
token and a sygne of harme/for yf the birde had flowen on
his right side/he had ben mery and glad /but now he sorowed
that his Iourney shold torne to vnhappe/neuertheles he dyde
as many doo /and gaf to hym self better hope than his herte
sayde/he wente and ronne to maleperduys ward /and there
he fonde the foxe allone standynge to fore his hous /

Tybert saide / The riche god yeue you good euen reynart /
the kyng hath menaced yow /for to take your lyf from
yow /yf ye come not now wyth me to the court /

The foxe tho spack and said /Tibert my dere cosyn ye
be right wel come /I wolde wel truly that ye had moche
good lucke /what hurted the foxe to speke fayre /though he
sayd wel /his herte thoughte it not and that shal be seen /er
they departe /

reynart sayde wylle we this nyght be to gydre /I wyl
make you good chyere and to morow erly in the dawnyng
we wyl to gydre goo to the court / good neue late vs so
doo /I haue none of my kyn /that I truste so moche to as
to yow /hier was bruynt the bere the traytour he loked so
shrewdly on me /and me thoughte he was so stronge /that I
wolde not for a thousand marke haue goon with hym /but
cosyn I wil to morow erly goo with yow /

Tybert saide /it is beste that we now goo /for the mone
shyneth also light as it were daye /I neuer sawe fayrer weder /
nay dere cosyn /suche myght mete vs by daye tyme /that
wold make vs good chiere /and by nyghtte paraenture myght
doo vs harme /it is suspecyous to [w]alke by nyghte. Therefore
a byde this nyght here by me

Tybert sayde /w[h]at sholde we ete /yf we abode here /

reynart sayde /here is but lytel to ete ye maye wel haue
an hony combe good and swete /what saye ye /Tybert wyl ye
ony therof.

tybert answerd I sette nought therby haue ye nothyng
ellis yf ye gaf me agood fatte mows /I shold be better plesyd /

a fatte mows said reynard / dere cosyn what saye ye /here by
dwelleth a preest and hath a barne by his hows ther in ben
so many myse /that a man shold not lede them a way vpon

Trans. by
W. Caxton
June 1481.

SAY ME TRUTH! LOVE YE WELL MICE?] 21

a wayne / I haue herd the preest many tymes complayne that
they dyde hym moche harme

O dere reyner lede me thyder for alle that I may doo for yow /
ye[a] tybert saye ye me trouthe / loue ye wel myes /

yf I loue hem wel said the catte / I loue myes better than
ony thyng that men gyue me knowe ye not that myes
sauoure better than veneson / ye than flawnes or pasteyes wil
ye wel doo. so lede me theder where the myes ben and thenne
shal ye wyne my loue. ye[a] al had ye slayn my fader moder
and alle my kyn.

Reynart sayd ye moke and Jape therwyth
the catte saide so helpe me god I doo not.

Tybert said the foxe wiste I that veryly I wolde yet this
nyght make that ye shuld be ful of myes.

reynart quod he ful that were many.

tyberte ye Iape /

reynart quod he in trouth I doo not / yf I hadde a fatte
mows / I wold not gyue it for a golden noble /

late vs goo thenne / tybert quod the foxe I wyl brynge yow
to the place / er I goo fro you /

reyner quod the foxe [*or rather* the cat] / vpon your sauf-
conduyt / I wolde wel goo wyth you to monpelier /

late vs thenne goo said the foxe we tarye alto longe /

Thus wente they forth withoute lettyng to the place /
where as they wold be to the prestes barne whiche was
faste wallid aboute with a mude wal and the nyght to
fore the foxe had broken in and had stolen fro the preest
a good fatte henne / and the preest alle angry had sette a
gryn to fore the hool to auenge hym / for he wold fayn
haue take the foxe / this knewe wel the felle theef the foxe
And said sir tybert cosyn crepe in to this hool / and ye shal
not longe tarye but that ye shal catche myes by grete heepis /
herke how they pype. whan ye be ful / come agayn / I wil
tarye here after you be fore this hole / we wil to morowe goo
to gyder to the court. Tybert why tarye ye thus longe come
off[f] / and so maye we retorne sone to my wyf. whiche wayteth
after vs / and shal make vs good chiere

Tybert saide / reynart cosyn is it thenne your counseyl that
I goo in to this hole. These prestes ben so wyly and shrewysssh /
I drede to take harme /

O ho tybert said the fox I sawe you neuer so sore aferde /
what eyleth yow /

the catte was ashamed and sprange in to the hoole. And anon he was caught in the gryn by the necke er he wyste / thus deceyuyd reynart his ghest and cosyn /

As tybert was waer of the grynne / he was a ferde and sprange forth / the grynne wente to / thenne he began he to wrawen / for he was almost ystranglyd / he called he cryed and made a shrewd noyse /

reynart stode to fore the hool and herde al / and was wel a payed and sayde / tybert loue ye wel myes / be they fatte and good / knewe the preeste herof or mertynet / they be so gentyl that they wolde brynge yow sawce / Tybert ye synge and eten / is that the guyse of the court / lord god yf ysegrym ware there by yow in suche reste as ye now be thenne shold I be glad / for ofte he hath don me scathe and harme /

tybert coude not goo awaye / but he mawede and galped so lowde / that martynet sprang vp / and / cryde lowde / god be thanked my gryn hath taken the thief that hath stolen our hennes / aryse vp we wil rewarde hym /

Wyth these wordes aroose the preest in an euyl tyme and waked alle them that were in the hows / and cryde wyth a lowede vois / the foxe is / take

there leep[t] and ranne alle that there was[.] the preest hym self ranne al moder naked / mertynet was the first that cam to tybert / the preest toke to locken his wyf an offryng candel and bad her lyght it atte fyer / and he smote tybert with a grete staf / Ther receyuid tybert many a grete stroke ouer alle his body / mertynet was so angry that he smote the catte an eye out / the naked preest lyfte vp and shold haue gyuen a grete stroke to tybert / but tybert that sawe that he muste deye sprange bytwene the prestes legges wyth his clawes and with his teeth that he raught out his ryght colyon or balock stone / that leep becam yl to the preest and to his grete shame.

This thyngde fyl down vpon the floer / whan dame Iulocke knewe that / she sware by her faders sowle / that she wolde it had coste her alle th[e] offryng of a hole yere / that the preest had not had that harme hurte and shame / and that it had not happed and said / in the deueles name was the grynne there sette / see mertynet lyef sone / this is of thy faders

Trans. by
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June 1481.

TIBERT RETURNS TO NOBLE THE KING.] 23

harneys / This is a grete shame and to me a grete hurte / for
though he be heled herof yet he is but a loste man to me and
also shal neuer conne doo that swete playe and game /

The foxe stode wythoute to fore the hole and herde alle thyse
wordes / and lawhed so sore that he vnnethe coude stonde / he
spack thus al softly / dame Iulock be al styll / and your
grete sorowe synke / Al hath the preest loste one of his stones
it shal not hyndre hym he shal doo wyth you wel ynowh ther
is in the world many a chapel / in whiche is rongen but one
belle / thus scorned and mocked the foxe / the prestes wyf dam
iulock that was ful of sorowe /

The preest fyl doun a swoune / they toke hym vp and brought
hym agayn to bedde. tho wente the foxe agayn in to his
borough ward / and lefte tybert the catte in grete drede and
leopardye / for the foxe wiste none other but that the catte
was nygh deed / but whan tybert the catte sawe them al besy
aboute the preest tho began he to byte and gnawe the grenne
in the myddel a sondre / and sprange out of the hool and wente
rollyng and wentlyng towards the kyngs court or he cam
theder it was fayr day and the sonne began to ryse / And he
cam to the court as a poure wyght / he had caught harme atte
prestes hows by the helpe and counseyl of the foxe / his body
was al to beten / and blynde on the one eye / whan the kyng
wyste this / that tybert was thus arayed / he was sore angry
and menaced reynart / the theef sore / and anone gadred his
counseyl to wyte what they wold a[d]uyse hym / how he myght
brynge the foxe to the lawe and how he sholde be fette

Tho spack sir grymbart whiche was the foxes suster sone
and saide ye lordes / though my eme were twyes so bad
and shrewessh / yet is ther remedye ynough / late hym be
don to / as to a free man whan he shal be Iuged / he muste be
warned the thirde tyme for al and yf he come not thanne / he
is thenne gylty in alle the trespaces that ben leyd ayenst
hym and his or complayned on /

grymbart who wolde ye that sholde goo and daye hym to come /
who wil auenture for hym his eiris / hys eye or his lyf whiche
is so fel a beest / I trowe ther is none here so moche a fool /

grymbert spack / so helpe me god I am so moche a fool /
that I wil do this message myself to reynart / yf ye wille
commande me /

How grymbert the dassse broughte the fore to the
lawe to fore the kynge / capitulo .rj^o.

Now go forth gymbart and see wel to fore yow
reynart is so felle and fals and so subtyl / that ye
nede wel to loke aboute yow / and to beware of hym /
Grimbert said he shold see welto /

thus wente grymbart to maleperduys ward / and when he
cam theder / he fonde reynart the foxe at home / and dame
ermelyn his wyf laye by her whelpis in a derke corner /

Tho spack grymberd and saleded his eme and his aunte /
and saide to reynart eme beware that your absence hurte yow
not in suche maters as be leyde and complayned on yow but
yf ye thynke it good / it is hye tyme that ye come wyth me
to the court / The wythholdyng you fro it can doo yow no
good there is moche thyng complayned ouer you / and
this is the thirde warnyng / and I telle you for trouth yf
ye abyde to morow al day / ther may no mercy helpe you
ye shal see that wyth in thre dayes that your hows shal be
byseged al aboute / and ther shal be made to fore it galowes
and racke / I saie you truly ye shal not thenne escape
neyther with wyf ne wyth chylde / The kynge shal take alle
your liuys fro yow / therfore it is beste that ye goo wyth me to
the court / your subtyl wyse counseyl shal parauenture auaylle
you / ther ben gretter auentures falle er this for it may happē
ye shal goo quyte of all the complayntes that ben complayned
on you / and alle your enemyes shal abyde in the shame / ye
haue oftymes don more and gretter thingis than this.

Reynart the foxe answerd / ye saye soth / I trowe it is
beste that I goo wyth you for ther lacketh my counseyl
parauenture the kynge shal be merciful to me yf I maye
come to speke wyth hym / and see hym vnder his eyen /
though I had don moche more harme / the court may not
stonde without me / that shal the kynge wel vnderstande
Though some be so felle to me ward / yet it goth not to the
herte / alle the counseyl shal conclude moche by me / where
grete courtes ben gadred of kynges or of grete lordes / where as
nedeth subtyl counseyl / ther muste reynart fynde / the subtyl

meanes / they maye wel speke and saye theyr aduys but the myne is beste / and that goth to fore alle other / in the courte ben many that haue sworn to doo me the werst they can / and that causeth me a parte to be heuy in my herte / ffor many maye doo more than one allone / that shal hurte me / neuertheles newew it is better I goo wyth yow to the court and answere for my self / than to sette me / my wyf / and my chyldren in a venture for to be loste / aryse vp late vs goo hens / he is ouer myghty for me / I muste doo as he wylle / I can not bettre it I shal take it paciently and suffre it.

REynert saide to his wyf dame ermelyn I betake yow my chyldren that ye see wel to hem / and specyally to reynkin my ynogest sone / He belyketh me so wel I hope he shal folowe my stappes And ther is rosel apassyng fayr theef / I loue hem as wel as ony may loue his chyldren / Yf god gyue me grace / that I maye escape I shal whan I come agayn thanke yow wyth fair wordes Thus toke Reynart leue of his wyf /

A gods / how sorouful a bode ermelyn wyth her smale whelpis / ffor the vytayller and he that sorowed for malperduys was goon his way / And the hows not pourueyed ne vitaylled.

How reynard shroef hym capitulo. rij.

WHan reynart and grymbert had goon a whyle to gydre / tho saide reynart / dere cosyn now am I in grete fere / for I goo in drede and ieopardye of my lyf / I haue so moche repentaunce for my synnes that I wil shryue me dere cosyn to yow / here is none other preest to gete yf I were shryuen of my synnes / my soule shold be the clerer /

grymbert ansuerde / Eem wil ye shryue you / thenne muste ye promyse firste to leue your steelyng and rouynge

reynart saide that wiste he wel / now herke dere cosyn what I shal saye / Confiteor tibi pater of alle the mysdedes that I haue don / And gladly wil receyue penance for them /

Grymbert sayde what saye ye / wylle ye shryue yow / thenne saye it in englissh that I may vnderstande. yow

reynart sayde / I haue trespaced ayenst alle the beestis
that lyue in especyal ayenst bruyn the bere myn Eem whom I
made his crowne al bloody / And taughte tybert the catte to
catche myes for I made her leepe in a grenne wher she was al
to beten / also I haue trespaced gretly ayenst chanteclere with
his children / for I haue made hym quyte of a grete dele of hem

The kynge is not goon al quyte / I haue sklandred hym
and the quene manytymes / that they shal neuer be cleer
therof yet haue I begyled ysegrym the wulf ofter than I
can telle wel I called hym eme / but that was to deceyue hym /
he is nothyng of my kyn / I made hym a monke / [at] Eelmare /
wher I my self also becam one / And that was to his hurte and
no prouffyte / I made bynde his feet to the belle rope / the ryngyng
of the belle thought hym so good that he wolde lerne to ryng
wherof he had shame / ffor he range so sore that alle the folke in
the strete were aferd therof and meruaylled what myght be on
the belle / And ranne thyder to fore he had comen to axe the
religyon / wherfore he was beten almost to the deth / after this
I taught hym to catche fyssh wher he receyuid many a stroke /
also I ledde hym to the richest prestes hows that was in
vermedos / This preest had aspynde wherin henge many a
good flitche of bacon / wherin many a tyme I was wonte to fyl
my bely / in this spynde I had made an hole / in whiche I made
ysegrym to crepe / There fonde he tubbes with beef and many
goed flytches of bacon wherof he ete so moche withoute
mesure / that he myght not come out at the hole wher he wente
in / his bely was so grete and ful of the mete / and whan he
entred his bely was smal / I wente in to the village and made
there a grete showte and noyse / yett herke what I dyde thenne
I ranne to the preest wher he satte at the table and ete / And
hadde to fore hym as fatte capone as a man myght fynde /
that capone caught I and ranne my weye therwith al that I
myghte / the preest cryed out and said / take and slee the foxe /
I trowe that neuer man sawe more wonder / the foxe cometh in
my hows and taketh my capoone fro my table / wher sawe
euer man an hardyer thief / and as me thought he toke his
table knyf and casted it at me / but he touched me not I ranne
away / he shoof the table from hym / and folewed me cryeng
kylle and slee hym / I to goo and they after and many moo
cam after which alle thought to hurte me /

Ranne so longe that I cam where as isegrym was /
and there I lete falle the capoone / for it was to[o]
heuy for me / and ayenst my wille I lefte it there /
and thenne I sprange thurgh an hole where as I wolde be / and
as the preest toke vp the capone. he espyed isegrym and
cryde smyte doun here frendes here is the theef the wulf / see
wel to that he escape vs not they ranne alle to gydre wyth
stokkes and staues and made a grete noyse that alle the
neyghbours camen oute. and gauen hym many a shrewde
stroke / and threwe at hym grete stones / in suche wyse that
he fyl doun as he had been deed / They slepid hym and drewe
hym ouer stones and ouer blockes wythout the village and
threwe hym in to a dyche and there he laye al the nyght / I
wote neuer how he cam thens / syth I haue gotten of hym / for
as moche as I made hym to fylle his bely / that he sware that
he wolde be myn helpe an hole yere.

Tho ledde I hym to a place where I tolde hym ther were
vij^r hennes and a cocke whiche satte on a perche and
were moche fatte / And ther stode a faldore by / and we
clymmed ther vp / I sayde to hym yf he wolde bileue me / and
that he wolde crepe in to the dore / he sholde fynde many fatte
hennes / Isegrym wente al lawhyng to the dore ward and crope
a lityl in / and tasted here and there / and at laste he sayde to
me reynarde ye borde and iape with me / for what I seche I
fynde not thenne said I / eme yf ye wyl fynde crepe forther
in / he that wil wyne / he muste laboure and auenture / They
that were wonte to sytte there / I haue them a waye thus I
made hym to seche ferther in / and shooue him forth so
ferre / that he fylle doun vpon the floer for the perche was
narow / and he fill so grete a falle / that they sprange vp alle
that slepte / and they that laye nexte the fyre cryden that the
valdore was open and somthyng was falle and they wiste
not w[h]at it myght be /

They roose vp and lyghte a candel / and whan they sawe
hym they smeton beten and wounded hym to the deth / I
haue broughte hym thus in many a iepardye / moo than
I gan now rekene / I sholde fynde many moo / yf I me wel
bythoughte / whiche I shal telle you here after / Also I haue
bydryuen wyth dame erswynde his wyf / I wolde I had not don

it/I am sorry for it/hit is to her grete shame/and that me
repenteth/

grymbert saide/ Eme I vnderstande you not/

he sayde I haue trespaced with his wyf/

ye shryue you/as though ye helde somewhat behynde/I
wote not what ye mene ne where ye haue lerned this langage/

Ach dere eme it were grete shame yf I shold saye it
oppnenly as it happed/I haue leyen by myn aunte/I am your
eme I shold angre you yf I spak vylanye of wymmen/neueu
now haue I tolde yow alle that I can thynke on/sette me
penaunce/and assoylle me/ffor I haue grete repentaunce/

Grymbert was subtyl and wyse/he brake a rodde of[f] a
tree and saide/eme now shal ye smyte your self thryes
with this rodde on your body/And thenne leye it doun
vpon the grounde/and sprynge thre tymes ther ouer without
bowyng of your legges and wythout stomblyng/and thenne
shul ye take it vp and kysse it frendly in token of mekenes
and obedience of your penance that I gaf yow/herwith be ye
quyte of alle synnes that ye haue don to this day for I forgeue
it yow al/

the foxe was glad/

tho sayd grymbert to his eme/ Eme see now forthon/that
ye doo good werkis/rede your psalmes/goo to chirche/faste
and kepe your halydayes/and gyue your allmesse/and leue
your synful and yl lyf/your thefte and your treson and so
maye ye come to mercy/

the foxe promysed that he wold so doo/and thenne wente
they bothe to gydre to the court ward/

Alytel besyde the waye as they wente stode a cloyster of
back nonnes. where many ghees/hennes and capones
wente withoute the walles/and as they wente talkyng
the foxe brought grymberte out of the right waye thyder and
wythout the walles by the barne went the polayle/The foxe
espyed them and saw a fatte yong capone whiche wente
allone fro his felaws/and leep and caught hym that the
fethers flew aboute his eeris but the capone escaped/

grymbert sayde what eme cursyd man what wil ye doo/wille
ye for one of these poletes falle agayn in alle your synnes of
whiche ye haue shryuen yow/ye ought sore repente you/

reynart answerd / truly cosyn I had al forgotten / praye god
that he forgeue it me for I wil neuer do so more /

thenne torned they agayn ouer alityl brydge / yet the foxe
alway loked after the polaylle / he coude not refrayne hym self /
that whiche cleuid by the bone / myght not out of the flesshe /
though he shold be hanged / he coude not lete the lokyng after
the polayll as fer as he myght see them /

Grymbert sawe his maner and sayde / fowle false deceyuour /
how goo your eyen so after the poleyl /

The foxe sayde / cosyn ye mysdoo to saye to me ony suche
wordes / ye brynge me out of my deuocion and prayers / late
me saye apater noster ffore alle the sowles of polaylle and
ghes that I haue betrayed / and ofte wyth falsheed stolen from
thyse holly nonnes /

Grymbert was not wel a payd but the foxe had euer his eyen
toward the polayl / til atte laste they cam in the waye agayn.
And thenne torned they to the courte warde / how sore quaked
tho reynard whan they aproched the court / ffor he wiste wel
that he had for to answeere to many a fowle feet and theft that
he had doon /

How the fore cam to the court / and how he excused hym to fore the kynge / capitulo .xiiij^o



AT the first whan it was knowen / in the court that
reynart the foxe and grymbaert his cosyn were comen
to the court / Ther was none so poure nor so feble
of kynne and frendes / but that he made hym redy for
to complayne on reynart the foxe /

reynart loked as he had not ben aferd / and helde hym
better / than he was for he wente forth proudly with his
neueu thurgh the hiest street of the courte / right as he
had ben the kynges sone and as he had not trespaced to
ony man the value of an heer / and wente in the mydel of
the place stondyng to fore noble the kynge and sayde / God
gyue yow grete honour and worship / Ther was neuer kyng /
that euer had a trewer seruant / than I haue ben to your
good grace and yet am. Neuertheles dere lorde I knowe
wel that ther ben many in this courte that wolde destroye
me yf yewold byleue them / but nay god thanke yow /

hit is not fyttyng to youre crowne to byleue this false
deceyuars and lyars lyghtly / To god mote it be complayned /
how that this false lyars and flaterers now adayes in the
lordes courtes ben moste herde and byleuyd / the shrewes and
false deceyuers ben borne vp for to doo to good men alle the
harne and scath they maye / Our lorde god shal ones rewarde
them their hyre /

the kynge sayde / pees reynard false thief and traytour /
how wel can ye brynge forth fayr talis / And alle shalle not
helpe yow a strawe / wene ye wyth suche flateryng wordes to
be my frende / ye haue so ofte seruyd me soo as ye now shal
wel knowe / The pees that I haue comanded and sworn / that
haue ye wel holden / haue ye /

chauntecler coude no lenger be styll but cryde alas what
haue / I by this pees loste /

be styll chaunteclere holde your mouth late me answeere
this fowle thief /

How shrewd felle thief saide the kynge / thou saist that
thow louest me wel that hast thou shewd wel on my
messagers these poure felaws / Tibert the cat and bruyn
the bere / whiche yet ben al bloody whiche chyde not ne saye
not moche / but that shal this day coste the [e] thy lyf / In nomine
pater criste. filij.

sayd the foxe dere lord and myghty kyng yf bruyns
crowne be bloody / what is that to me / when he ete hony
at lantferts hows in the vyllage and dyde hym hurte and
scathe / there was he beten therfore yf he had willyd he
is so stronge of lymmes / he myght wel haue be auengid er
he sprang in to the water / Tho cam tybert the catte whom I
receyued frendly / yf he wente out without my counseyl for to
stele myes to a prestes hows / and the preest dyde hym harne
sholde I aby[d]e that thenne myght I saye I were not happy /
not so my liege lorde / ye may doo what ye wille / thowh my
mater be cleer and good. ye may siede me / or roste / hange. or
make me blynde. I may not escape yow. we stonde alle
vnder your correccion. ye be myghty and stronge. I am
feble / and my helpe is but smal / yf ye put me to the deth. hit
were a smal vengeance /

whiles they thus spack. sprange vp bellyn the rame
and his ewe dame olewey and saide my lord the kynge

here oure complaynt / bruyn the bere stode vp wyth al his
lygnage and his felaws. Tibert the catte Isegrym the wulf.
kywart the hare / and panther the boore the camel and brunel
the ghoos the kyde and ghoot / boudewyn the asse. borre the
bulle / hamel the oxen and the wesel. Chantecler the cock.
pertelot wyth alle theyr children alle thise made grete rumour
and noyse. And cam forth openly to fore their lorde the
kynge. And made that the foxe was taken and arested /

**How the foxe was arested and Iuged to deth
capitulo ·xiiij·**

Here vpon was a parlament / and they desired that
reynart sholde ben deed and what somme euer they
sayden ayenst the foxe / he answerde to eche to
them / neuer herde man of suche beestis / suche
playntis of wyse counseyl / and subtyl Inuencions and on
that other syde / the foxe made his excuse so wel and formably
theron that they that herde it wondred therof / they that
herde and sawe it / may telle hit forth for trouthe / I shal
shorte the mater and telle yow forth of the foxe / The kyng
and the counseyl herd the witnessis of the complayntes of
reynarts mysdedes / hit went with hem as it ofte doth the
feblest hath the worst / They gafe sentence and Iuged that
the foxe shoulde be dede and hanged by the necke / tho lyfte
not he to pleye alle his flaterynge wordes / and deceytes could
not helpe hym / The Iugement was gyuen and that muste be
don / grymbert his neuue / and many of his lignage myght not
fynde in their hertes to see hym dye but token leue soroufully /
and romed the court.

The kyng bithoughte hym and marked how many a
yonglyng departed from thens al wepyng / whiche were
nyghe of his kynne / and sayde to hym self / hier behoueth
other counseyl herto / Though reynart be a shrewe / ther be
many good of his lignage /


thybert the catte sayde / sir bruyn and sir Isegrym / how be
ye thus slowe. it is almost euen / hier ben many busshes and
hedges. yf he escaped from vs. and were delyuerd out of this
paryl he is so subtyl and so wyly and can so many deceytes

that he shold neuer be taken agayn / shal we hange hym how
stonde ye al thus er the galewis can be made redy it shal be
nyght /

Isegrym bethought hym tho and seyde / hier by is a gybet
or galewis / And wyth that worde he sighed /

and the catte espyed that and sayde / Isegrym ye be aferd /
ys it ayenst your wylle / thynke ye not that he hym self wente
and laboured that bothe your brethern were hanged / were ye
good and wyse ye sholde thanke hym / and ye sholde not
therwith so longe tarye /

How the fore was ledde to the galewis / cap^o 'rv^o

 segrym balked and sayde / ye make moche a doo sir
tyberte hadde we an halter which were mete for
his necke and strong ynough / we shold sone make
an ende /

reynert the foxe whiche longe had not spoken / saide to
Isegrym shorte my payne / Tyberte hath a stronge corde
whiche caughte hym in the prestes hous / whan he bote of [f]
the prestes genytoirs / he can clyme wel and is swyft late
hym bere vp / the lyne / Isegrym and bruyn thys becometh
yow wel that ye thus doo to your neuwe / I am sory that I
lyue thus longe / haste you ye be sette therto / it is euyl doo
that ye tarye thus longe / goo to fore bruyn and lede me
Isegrym folowe fast. and see wel to and be ware that reynart
go not away.

tho sayd bruyn it is the best counseil that I euer yet
herde / that reynart there seith

Isegrym commanded anon and badde his kyn and frendes.
that they sholde see to reynart that he escaped not. ffor he is
so wyly and fals. They helden hym by the feet. by the berde.
and so kepte hym that he escaped not from hem /

The foxe herde alle thyse wordes / whiche touchid hym
nygh / yet spak he and sayde / Och dere eme / me thynketh ye
payne your self sore / for to doo me hurte and scathe / yf I durste
I wolde pay you of mercy / though my hurte and sorow is
playsant to you / I wote wel yf myn aunte your wyf bethought
her wel of olde ferners' she wolde not suffre that / I shold
haue ony harme / but now I am he / that nowe ye wille doo on

me what it shal plese yow / ye bruyn and thibert / god gyue you shames deth but ye doo to me your werst / I wote wherto I shal / I may deye but ones I wolde that I were dede al redy I sawe my fader deye he had so[o]ne donne /

Isegrym sayde late vs goo / ffor ye curse vs bi cause we lengthe the tyme / euyl mote he fare yf we abyde ony lenger / he wente forth wyth grete enuye on that one side and bruyn stode on the other syde / and so lede they hym forth to the galowes warde / Tybert ranne with a good wil to fore / and bare the corde and his throte was yet sore of the grynne / and his crophe dyde hym woo of the stryke that he was take in that happed by the counseil of the foxe / and that thought he now to quyte /

Tybert ysegrym and bruyn wente hastely wyth reinert to the place / there as the felons ben wonte to be put to deth / Nobel the kynge and the quene / and alle that were in the court folowed after for to see the ende of reynart / the foxe was in grete drede yf hym mys[s]happed / and bethought hym ofte / how he myghte saue hym fro the deth / And tho thre[e] that so sore desireden hys deth how he myght deceyue them / and brynge them to shame / and how he myght brynge the kynge wyth lesyngis ffor to holde wyth hym ayenst hem / This was alle that he studyed / how he myght putte away his sorowe wyth wyls / And thought / thus though the kynge and many one be vpon me angry / it is no wonder for I haue wel deseruid it / neuertheles I hope for to be yet hir best frende / And yet shal I neuer do them good / how strong that the kynge be / and how wyse that his counseil be / yf I may brouke my wordes / I knowe so many an inuencion / I shal come to myn aboue / as fer as they wolde comen to the galewes /

Tho saide ysegrym / sir bruyn thynke now on your rede crowne whiche by reynarts mene ye caughte we haue now the tyme that we may wel rewarde hym / Tybert clyme vp hastly and bynde the corde faste to the lynde / and make a rydyngge knotte or a strope / ye be the lyghtyst / ye shal this day see your wylle of hym · Bruyn see wel to that he escape not. and holde faste. I will helpe that the ladder be sette vp / that he may goo vpwart theron.

bruyn said. do. I shal helpe hym wel

The foxe sayde now may my herte be wel heuy for grete drede· ffor I see the deth to fore myn eyen. and I may not escape· my lorde the kynge and dere quene and forth alle ye that here stande. er I departe fro this worlde I pray you of a bo[o]ne. that I may to fore you alle make my confession openly and telle my defaultes also clerly that my sowle be not a-combred / and also that noman here after / bere no blame for my thefte ne for my treson my deth shal be to me the esyer / and praye ye alle to god that he haue mercy on my sowle.

How the fore made openly his confession to fore the kynge and to fore al them that wold here it cap^o rvj^o



Alle they that stoden there had pyte whan reynart saide tho wordis and said it was / but a lytyl requeste yf the kynge wolde graunte it hym / and they prayde the kynge to graunte it hym /

The kynge gaf hym leue /

reynart was wel glad and hoped that it myght falle better / And said thus / now helpe spiritus domini / for I see hier noman but I haue trespased vnto / Neuertheles yet was I vnto the tyme that I was wened fro the tete / one the best chyldre that coude ouwher be founden / I wente tho and pleyde wyth the lambes by cause I herde hem gladly blete / I was so longe wyth hem that at the laste I bote one / there lerned I fyrst to lapen of the bloode hit sauourd wel / me thought it right good And after I began to taste of the flessch / therof I was lycourous / so that after that I wente to the gheet in to the wode / there herde I the kyddes blete and I slewe of them tweyne / I began to wexe hardy after I slew hennes / polayl and ghees / where euer I fonde hem. Thus worden my teeth al bloody after this I wexe so felle and so wroth / That what somme euer I fonde that I myght ouer / I slowe alle / Ther aftercam I by Isegrym now in the wynter / where he hydde hym vnder a tree. And rekened to me that / he was myn eme whenne I herde hym thenne rekene allyance we becomen felaws whiche I may wel repente / we promysed eche to other

to be trewe and to vse good felawship/and began to wandre
to gyder/he stal the grete thynges and I the smalle and all
was comyn bytwene vs/yet he made it so that he had the
beste dele I gate not halfe my parte/whan that ysegrym gate
a calf/a ramme or a weder thenne grimmed he/and was
angry on me and droof me fro hym/ and helde my part and
his to[o] / so good is he.

Et this was of the leste / but whan it so lucked that we
toke an oxe or a cowe / thenne cam therto his wyf wyth.
vij. children so / that vnto me myght vnnethe come one
of the smallest rybbes / and yet had they eten alle the flessch
therof / ther with all muste I be content not for that I had so
grete nede. ffor I haue so grette scatte and good of syluer and
of gold that seuen waynes shold not conne carye it away /

whan the kynge herde hym speke of this grete good and
richesse he brenned in the desyre and couetyse therof and
sayde reynart where is the rychesse becomen / telle me that

the foxe saide my lord I shal telle yow / the rychesse was
stolen / and had it not bestolen / it shold haue cost yow / your
lyf and [you] shold haue ben murdred whiche god forbede and
shold haue ben the grettest hurte of the worlde /

whan the quene herde that she was sore aferde and cryde
lowde / alas and weleaway reynart what say ye / I coniure
yow by the longe waye that youre soule shal goo / that ye telle
vs openly the trouthe herof as moche as ye knowe of this
grete murdre that sholde haue be doon on my lorde / that we
alle may here it

now herkene how the foxe shal flatre the kynge and quene /
and shal wynne bothe their good willes and loues And shal
hyndre them that laboure for his deth / he shal vnbynde his
packe and lye and by flaterye and fayr wordes shal brynge
forth so his maters / that it shal be supposed for trouthe /

In a sorouful contenance spack the foxe to the quene I
am in suche caas now that I muste nedes deye / and
hadde ye me not so sore coniured / I wil not leoparde
my soule / and yf I so dyde I shold goo therefore in to the payne
of helle / I wil saye nothyng but that I wil make it good / for
pytously he shold haue ben murthred of his owen folke.
neuertheles they that were most pryncypal in this feat. were

of my next kynne whom gladly I wold not bewraye. yf the sorow were not of the helle.

The kyng was heuy of herte and saide / reynart saiste thou to me the trouthe.

ye said the foxe. see ye not how it standeth with me. wene ye that I wil dampne my sowle. what shold it auaylle me yf I now saide other wise than trouthe. my deth is so nyghe ther may nether prayer ne good helpe me Tho trembled the foxe by dyssymlyng as he had ben a ferde

The quene had pyte on hym. And prayde the kyng to haue mercy on hym in eschewyng of more harme / and that he sholde doo the peple holde their peas and gyue the foxe Audience. and here what he shold saye /

Tho commanded the kyng openly that eche of them shold be styll / and suffre the foxe to saye vnberisped what that he wolde.

thenne saide the foxe / be ye now alle styll. syth it is the kynges wille. and I shal telle you openly this treson. And therin I wil spare noman that I knowe gylty.

How the fore brought them in daunger / that wolde haue brought hym to deth. and how he gate the grace of the kyng. capitulo .xviij^o:



Now herkene how the foxe began. in the begynnyng he appeled grymbert his dere cosyn. whiche euer had holpen hym in his nede / he dyde so bycause his wordes sholde be the better byleued. and that he forthon myght the better lye on his enemyes / thus began he firste and saide.

my lorde my fader had founden kyng ermaryks tresour doluen in a pytte. and whan he had thys grete good. he was so prowde and orguillous that he had alle other beestis in despyte whiche to fore had been his felaws he made tybert the catte to goo in to that wylde lande of ardenne to bruyne the bere for to do to hym homage. and bad hym saye yf he wolde be kyng that he shold come in to flaundres / bruyne the bere was glad hierof / ffor he had longe desired it / And wente forth in to flaundres where my fader receyued hym right frendly / anone

Trans. by
W. Caxton
June 1481.

THE FEIGNED PLOT TO MAKE BRUIN KING.] 37


he sente for the wyse grymbert myn neuewe / And for ysegrym
the wulfe / and for tybert the catte / Tho these fyue camen
bytwene gaunt and the thorpe callyd yfte / there they helden
their counseyl an hole derke nyght longe / what wyth the
deuels helpe and craft and for my faders richesse they con-
cluded / and swore there the kyngys deth / now herkene and
here this wonder the foure sworn vpon ysegryms crowne / that
they sholde make bruyn a kyng and a lorde / And brynge hym
in the stole at akon and sette the crowne on his heed / and
yf there were any of the kynges frendes or lignage / that wolde
be contrarye or ayenst this / hym sholde my fader wyth his
good and tresour fordryue and take from hym his myght and
power /

IT happed so that on a morowtyde erly that grymbert
my neuewe was of wyne almost dronke / that he tolde it
to dame sloepcade his wif in counseyl / and badde her
kepe it secrete / but she anone forgate it / and saide it forth in
confession to my wyf / vpon and heth where they bothe wenten
a pylgremage / but she muste firste swere by her trouthe and
by the holy thre kynges of coleyne that for loue ne for hate
she sholde neuer telle it forth but kepe it secrete but she
helde it not / and kepte it no lenger secrete but tyl she cam
to me / and she thenne tolde to me alle that she herde / but I
muste kepe it in secrete / and she tolde me so many tokenys /
that I felte wel it was trouthe and for drede and fere myn heer
stode right vp / and my herte becam as heuy as leed / and as
colde as Ise / I thought by this a lyknesse whiche hier a fore
tyme byfille to the frossthis / whiche were free / and complayned
that they had none lorde / ne were not bydwongen / for a
comynthe without a gouernour was not go[o]d / and they cryden
to god with a lowde voys / that he wolde ordeyne one that
myght rewle them / this was al that they desired / god herde
theyr requeste / for it was resonable and sente to them a
storke / whiche ete and swolowed them in as many as he
coude fynde / he was alway to hem vnmercyful / tho com-
playned they theyr hurte / but thenne it was to[o] late / they that
were to fore free and were a ferde of no body / ben now bonde
and muste obeye to strengthe theyr kyng / hyer fore ye
riche and poure I sorowed that it myght happen vs in lyke
wyse /

THus my lord the kyng I haue had sorowe for yow wherof ye can me but lytyl thanke / I knowe bruyn the bere for suche a shrewe and rauener / wherfor I thoughte yf he were kyng we shold be alle destroyed and loste / I knowe our souerain lord the kyng of so hye byrthe / so myghty so benyngne and mercyful / that I thought truly it had ben an euyl change for to haue a foule stynkngye thief and to refuse a noble myghty stately lyon / ffor the bere hath more madde folye in his vnthrifty heed and al his auncestris / than any other hath / thus had I in myn herte many a sorowe / and thought alway how I myght breke and fordoo my faders fals counseyl whiche of a chorle and a traytour and worse than a thief wolde make a lorde and a kyng / alway I prayd god that he wolde kepe our kyng in worship and good helthe and graunte hym long lyf / but I thought wel yf my fader helde his tresour / he shold with his fals felaws wel fynde the waye that the kyng shold be deposed and sette a syde / I was sore bethought how I myght beste wyte where my faders good laye / I a wayted at al tymes as nygh as I coude / in wodes in bushes in feeldis / where my fader leyde his eyen / were it by nyghte or by daye / colde or weete I was alway by hym to espye and knowe where his tresour was leyde /

ON a tyme I laye down al plat on the grounde / and sawe my fader come rennyng out of an hole / Nowe herke what I sawe hym doo / whan he cam out of the hole / he loked fast a boute yf ony body had seen hym / And whan he coude nowher none see / he stopped the hole with sande and made hit euen and playn lyke to the other grounde by / he knewe not that I sawe it / and where his footspore stood / there stryked he with his tayl and made it smothe with his mouth that noman shold espye it / that lerned I there of my fals fadre and many subtylitees that I to fore knewe nothyng of / thenne departed he thens and ran to the village warde for to doo his thyngis / and I forgate not but sprange and lepe to the hole ward / and how wel that he had supposed that he had made al faste I was not so moche a fool but that I fonde the hole wel / and cratched and scraped with my feet the sande out of the hole / and crepte therin / there fonde I the moste

plente of siluer and of golde that euer I sawe / hier is none so olde that euer so moche sawe on one heep in alle his lyf / Tho toke I ermelyne my wyf to helpe / and we ne rested nyght ne day to bere and carye a waye with grete labour and payne this riche tresour in to another place that laye for vs better vnder an hawe in a depe hole / in the mene whyle that myn husewyf and I thus labouryd my fader was with them that wolde betraye the kynge / now may ye here what they dede / bruyn the bere and ysegrym the wulf sente alle the londe a boutte / yf ony man wolde take wages / that they shold come to bruyn / and he wolde paye them their souldye or wagis to fore. my fader ranne alle ouer the londe and bare the lettres. he wistlytil that he was robbed of his tresour. ye[a] though he myght haue wonnen al the world. he had not conne fynde a peny therof.

han my fader hadde ben oueral in the lande bytwene the elue and the somme. And hadde gotten many a souldyour that shold the next somer haue comen to helpe bruyn. tho cam he agayn to the bere and his felowis. and tolde them in how grete a venture he had be to fore the borughes in the londe of saxone / and how the hunters dayly ryden and hunted with houndes after hym in suche wise that he vnnethis escaped with his lyf / whan he had tolde this to thise foure false traytours / thenne shewde he them lettres that plesyd moche to bruyn there in were wreton xij. C. [1200] of ysegryms lignage by name withoute the beres / the foxes / the cattes and the dassen / alle thise had sworn that wyth the first messenger that shold come for them they shold be redy and come for to helpe the bere / yf they had their wages a moneth to fore / This aspyed I / I thanke god / after thise wordes my fader wente to the hole where his tresour had leyn and wolde loke vpon it / tho began he a grete sorowe / that he soughte he fonde nothyng / he fonde his hole broken and his tresour born away / there dede he that I may wel sorowe and bewaylle / for grete anger and sorowe he wente and hynge hym self / thus abode the treson of bruyn by my subtylte after / Now see myn Infortune / thise traytours ysegrym and bruyn / ben now most preuy of counseyl aboute the kynge / and sytte by hym on the hye bouche / And I poure reynart haue no thanke ne reward / I haue buried myn owen fader by cause the kynge sholde

haue his lyf / my lorde saide the foxe / where ben they that so
wolde doo / that is to destroye them self for to kepe yow /

The kynge and the queene hoped to wyinne the tresour and
wyth oute counceyl toke to them reynart and prayde
hym that he wold do so wel as to telle them were this
tresour was /

reynart saide how shold I telle the kynge or them that
wolde hange me / for loue of the traytours and murderars
whiche by her flaterye wolde fayne brynge me to deth / shold I
telle to them where my good is / thenne were I out of my wytte /

The quene tho spak nay reynart the kynge shal lete you
haue your lyf / and shal al to gydre forgyue you / and ye shal be
frohens forth wyse and true to my lorde.

the foxe answerd to the quene. dere lady yf the kynge wil
beleue me and that he wil pardone and forgyue me alle my
olde trespaces ther was neuer kynge so riche as I shal make
hym for the tresour that I shal doo hym haue / is right costely
and may not be nombred /

The kynge saide ach dame. wille ye beleue the foxe. sauf
your reuerence he is borne to robbe / stele and to lye / this
cleuid to his bones and can not be had out of the flessch /

the quene saide / nay my lorde ye may now well byleue hym /
though he were to fore felle / he is now chaunged otherwise
than he was ye haue wel herde that he hath appechid his
fader and the dasse his neuew / whiche he might wel haue
leyde on other bestes / yf he wold haue ben false / felle / and
a lyar /

The kynge saide dame wille ye thenne haue it soo / and
thynke ye it best to be don / though I supposed it sholde hurte
me / I wille take alle these trespaces of reynart vpon me / and
bileue his wordes / But I swere by my crowne / yf he euer here
after mysdoo and trespac / that shal he dere aby[d]e and
alle his lignage vnto the. ix. degree /

The foxe loked on the kyng stoundmele and was glad in his
herte / and saide my lorde / I were not wyse / yf I sholde saye
thyng that were not trewe

The kynge toke vp a straw fro the ground / And pardoned
and forgaf the foxe alle the mysdedes and trespaces of his
fader and of hym also /

yf the foxe was tho mery and glad it was no wonder / ffor

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THE KING FORGIVES REYNARD HIS CRIMES.] 41

he was quyte of his deth and was alle free and franke of alle his enemyes /

He foxe saide my lord the kynge and noble lady the queene god rewarde yow / thys grete worship that ye do to me / I shal thynke and also thanke you for hit / in suche wise that ye shal be the richest kynge of the world / ffor ther is none lyuyng vnther the sonne / that I vouchesauf better my tresour on / than on yow bothe /

Thenne toke the foxe vp a straw and profred it to the kyng / and saide my moste dere lord plese it yow to receyue hiere the ryche tresour whiche kynge ermeryk hadde / for I gyue it vnto you wyth a fre wylle / and knowleche it openly /

The kynge receyuid the straw and threwe it meryly fro hym with a Ioyous visage / And thanked moche the foxe /

The foxe laughed in hym self.

The kynge thenne herkened after the counseyl of the foxe. And alle that ther were / were at his wylle /

My lorde sade he / herkene and marke wel my wordes / in the west side of flaundes ther standeth a woode and is named hulsterlo / And a water that is called krekennyth therby / This is so grete a wyldernesse / that ofte in an hole yere man ner wyf cometh therin / sauf they that wil / and they that wille not eschewe it / There lyeth this tresour hydde / vnderstande wel that the place is called krekennyth / for I aduyse you for the leste hurte / that ye and my lady goo bothe thyder / ffor I knowe none so trewe that I durste on your behalve truste wherfore goo your self / And whan ye come to krekennyth ye shal fynde there two birchen trees standyng alther next the pytte / my lorde to tho byrchen trees shal ye goo / there lyeth the tresour vnther doluen / There muste ye scrape and dygge a way a lytyl the mosse on the one side / Ther shalle ye fynde many a Iewel of golde and syluer. and there shal ye fynde the crowne whiche kynge Ermeryk ware in his dayes that sholde bruyne the bere haue worn yf his wyl had gon forth ye shal see many a costly Iewel with riche stones sette in golde werk whiche coste many a thousand marke / My lorde the kynge whan ye now haue alle this good / how ofte shal ye saye in your herte and thynke / O how true art thou reynart the foxe. that with thy subtyl wytte daluyt and hyddest here this grete tresour / god gyue the[e] good happe and welfare where euer thou bee /

He kyng sayde / sir reynart ye muste come and helpe
vs to dygge vp this tresour / I knowe / not the way / I
sholde neuer conne fynde it / I haue herde ofte named /
parys / london akon and coleyn / As me thynketh this tresour
lyeth / right as ye mocked and Iaped / for ye name kryekenpyt /
that is afayned name /

these wordes were not good to the foxe / and he sayd wyth
an angry mode / and dissymled and saide / ye my lord the
kyng / ye be also nyghe that as fro rome to maye / wene ye
that I wille lede yow to flomme iordyn / Nay I shal brynge
you out of wenyng and shewe it you by good wytnes /

he called lowde kywart the hare / come here to fore the
kyng The bestes sawe alle thyder ward and wondred what
the kyng wold / the foxe sayde to the hare / kywart ar ye a
colde / how tremble ye and quake so / be not a ferd / and telle
my lorde the kyng here the trouthe / And that I charge you
by the fayth and trouthe that ye owe hym and to my lady
the quene of suche thyng. as I shal demaunde of you /

Kywaert saide I shal saye the trouthe though I shold lose
my necke therefore / I shal not lye ye haue charged me so
sore / yf I knowe it /

Thenne saye / knowe ye not where krieken pyt standeth /
is that in your mynde /

the hare saide / I knewe that wel. xij. yer a goon / wher that
stondeth / why aske ye that. It stondeth in awoode named
hulsterlo vpon a warande in the wyldernesse / I haue suffred
there moche sorowe for hunger and for colde / ye[a] more than
I can telle / Pater symonet the friese was woned to make
there false money / wherwyth he bare hym self out and al
his felawship / but that was to fore er I had felawship wyth
ryn the hounde / whyche made me escape many a daunger /
as he coude wel telle yf he were here / and that I neuer
In my dayes trespaced ayenst the kyng other wyse than I
oughte to doo with right /

reynart sayd to hym go agayn to yonder felawship here ye
kyward / my lorde the kyng desyreth nomore to knowe of
yow /

the hare retorned and wente agayn to the place he cam fro.

The foxe sayde my lord the kyng is it trewe that I saide /
ye reynart said the kyng / ffor gyue it me / I dyde euyl

that I beleuid you not / Now reynart frende fynde the waye
that ye goo wyth vs to the place and pytte / where the tresour
lyeth /

the foxe saide it is a wonder thyng wene ye that I wolde
not fayne goo with yow / yf it were so wyth me that I myght
goo wyth yow / in suche wise that it no shame were vnto your
lordshyp / I wold goo but nay it may not bee / herkene what I
shal saye and muste nedes thaugh it be to me vylonye and
shame / whan Isegrym the wulf in the deuels name wente in
to religion and become a monke shorn in the ordre / tho the
prouende of sixe monkes was not suffycient to hym / and had
not ynough to ete he thenne playned and waylled so sore / that
I had pyte on hym / for he becam slowe and seke / and by
cause he was of my kynne I gaf hym counceyl to renne
away and so he dyde / wherfore I stonde a cursed and am in
the popes banne and sentence I wil to morow bytymes as the
sonne riseth take my waye to rome for to be assoyled and
take pardon and fro rome I wil ouer the see in to the holy
lande and wil neuer retorne agayn til I haue doon so inoche
good that I may with worship goo wyth yow / hyt were grete
repreff to you my lord the kyng / in what londe that I
accompanied you that men shold saye ye reysed and
accompanied your self with a cursyd and persone agrauate /

The kynge sayde sith that ye stande a cursyd in the censures
of the chirche yf I wente wyth yow / men sholde arette
vilonye vnto my crowne / I shal thenne take kywaert or
somme other to goo with me to kryekenpytte / and I counseylle
you reynart that ye put you your self out of this curse /

my lord quod the foxe / therfore wylle I goo to rome as
hastely as I may / I shall not reste by nyght ner day til I
bee assoyled /

reynart said the kynge / me thynketh ye ben torned in to a
good waye / god gyue you grace t[o]accomplyssh wel your
desyre /

Assone as this spekyng was don / noble the kyng wente and
stode vpon an hygh stage of stone / And commanded
sylenece to alle the bestes / and that they shulde sytte
doun in a rynge rounde vpon the grasse eueriche in his place
after his estate and byrthe / reynart the foxe stode by the
quene / whom he ought wel to loue /

Thenne said the kynge / here ye alle that be poure
and riche yong and olde that stondest here / reynart one
of the heed offycers of my hows had don so euyl whiche
this daye shold haue ben hanged / hath now in this courte
don so moche / that I and my wyf the quene haue promysed
to hym our grace and frendshyp / The quene hath prayde
moche / for hym / in so moche that I haue made pees wyth
hym / And I gyue to hym his lyf and membre / frely agayn /
and I comande you vpon your lyf / that ye doo worship to /
reynart his wyf and to his chylde / where someuer ye
mete hem by day or night / and I wil also here nomoo
complayntes of reynard / yf he hath hier to fore mysdon and
trespaced / he wil nomore mysdo ne trespaced / but now better
hym / he wyll to morowe / erly goo to the pope for pardone
and foryeuenes of alle hys synnes and forth ouer the see to
the holy lande / and he wil not come agayn til he brynge
pardon of alle his synnes /

This tale herde tyselyn the rauyn / and leep to ysegrym / to
bruyn / and to tybert there as they were / and saide ye caytyfs /
how go[est] it now / ye vnhappy folke what do ye here / reynard
the foxe is now asquyer and a courtyer and right grete and
myghty in the court / The kynge hath skylled hym quyte of
alle his brokes and forgyuen hym all his trespaces and
mysdedes / And ye be alle betrayed and apechyd /

ysegrym saide how may this be / I trowe tyselyn that ye lye
I do not certaynly saide the rauyn /

Tho wente the wulf and the bere to the kynge Tybert the
catte was in grete sorowe he was so sore a ferde / that for to
haue the foxes frendship / he wold wel forgyue reynard the losse
of his one eye that he loste in the prestes hows / he was so
woo / he wist not what to doo / he wolde wel that he neuer had
seen the foxe /

**How the wulf and the bere were arested by the
labour of reynart the fore capitulo .xviii^o.**



Segrym cam proudly ouer the felde to fore the kynge /
and he thanked the quene / and spack wyth afelle
moed ylle wordes on the foxe / in suche wise that
the kynge herde it / and was wroth and made the
wulf and the bere anon to be arested / ye sawe neuer wood

dogges do/more harme/than was don to them they were
bothe fast bounden so sore that alle that nyght/they myght
not stere hande ne foot/They myght scarsely rore ne meue
ony Ioynte/Now here how the foxe forth dyde/he hated hem/
he laboured so to the quene that he gate leue for to haue as
moche of the beres skyn vpon his ridge as a foote longe and
a foot brode for to make hym therof a scryppe/thenne was
the foxe redy yf he had foure stronge shoon/now here how
he dyde for to gete these shoon/

he said to the quene/madame I am youre pylgrym/here is
myn eme sir Isegrym that hath .iiij. stronge shoon whiche
were good for me/yf he wolde late me haue two of them I
wolde on the waye besyly thynke on your sowle/ffor it is
ryght that a pylgrym shold alway thynke and praye for them
that doo him good/Thus maye ye doo your sowle good yf
ye will. And also yf ye myght gete of myn aunte dame
eerswyn also two of her shoon to gyue me/she may wel doo
it/ffor she gooth but lytil out/but abydeth alway at home/

thenne sayde the quene/reynard yow behoueth wel suche
shoes / ye may not be wythout them / they shal be good
for you to kepe your feet hool for to passe with them many
a sharpe montayn and stony roches/ye can fynde no better
shoes for you/than suche as Isegrym and his wyf haue
and were/they be good and stronge/though it sholde touche
their lyf eche of them shal gyue you two shoes for to
accomplissh wyth your hye pilgremage/

**How ysegrym and his wyf ereswyn muste suffre
her shois to be plucked of / And how reynard dyde
on the shoys for to goo to rome wyth/capitulo xix^o.**



Hus hath this false pylgrym gotten fro Isegrym ij
shoes fro his feet / whiche were haled of the clawes
to the senewis ye sawe neuer foule that men rosted
laye so styll/as Isegrym dyde/whan his shoes
were haled of/he styred not/and yet his feet bledde/thenne
whan Isegrym was vnshoed/Tho muste dame eerswyn his
wyf lye down in the grasse wyth an heuy chere/And she
loste ther her hynder shoes/

Tho was the foxe glad and saide to his aunte in scorne / My dere aunte how moche sorow haue ye suffred for my sake / whiche me sore repenteth / sauf this / herof I am glad ffor ye be the lyeuest of alle my kyn / Therefore I wyl gladly were your shoen / ye shal be partener of my pylgremage / and dele of the pardon that I shal with your shoen fecche ouer the see /
 dame erswyne was so woo that she vnnethe myghte speke /
 Neuetherles this she saide / A[h] reynart that ye now al thus haue your wyl / I pray god to wreke it /

ysegrym and his felaw the bere helden their pees and wheren al styll / they were euyl at ease / ffor they were / bounden and sore wounded had tybert the catte haue ben there / he shold also somewhat haue suffred / in suche wyse / as he sholde not [haue] escaped thens wythout hurte and shame

THe next day whan the sonne aroos reynard thenne dyde grece his shoes whiche he had of ysegrym and erswyn his wyf / and dyd hem on and bonde hem to his feet / and wente to the kynge and to the quene and said to hem with a glad chere / Noble lord and lady god gyue you good morow and I desire of your grace that I may haue male and staff blessyd as belongeth to a pilgrym

Thenne the kynge anone / sent for bellyn the ramme / and whan he cam he saide / sir bellyn ye shal do masse to fore reynart / for he shal goo on pylgrymage / and gyue to hym male and staf /

the ram answerd agayn and said / my lord I dare not do that / ffor he hath said that he is in the popes curse /

The kynge said / what therof / mayster gelys hath said to vs / yf a man had doo as many synnes as al the world / and he wold tho synnes forsake / shryue hem and resseyue penance / and do by the prestes counseyl / god wil forgyue them and be mercyful vnto hym now wil reynard goo ouer the see in to the holy lande and make hym clere of al his synnes /

Thenne ansuerd bellyn to the kynge I wil not doo litil ne moche herin / but yf ye saue me harmles in the spirituel court byfore the bysshopp and to fore his archedeken loosuynde / and to for sir rapiamus his offycyal /

The kynge began to wexe wroth and saide / I shal not bydde you so moche in half a yere / I had leuer hange yow than I shold so moche praye you for it /

Trans. by
W. Caxton
June 1481.

BELLIN DOES MASS BEFORE REYNARD.] 47

whan the rame sawe that the kynge was angry / he was so
sore aferd that he quoke for fere / and wente to the awter and
sange in his bookes and radde suche as hym thought good
ouer reynart / whiche lytyl sette ther by / sauf that he wold
haue the worship therof

Whan bellyn the ramme had alle sayd his seruyse
deuoutly / thenne he hynge on the foxes necke / a male
couerd wyth the skynne of bruyn the bere / and a lytil
palster therby. tho was reynart redy toward his Iourney. tho
loked he toward the kynge as he had ben sorowful to departe
and fayned as he had wepte. right as he hadde yamerde in
his herte but yf he had ony sorow it was bycause al the
other that were there were not in the same plyght as the wulf
and bere were brought in by hym. neuertheles he stood and
prayd them alle to praye for hym. lyke as he wold praye
for them the foxe thought that he taryed longe and wold
fayn haue departed for he knewe hym self gylty /

the kynge saide reynart I am sory ye be so hasty / and wil
no lenger tarye /

nay my lord / it is tyme / for me ought not spare to doo
wel / I pray you to gyue me leue to departe I muste doo my
pylgremage /

the kynge sayd / god be wyth yow / and commanded alle
them of the court to go and conueyne reynart on his way
sauf the wulf and the bere / whyche fast laye bounden / ther
was none that durst be sory therfore / and yf ye had seen
reynart how personably he wente wyth hys male and palster
on his sholder and the shoes on his feet / ye shold haue
laughed / he wente and shewde hym outward wysely / But he
laughed in his herte that alle they brought hym forth / whiche
had a lytyl to fore been with. hym so wrooth / And also the
kynge whiche so moche hated hym / he had made hym suche
a fool that he brought hym to his owne entente he was
a pylgrym of deux aas.

MY lord the kyng sayd the foxe I pray you to retorne
agayn I wil not that ye goo ony ferther with me. ye
myght haue harme therby. ye haue there two morderars
arestyd / yf they escape you. ye myght be hurt by them y
pray god kepe you fro mysauenture wyth these wordes he

stode vp. on his afterfeet. And prayde alle the beestys grete
and smal that wolde be parteners of his pardon that they
shold praye for hym /

They sayde that they alle wolde remembre hym /

Thenne departed he fro the kyng so heuylly that many of
them ermed /

Thenne said he to kyward the hare / and to bellyn th[e]
ramme meryly / dere frendes shal we now departe / Ye wil
and god will accompanye me ferther / ye two made me
neuer angry / ye be good for to walke wyth / courtoys /
frendly and not complayned on of ony beeste ye be of good
condicions / and goostly of your lyuyng / ye lyue bothe as I
dyde / whan I was a recluse / yf ye haue leewis and gras[s] ye be
plesyd / ye retche not of brede / of flesshe / ne suche maner
mete

with suche flaterieng wordes hath reynard thise two
flatred / That they wente wyth hym tyl they camen to fore
his hows / maleperduys /

How kywart the hare was slayn by the fore / cap^o .xx^o

WHan the foxe was come to fore the yate of his hows
he sayde to bellyn the ramme / cosyng ye shal abide
here withoute / I and kywart wille goo in / ffor I wille
praye kywart to helpe me to take my leue of
ermelyn my wyf / and to conforte her and my chyl dren /

bellyn sayde I praye hym to conforte them wel /

wyth suche flaterieng wordes brought he the hare in to his
hole in an euyl hour / There fonde they dame ermelyn lyeng
on the grounde with her yonglyngis / whiche had sorowed
moche ffor drede of reynarts deth / but whan she sawe hym
come she was glad / but whan she sawe his male and palster /
and espyed his shoes / she meruailed and sayd dere reynard
how haue ye spedd /

he sayd I was arestid in the court / But the kyng let me
gon / I muste goo a pilgremage / Bruyn the bere and ysegrym
thew ulf they be plegge for me. I thanke the kyng / he hath
gyuen to vs kywart hier / ffor to doo with hym what we wyl /
The kyng saide hym self that kywart was the first that on vs
complayned / And by the fayth that I owe yow I am right
wroth on kywart /

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June 1481.

KYWERT THE HARE SLAIN BY REYNARD.] 49

whan kywart herde thise wordes he was sore aferde/ He wold haue fledde/ but he myght not/ ffor the foxe stode bytwene hym and the yate/ And he caught hym by the necke/ Tho cryed the hare helpe bellyn helpe/ Where be ye This pilgryme sleeth me/ but that crye was sone doon/ for the foxe had anon byten his throte a two/

Tho sayd he late vs go ete this good fatte hare/ the yonge whelpes cam also/ Thus helde they a great feste/ ffor kywart had a good fatte body/ ermelyn ete the flessch and dranke the blood/ she thanked ofte the kyng that he had made them so mery/ The foxe saide ete as moche as ye maye/ he wil paye for it/ yf we will feche it.

SHe sayd reynart I trowe ye mocke / telle me the trouthe how ye be departed thens /
dame I haue so flaterid the kyng and the quene / that I suppose the frendship bytwene vs shal be right thynne whan he shal knowe of this / he shal be angry / and hastely seke me for to hange me by myne necke / Therefore late vs departe and stele secretly a way in somme other foreste / Where we may lyue wythoute fere and drede / and there that we may lyue vij yere and more and [they] fynde vs not / there is plente of good mete of partrychs / wododekkis and moche other wilde fowle / dame and yf ye wil come with me thyder / ther ben swete welles and fayr and clere rennyng brokes / lord god how swete eyer is there / There may we be in pees and ease and lyue in grete welthe / ffor the kyng hath lete me gon by cause I tolde hym that ther was grete tresour in kreckenpyt / but there shal he fynde nothyng though he sought euer / This shal sore angre hym whan he knoweth that he is thus deceyuid what trowe ye how many a grete lesynge muste I lye / er I coude escape from hym / It was harde that I escaped out of pryson / I was neuer in gretter paryl ne nerrer my deth / but how it euer goo / I shal by my wille neuer more come in the kynges daunger / I haue now goten my thombe out of his mouth / that thanke I my subtylyte.

DAme ermelyne saide reynart I counseyle that we goo not n to another foreste / where we sholde be strange and blenge we haue here al that we desyre / And ye be here

lorde of our neyghbours / wherfore shalle we leue this place /
And auenture vs in a worse / we may abyde her sure ynough /
yf the kynge wold doo vs ony harme or besiege vs / here ben
so many by or side holes / in suche wyse as we shal escape
from hym / in abydyng here / we may not doo amys / we knowe
alle bypathes ouer alle / and er he take vs with myght / he
muste haue moche helpe therto but that ye haue sworn that
ye shal goo ouersee and abide there / that is the thyng that
toucheth me moste.

nay dame care not therfore / how more for sworn / how
more forlorn / I wente ones with a good man / that said to
me / that a bydwongen oth' or oth sworn for force. was none
oth. Though I wente on his pilgremage it shold not auaylle
me a cattes tayl. I wil abyde here and folowe your counseyl /
yf the kyng hunte after me. I shal kepe me as wel as I
maye. yf he be me to[o] myghty. yet I hope wyth subtylte to
begyle hym. I shal vnbynde my sack. yf he wil seche harm
he shal fynde harme.

Now was bellyn the ramme angry that kywart his felawe
was so longe in the hole / and called lowde. come out
kywarte in the deuels name. how longe shal reynart
kepe you there / haste you and come late vs goo /

whan reynard herde this' he wente out and saide softly to
bellyn the ramme. lief bellyn wherfore be ye angry kywart
speketh wyth his dere aunte. me thynketh ye ought not to be
dysplesid therfore. he bad me saye to yow ye myght wel go to
fore' And he shal come after' he is lighter of fote than ye. he
muste tarye a whyle wyth his aunte and her chyldren. they
wepe and crye by cause I shal goo fro them /

bellyn sayde' what dyde kyward. me thoughte he cryed after
helpe /

the foxe answerd / what saye ye bellyne wene ye that he shold
haue ony harme / now herke what he thenne dyde / whan we were
comen in to myn hows / and ermelyn my wyf vnderstode that
I shold goo ouer see she fyl down in a swoun and whan
kywart sawe that / he cryed loude bellyn come helpe myn
aunte to brynge her out of her swoun

thenne sayde the ramme In fayth I vnderstode that kywart
had ben in grete daunger /

the foxe sayde / nay truly / or kyward shold haue ony harme in

my hows / I had leuer that my wyf and chyldren shold suffre
moche hurte /

**Howe the fore sente the heed of kywart the hare to
the kynge by bellyn the ramme' capitulo xxj^o.**

THe foxe saide / bellyn remembre ye not that
yesterday the kynge and his counseyl commanded
me that er I shold departe out of this lande / I
shold sende to hym two lettres. dere cosyn I pray
you to bere them. they be redy wreton.

the ramme sayde I wote neuer yf I wiste that your
endyttyng and wrytyng were good / ye myght pareuenture so
moche praye me that I wold bere them / yf I had ony thyng
to bere them in /

reynard saide ye shal not fayle to haue som what to bere
them in / rather than they shold be vnborn I shal rather gyue
yow my male that I bere. and put the kynges lettres therin.
and hange them aboute your necke ye shal haue of the kynge
grete thanke therfore and be ryght welcomen to hym.

hier vpon bellyn promysed hym to bere these lettres.

tho retorned reynart in to his hows and toke the male and put
therin kywarts heed and brought it to bellyn for to brynge hym
in daunger / And henge it on his necke / and chargyd hym not
for to loke in the male / yf he wolde haue the kyngis frendship
and yf ye wil that the kynge take you in to his grace and loue
you / saye that ye your self haue made the lettre and ended it
it / and haue gyuen the counseyl that it is so wel made and
wreton / ye shal haue grete thank therfore /

bellyn the ramme was glad herof and thought he shold haue
grete thank and saide reynarde I wote wel that ye now doo
for me / I shal be in the court gretly preysed whan it is knowen
that I can so wel endyte and make alettre / though I can not
make it / ofte tymes it happeth that god suffreth somme to haue
worship and thanke of the labouris and connyng of other men /
and so it shal bifalle me now / Now what counseyle ye reynard /
shal kywart [t]he hare come wyth me to the court /

reynard sayd the foxe / he shal anone folowe yow / he may not
yet come / for he muste speke wyth his aunte /

Now goo ye forth to fore / I shal shewe to kywart secrete
things whiche ben not yet knowen /

bellyn sayde fare wel reynart / and wente hym forth
to the court / and he ran and hasted so faste that he cam
to fore mydday to the court / and fonde the kynge in his
palays wyth his barons / the kynge meruaylled whan he saw
hym brynge the male agayn whiche was made of the beres
skyn / the kyng saide saye on bellyn fro whens come ye / where
is the foxe / how is it that he hath not the male with hym /

bellyn sayd my lord I shal saye yow al that I knowe / I
accompayned reynard vnto his hows / And whan he was
redy he asked me yf I that wold ffor your saacke bere two.
lettres to yow / I saide for to do you playsir and worship /
I wold gladly bere to yow vij. tho brought he to me this
male where in the lettres be / whiche ben endyted by my
connyng and I gaf counseyl of the makyng of them / I trowe
ye sawe neuer lettres better ne craftelyer made ne endyted /

The kynge commanded anon bokart his secretarye to rede
the lettres / ffor he vnderstode al maner langages / tybert the
catte and he toke the male of[f] bellyn's necke / and bellyn hath
so ferre sayd and confessyd / that he therfore was dampned.

He clerke bokwart vndyde the male / and drewe out
kywarts heed and said alas what lettres ben these /
certainly my lord this is kywarts heed /

alas sayde the kynge that euer I beleuid so the foxe / There
myghte men see grete heuynesse of the kynge and of the
quene / the kynge was so angry that he helde longe doun his
heed And atte laste after many thoughtes / he made a grete
crye / that alle the bestys were aferde of the noyse /

Tho spack sir fira peel / the lupaerd whiche was sybbe
somwhat to the kynge / and saide / sire kyng how make ye
suche a noyse ye make sorow ynough though the quene were
deed / late this sorowe goo / and make good chere / it is grete
shame / be ye not a lorde and kynge of this londe / Is it not
alle vnder yow / that here is /

the kynge sayde sir fira peel how sholde I suffre this / one
false shrewe and deceyuar hath betrayed me and brought me so
ferre / that I haue forwrought and angred my frendes / that I the
stoute bruyn the bere / and ysegrym the wulf / whiche sore me

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BELLIN SLAIN BY ISEGRIM AND BRUIN.] 53

repenteth / and this go[e]th ayenst my worship that I haue done
amys ayenst my beste barons and that I trusted and beleuid
so moche the fals horeson the foxe / and my wyf is cause
therof / she prayde me so moche that I herde her prayer
and that me repenteth / though it be to[o] late /

what thawh sir kyng said the lupaerd / yf ther be ony
thyng mysdon / it shal be amended we shal gyue to bruyne the
bere to ysegrym the wulf / and to erswyn hys wyf for the pece
of his skynne and for their shoes for to haue good pees bellyn
the ramme / for he hath confessyd hymself that he gaf
counseyl and consentyd to kywardes deth / it is reson that he
aby[d]e it / And we alle shal goo fecche reynard and we shal
areste hym and hange hym by the necke withoute lawe or
Iugement / and ther with alle shul be contente /

**How bellyn the ramme and alle his lignage were
gyuen in the handes of ysegrym and bruyne and
how he was slayn / capitulo .xxij^o.**

THe kyng saide I wil do it gladly /
firapel the lupaerd wente tho to the pryson / and
vnbonde them firste / and thenne he sayde ye sires I
brynge to you a faste pardon and my lordes loue and
frendship it repenteth hym and is sory that he euer hath don
spoken or trespaced ayenst you / and therefore ye shal haue a
good appoyntement / And also amendes he shal / gyue to you
bellyn the ramme and alle his lignage fro now forthon to
domesdaye / in suche wyse that where someuer ye fynde them
in felde or in wode that ye may frely byte and ete them
wythoute ony forfayte / And also the kyng graunteth to yow /
that ye maye hunte and do the werst ye can to reynard and alle
his lygnage wythoute mysdoynge This fayr grete pryuelage
wylle the kyng graunte to you euer to holde of hym / And
the kyng wille that ye swere to hym neuer to mysdoo / but
doo hym homage and feawte I counseil yow to doo this / ffor
ye may doo it honorably /

Thus was the pees made by fyrapel the lupaerd frendly and
wel / And that coste bellyn the ramme his tabart and also
his lyf / and the wulfis lignage holde these preuilegis of the

kynges/and in to thys daye they deuoure and ete bellyns
lignage where that they may fynde them this debate was
legonne in an euyl tyme/ffor the pees coude neuer syth be
made bytwene them /

The kynges dyde forth wyth his courte and feste[d] lengthe
xij dayes lenger for loue of the bere and the wulf/ So glad
was he of the making of this pees /

**How the kynges helde his feeste / and how lapreel the
cony complayned vnto the kynges vpon reynard the
fore capitulo ·xxiiij^o.**

TO this grete feste cam al maner of beestis /ffor the
kynges dyde do crye this feste ouer alle in that londe /
Ther was the moste Ioye and myrthe that euer was
seen emonge beestis /Ther was daunsed manerly the
houedaunce with shalmouse trompettis and alle maner of
menestralsye /the kynges dyde do ordeyne so moche mete /
that euerych fonde ynough / And ther was no beest in al
his lande so grete ne so lytyl but he was there /and ther were
many fowles and byrdes also /and alle they that desired the
kynges frendship were there /sauyng reynard the foxe /the
rede false pilgrym whiche laye in a wayte to doo harme /and
thoughte it was not good for hym to be there /Mete and
drynke flowde there /Ther weere playes and esbatemens /
The feest was ful of melodye / One myghte haue luste to see
suche a feeste /

and right as the feeste had dured viij dayes /a boute mydday
cam in the cony lapreel to fore the kynges where he satte on
the table with the quene /and sayde al heuyly that all they
herde hym that were there / My lorde haue pyte on my
complaynt whiche is of grete force and murdre that reynard
the foxe wold haue don to me /yester morow as I cam rennyng
by his borugh at maleperdhuis he stode byfore his dore
without lyke a pylgryme / I supposed to haue passed by hym
peasibly toward this feste and whan he sawe me come /he
came ayenst me sayeng his bedes I salewed hym /but he
spack not one worde /but he raught out his right foot and
dubbed me in the necke bytwene myn Eeris /that I had

wende I sholde haue loste my heed / but god be thanked I
was so lyght that I sprange fro hym / wyth moche payne cam
I of his clawes / he grymmed as he had ben angry by cause
he helde me no faster / tho I escaped from hym I loste myn
one ere / and I had foure grete holes in my heed of his sharpe
nayles that the blood sprange out / and that I was ny^[g]he al a
swoun / but for the grete fere of my lyf I sprange and ran so
faste fro hym that he coude not ouertake me / See my lord
thise grete woundes that he hath made to me with his sharpe
longe nayles / I pray yow to haue pite of me and that ye wil
punysse this false traytour and morderar / or ellis shal ther
noman goo and comen ouer the heth in saefte / whyles
he haunteth his false and shrewde rewle /

**How corbant the roke complayned on the fore for
the deth of his wyf capitulo .xiiij^o.**

BYght as the cony had made an ende of his
complaynt / cam in corbant the roek flown in the
place to fore the kynge and sayde / dere lorde here
me / I brynge you hier a pietous complaynt / I wente
to day by the morow wyth sharpebek my wyf for to playe vpon
the heth And there laye reynart the foxe down on the
grounde lyke a dede keytyf / hys eyen stared and his tonge
henge longe out of his mouth / lyke an hounde had ben deed /
we tasted and felte his bely / but we fonde theron no lyf /
tho wente my wyf and herkened and leyde her ere to fore his
mouth for to wite yf he drewe his breeth / whiche mysfyller
euyll / ffor the false felle foxe awayted wel his tyme and whan
he sawe her so nygh hym / he caught her by the heed and
boote it of^[f] / tho was I in grete sorowe and cryde lowde / Alas
alas what is there happed / thenne stode he hatelsy vp / and
raught so couetously after me that for feere of deth / I
trembled and flewh vpon a tree therby and sawe fro ferre
how the false keytyf ete and slonked her in so hungerly that
he lefte neyther flessh ne bone / nomore but a fewe fethers /
the smal fethers he slange them in wyth the flessh / he was so
hungry / he wolde wel haue eten tweyne / Tho wente he his
strete / tho flewe I down wyth grete sorow and gadred vp the
fetheris for to shewe them to you here / I wolde not be agayn

in suche peryl and fere as I was there for a thousand marke /
of the fynest gold that euer cam out of arabye / My lord the
kyng see hier this pyteous werke / These ben the fethers of
sharpbecke my wyf / my lord yf ye wil haue worship ye
muste do herfore Iustyce and auenge you in suche wise
as men may fere and holde of yow / ffor yf ye suffre thus
youre sauconduyt to be broken / ye your self shal not goo
peasibly in the hie way / for tho lordes that do not Iustyce
and suffre that the lawe be not executed vpon the theeuis /
morderars and them that mysdoo / they be parteners to fore
god of alle theyr mysdedes and trespaces / and eueryche
thenne / wylle be a lord hym self / dere lorde see wel to for to
kepe your self

How the kyng was sore angry of these complayntes
capitulo .xxv^o.

NOble the kyng was sore meuyd and angry whan he
had herde these complayntes of the cony and of the
roek / he was so ferdful to loke on that his eyen
glymmerd as fyre / he brayed as lowde as a bulle in
suche wise that alle the couit quoke for feere / at the laste he
sayde cryeng / by my crowne and by the trouthe that I owe
to my wyf I shal so awreke and auenge this trespaces / that
it shal be longe spoken of after / that my sauconduyt and my
commandement is thus broken I was ouer nyce that I beleuid
solyghtly the false shrewe / his false flateryng speche deceyued
me / He tolde me he wolde go to rome / and for thens ouer see
to the holy londe / I gaf hym male and palster and made of hym
a pylgrym and mente al trouth / O what false touches can
he / how can he stuffe the sleue wyth flockes / but this caused
my wyf / it was al by her counseyl / I am not the fyrst that
haue been deceyued by wymmens counseyl by whiche many a
grete hurte hath byfallen / I pray and comande alle them
that holde of me and desire my frendship / be they here or
where someuer they be / that they wyth their counseyl and
dedes helpe me t[o] auenge this ouer g[r]eete trespaas / that we
and owris may abyde in honour and worship / and this false
thief in shame that he nomore trespas ayenst our sauconduyt /
I wil mysell in my persone helpe therto al that I maye /

Ysegrym the wulf and bruyn the bere herde wel the kynges wordes / and hoped wel to be auengid on reynard the foxe but they durste not speke one word The kyng was so sore meuyd that none durste wel speke /

Atte laste the quene spak / Sire pour dieu ne croyes mye toutes choses que on vous dye / et ne Iures pas legierment / A man of worship shold not lyghtly bileue ne swere gretly vnto the tyme he knewe the mater clerly. and also he ought by right here that other partye speke. There ben many that complayne on other and ben in the defaute them self.

Audi alteram partem. here that other partye / I haue truly holden the foxe for good / and vpon that / that he mente no falsehede / I helped hym that I myghte but how someuer it cometh or gooth / is he euyl or good / me thynketh for your worship that ye shold not procede ayenst hym ouer hastely that were not good ne honeste / ffor he may not escape fro you. Ye maye prysonne hym or flee hym / he muste obeye your Iugement /

thenne saide fyrapel the lupaerd / My lord me thynketh / my lady here hath saide to you trouthe and gyuen yow good counseyl do ye wel and folowe her and take aduyse of your wyse counseyl / And yf he be founden gyilty in the trespaces that now to yow be shewd / late hym besore punyshid acording to hys trespaces / And yf he come not hyther / er this feste be ended and excuse hym / as he ought of right to doo / thenne doo as the counseyl shal aduyse yow / But and yf he were twyes as moche false and ylle as he is / I wolde not counseyll that he sholde be done to more then right /

Isegrym the wulf said sir fyrapal. all we agree to the same as ferre as it pleseth my lord the kyng / it can not be better. But though reynart were now here. and he cleryd hym of double so many playntes yet shold I brynge forth ayenste hym that he had forfayted his lyf. But I wyl now be styll and saye not. by cause he is not presente and yet aboue alle this he hath tolde the kyng of certayn tresour lyeng in kreckenpyt in hulsterlo. Ther was neuer lyed a greter lesyng. ther wyth he hath vs alle begyled. and hath sore hyndred me and the bere. I dar leye my lyf theron that he sayd not therof a trewe worde. Now robbeth he and steleth vpon the heth / alle that gooth forth by his

hows/Neuertheles sir firapel what that pleseth the kyng
and yow /that muste wel be don /But and yf he wolde haue
comen hyther /he myght haue ben here for he had knowleche
by the kynges messenger /

The kyng sayde we wyl none otherwyse sende for hym /
but I commande alle them that owe me seruyse and wylle
my honour and worshippe that they make them redy to the
warre at the ende of vj dayes /all them that ben archers and
haue bowes /gonnes /bombardes /horsemen /and footemen that
alle thise be redy to besiege maleperduys /I shal destroye
reynart the foxe /yf I be a kyng /ye lordes and sires what
saye ye hereto /wille ye doo this wyth a good wyl /

And they sayd and cryed alle /ye[a] we lorde /whan that ye
wylle /we shal alle goo with yow.

**How grymbert the dasse warned the fore /that the
kyng was wroth with hym and wold slee hym
capitulo .xxvj^o.**

Alle these wordes herde grymbert the dasse whiche
was his brother sone /he was sory and angry yf it
myght haue prouffited he ranne thenne the hie way
to maleperduys ward /he spared nether busshe ne
hawe /but he hasted so sore that he swette /he sorowed in hym
self for reynart his rede eme /and as he wente he saide to
hym self Alas in what daunger be ye comen in /where shal
ye become shal I see you brought fro lyf to deth /or elles
exyled out of the lande /truly I may be wel sorouful /for ye
be heed of alle our lygnage /ye be wyse of counseyl /ye be redy
to helpe your frendes whan they haue nede /ye can so wel
shewe your resons /that where ye speke /ye wyne all /

with suche maner wayllyng / and pytous wordes cam
grymbert to maleperduys /

And fonde reynart his eme there standyng /whiche had
goten two pygeons /as they cam first out of her neste to
assaye yf they coude flee and because the fethers on her wyngis
were to[o] shorte /they fylle down to the ground / And as
reynart was gon out to seche his mete /he spyed them and
caught hem and was comen home with hem /

And whan he sawe grymbert comyng / he taryed and said /
welcome my best beloued neuwe that I knowe in al my
kynrede / ye haue ronne faste / ye ben al be swette / haue ye ony
newe tydynges /

alas said he / lyef eme it standeth euyl wyth yow / ye haue
loste both lyf and good / the kynge hath sworn that he shal
gyue you a shameful deth / he hath commanded alle his folke
withyn vj dayes for to be here / Archers / fotemen / horsemen /
And peple in waynes. And he hath gunnes / bombardes tentes
and pauyllyons / And also he hath do laaden torches / See to
fore yow / For ye haue nede / Ysegrym and bruyn ben better
now wyth the kynge than I am wyth yow / Alle that they
wille / Is doon / Isegrym hath don hym to vnderstande that ye
be a theef and a morderar. he hath grete enuye to yow.
Lapreel the cony and Corbant the roek haue made a grete
complaynt also. I sorow moche for your lyf. That for drede
I am alle seke.

Puf said the foxe / dere neuwe is ther nothyng ellis / be ye so
sore aferd herof Make good chere hardely / though the kynge
hym self and alle that ben in the court had sworn my deth /
yet shal I be exalted aboue them alle / They maye alle faste
I angle clatre and yeue counseyl / but the courte may not
prosper wythoute me and my wyles and subtylte

How reynart the foxe cam another tyme to the
courte capitulo .xxvij^o.

DEre neuwe late alle thise thynges passe and come
here in / and see what I shal gyue you / a good payre
of fatte pygeons / I loue no mete better / They ben
good to dygeste / they may almoste be swolowen
in al hool / the bones ben half blode / I ete them wyth that
other. I fele myself other whyle encombred in my stomak
therefore ete I gladly lyght mete. My wyf ermelyn shal
receyue vs frendly / but telle her nothyng of this thyng / ffor
she sholde take it ouer heuily / she is tendre of herte. she
myghte for fere falle in somme sekene / a lytyl thyng gooth
sore to her herte. And to morow erly I wil goo with yow
to the courte / And yf I may come to speche and may be
herde / I shal so ansuere / that I shal touche somme nygh

ynowh / neuwe wyl not ye stande by me / as a frende oughte to doo to another /

yes truly dere eme said grymbert and alle my good is at your commandement /

god thanke you neuwe saide the foxe / That is wel said. yf I may lyue I shal quyte it yow /

Eme said grymbert ye may wel come tofore alle the lordes and excuse yow ther shal none areste yow ne holde as longe as ye be in your wordes / The quene and the lupaerd haue gotten that /

then said the foxe / therfor I am glad / thenne I carre not for the beste of them an heer / I shal wel saue my self /

they spake nomore herof / but wente forth in to the burgh / And fonde ermelyn there sitting by her yonglyngs whiche aroose vp anon and receyuid them frendly / Grymbert salewed his aunte and the chyldren with friendly wordes / the ij pygeons were made redy for theyr soper / Whiche reynard had taken / eche of them toke his part as ferre as it wolde stratche / yf eche of hem had had one more / ther sholde but lytyl haue lefte ouer / the foxe saide / lief nouewe / how lyke / ye my chyldren rosel and reynerdyn they shal do worship to alle our lygnage / They begynne al redy to do wel / that one catcheth wel a chyken and that other a pullet / They conne wel also duke in the water after lapwynches and dokys / I wolde ofte sende them for prouande / but I wil fyrste teche them how they shal kepe them fro the grynnes / fro the hunters and fro the houndes / yf they were so ferre comen that they were wyse / I durste wel truste to them that they shold wel vytaylle vs in many good diuerses metes / That we now lacke / And they lyke and folowe me wel / ffor they playe alle grymmyng and where they hate they loke frendly and meryly ffor ther by they brynge them vnder their feet / And byte the throte asondre / This is the nature of the foxe / They be swyfte in their takynge whiche pleseth me wel.

HMe said grymbert ye may be glad that ye haue suche wyse chyldren / And I am glad of them also by cause they be of my kynne /

Grymbert said the foxe ye haue swette and be very it were hye tyde that ye were at your reste /

Eme yf it pleseth you it thynketh me good Tho laye they

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REYNARD'S SECOND CONFESSION TO GRIMBERT.] 61

doun on a lytier made of strawe / the foxe hys wyf and hys
chylde[n] wente alle to slepe / But the foxe was al heuy / and laye.
sighed and sorowed how he myghte beste excuse hym self /

On the morow erly he ruymed his castel and wente with
grymbart / but he toke leue first of dame ermelyn his wyf
and of his chylde[n] / and sayde thynke not longe I muste goo
to the court wyth grymbert my cosyn / yf I tarye somewhat be
not aferde / and yf ye here ony ylle tydyngis / take it alway for
the beste. And see wel to your self and kepe our castel wel I
shal doo yonder the beste I can after that I see how it gooth

Alas reynere said she how haue ye now thus taken vpon yow
for to go to the court agayn / the last tyme that ye were
there ye were in grete ieopardye of your lyf. And ye sayde
ye wold neuer come there more.

dame said the foxe. th[e] auenture of the world is wonderly
it gooth otherwhyle by wenyng / Many one weneth to haue a
thing whiche he muste forgo. I muste nedes now go
thyder / be content it is al wythoute drede / I hope to come at
alther lengest with in fyue dayes agayn /

Here wyth he departed and wente wyth grymbert to the
court ward / And whan they were vpon the heeth thenne
sayde reynere / Neuw syth I was laste shryuen I haue don
many shrewde tornes / I wolde ye wold here me now of alle
that I haue trespased in / I made the bere to haue a grete
wounde for the male whiche was cute out of his skynne / And
also I made the wulf and his wyf to lese her shoon / I peased
the kynge with grete lesyngis and bare hym on honde that
the wulf and the bere wold haue betrayed hym and wolde haue
slayn hym / so I made the kynge right wroth with them
where they deseruyd it not / also I tolde to the kynge that
ther was grete tresour in hulsterlo of whiche he was neuer
the better ne richer / for I lyed al that I sayde / I ledde bellyn
the ramme and kyward the hare with me / and slewe kyward
and sente to the kynge by bellyn kywards heed in skorn / And
I dowed the cony bytwene his eeris that almost I benamme
his lyf from hym ffor he escaped ayenst my wyl / he was to me
ouerswyft / The roeke may wel complayne / for I swolowed
in dame sharpbeck his wyf / and also I haue forgotten on thyng
the laste tyme that I was shryuen to you / Which I haue syth
bethought me / And it was of grete deceyte that I dyde whiche
I now wyll telle yow /

I cam wyth the wulf walkynge bytwene houthulst and eluerdyngē / There sawe we goo a rede mare / And she had a black colte or a fool of iiij monethis olde / whiche was good and fatte Isegrym was almost storuen for hunger / And prayd me goo to the mare / and wyte of her yf she wold selle her fool /

I ran faste to the mare / And axed that of her / she sayd she wold selle it for money /

I demaunded of her how she wold selle it /

she sayde it is wreton in my hyndre foot / Yf ye conne rede and be a clerk ye may come see and rede it.

Tho wyste I wel where she wold be. and I saide nay for sothe I can not rede / And also I desyre not to bye your chylde Isegrym hath sente me hether. and wold fayn knowe the prys therof /

the mare saide late hym come thenne hym self / And I shall late hym haue knowleche /

I sayde / I shal / and hastely wente to ysegrym and saide / eme wil ye ete your bely ful of this colte / so goo faste to the mare for she taryeth after yow / She hath do wryte the pris of her colte vnder her fote she wolde that I shold haue redde it / but I can not one lettre / whiche me sore repenteth / ffor I wente neuer to scole / eme wylle ye bye that colte / conne ye rede so maye ye bye it /

oy neuwe that can I wel what shold me lette / I can wel frenshe latyn englissh and duche. I haue goon to scole at oxenford I haue also wyth olde and auncyent doctours ben in the audyence and herde plees / and also haue gyuen sentence / I am lycensyd in bothe lawes / what maner wrytyng that ony man can deuyse / I can rede it as perfyghtly as my name I wyl goo to her and shal anon vnderstonde the prys / and he bad me to tarye for hym /

and he ranne to the mare / and axed her how she wold selle her fool or kepe it /

she sayde the somme of the money standeth wreton after on my fote

he said late me rede it

she said doo and lyfte vp her foot whiche was newe shood wyth yron and vj stronge nayles / and she smote hym wythout myssyng on his heed that he fyl down as he had ben deed / a man shold wel haue ryden a myle er he aroos / The mare trotted a way wyth her colte / And she left Isegrym lyeng

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GRIMBERT FORGIVES REYNARD'S TRESPASSES.] 63

shrewdly hurt and wounded He laye and bledde / And howled
as an hound / I wente tho to hym and sayde / Sir ysegrym dere
eme how is it now wyth yow. haue ye eten ynowh of the
colte. is your bely ful. why gyue ye me no part I dyde your
erande. haue ye slepte your dyner I pray yow telle me what
was wreton vnder the mares fote what was it. prose or ryme.
metre or verse. I wold fayn knowe it. I trowe it was cantum.
for I herde you synge me thoughte fro ferre. for ye were so
wyse that noman coude rede it better than ye /

Alas reynart alas said the wulf I pray you to leue youre
mockyng. I am so foule arayed and sore hurte / than an herte
of stone myght haue pyte on me. The hore wyth her longe
legge had an yron foot I wende the nayles therof had ben
lettres / and she hytte me at the fyrst stroke vj. grete woundes
in my heed that almost it is clouen. suche maner lettres shal
I neuer more desire to rede /

Dere eme is that trouthe that ye telle me / I haue grete
meruaylle / I heelde you for one of the wysest clerkes that now
lyue / Now I here wel / it is true that I long syth haue redde
and herde / that the beste clerkes ben not the wysest men /

The laye peple otherwhyle wexe wyse / the cause that thise
clerkes ben not the wysest / is that they studye so moche in the
connyng and science / that they therin doole / Thus brought I
Isegrym in this grete laste and harme. That he vnneth
byhelde his lyf /

IYef neuwe now haue I tolde yow alle my synnes that
I remembre. What so euer falle at the courte. I wote
neuer how it shal stonde with me there. I am not
now so sore aferd' ffor I am clere from synne I wyl gladly
come to mercy / and receyue penance by your counseyl'

grymbert sayde the trespaces ben grete / neuertheles who
that is deed muste abyde deed. and therefore I wyl forgyue
it you alto gydre / With the fere that ye shal suffre therefore /
er ye shal conne excuse yow of the deth / and hier vpon I wyl
assoylle you. but the moste hyndre that ye shal haue shal be.
that ye sente kywarts heed to the court And that ye blynded
the kyng wyth sutthe lyes / Eme that was right euyl doon /

The foxe sayde. what lyef neuwe. Who that wyl go
thurgh the world this to here. and that to see / and that
other to telle. truly it may not clerly be done. how shold

ony man handle hony. but yf he lycked his fynGRES. I am oftymes rored and prycked in my conscience as to loue god aboue all thynges and myn euen crysten as my self. as is to god wel acceptable. and accordyng to his lawe/ But how wene ye that reson wythin forth fyghteth ayenst the outward wylle than stonde I alle styll in my self that me thynketh I haue loste alle my wittes/ And wote not what meyleth I am thenne in suche a thought/ I haue now alle lefte my synnes/ And hate alle thynges that is not good/ and clymme in hys contemplacion abone his commandements but this specyall grace haue I whan I am alone/ But in a short whyle after whan the world cometh in me thenne fynde I in my waye so many stones/ and the fote spores that thyse loos prelates/ and riche preestys goo in/ that I am anone taken agayn/ thenne cometh the world and wyl haue this/ And the flesshe wyl lyue plesantly/ whiche leye to fore me so many thynges that I thenne lese alle my good thoughtis and purpoos/ I here there synge pype/ lawhe/ playe/ and alle myrthe/ And I here that these prelates and riche curates preche and saye al other wyse/ than they thynke and doo/ There lerne I to lye/ the lesynges ben moste vsed in the lordes courtes/ certaynly lordes/ ladyes/ prestis and clerkes maken moste lesyngis/ Men dar not telle to the lordes now the trouthe/ Ther is defaute/ I muste flatre and lye also/ or ellis I shold be shette wythoute the dore/ I haue ofte herde men saye trouthe and rightfully/ And haue theyr reson made wyth a lesyng lyke to theyr purpose and brought it in and wente thurgh by cause their mater shold seme the fayrer/ The lesyng oftymes cometh vnaused/ And falleth in the mater vnwetyngly. And so whan she is wel cladde/ it goth forth thurgh with that other/

DEre neuwe thus muste men now lye here/ and there saye soth flatre/ and menace/ praye and curse/ And seke euery man vpon his feblest and wekest/ who otherwyse wylle now haunte and vse the world/ than deuise alesyng in the fayrest wyse/ and that bywymple with kerchieuis aboute in suche wise that men take it for a trouthe/ he is not ronne away fro his maister/ Can he that subtylte in suche wise that he stamer not in his wordes/ and may thenne be herde/ neuwe/ this man may doo wonder he may were skarlet and

gryse/he wynneth in the spyrituel lawe and temporal also and where sommeuer he hath to doo/Now ben ther many false shrewis that haue grete enuye that they haue so grete fordele/And wene that they conne also wel lye/And take on them to lye and to telle it forth/he wolde fayn ete of the fatte morsellis. but he is not bileued ne herd/And many ben ther that be so plompe and folisshe that whan they wene beste to prononce and shewe their matere and conclude. They falle besyde and oute therof. And can not thenne helpe hem self/and leue theyr mater wythout tayl or heed and he is a compted for a fool/And many mocke them ther with/but who can gyue to his lesynge a conclusion/and prononce it without tatelyng lyke as it were wretton to fore hym/and that he can so blynde the peple/That his lesynge shal better be bileuid than the trouthe/That is the man. What connyng is it to saye the trouthe that is good to doo. How lawhe these false subtyl shrewis that gyue counseyl to make these lesynges. and sette them forth/And maken vnright goo aboute right/and make billes/and sette in thynges that neuer were thought ne sayd/and teche men see thurgh their fynghes And alle for to wyne money/and late their tonges to hyre for to mayntene and strengthe their lesyngis alas neuewe this is an euyl connyng/of whiche. lyf. scathe and hurte may come ther of/

T Saye not but that otherwhyle men muste Iape/bourde and lye in smale thyngis/for who so sayth alway trouthe. he may not now goo nowher thurgh the world. ther ben many that playe placebo. who so alleway sayth trouthe. shal fynde many lettyngis in his way. Men may wel lye whan it is nede/and after amende it by counseyl/ffor alle trespaces/ther is mercy. Ther is no man so wyse/but he dooleth other whyle/

Grymbert sayde wel dere eme what thyng shal you lette. ye knowe al thyng at the narewest/ye shulde brynge me hastely in dotyng your resons passen my vnderstandyng/what nede haue ye to shryue you/ye shulde your self by right be the preest/And lete me and other sheep come to you for to be shryuen/ye knowe the state of the world in suche wyse as noman may halte tofore you/

Wyth suche maner talkyng they cam walkyng in to the

court/The foxe sorowed somewhat in his herte/Neuertheles
he bare it out and stryked forth thurgh alle the folke til
he cam in to the place where the kynge hym self was/

And grymbert was alway by the foxe and sayd eme be
not a ferde. and make good chere / who that is hardy/
th[e]aaventure helpeth hym/Oltymes one day is better than
somtyme an hole yere/

the foxe saide/Neuw ye saye trouthe/god thanke you
ye comfort me wel/

And forth he wente and lokyd grymly here and there as
who saith/what wylle ye here come I/he sawe there many
of his kynne standyng which yonned hym but lytyl good/
as the otter beuer and other to the nombre of x. whome I
shal. name afterward/ And somme were there that loued
hym.

The ffoxe cam in and fyl doun on his knees to fore the
kyng and began his wordes and sayde.

**How reynart the fore excused hym bifore the kynge
capitulo .xxviii^o.**



GOd fro whom nothyng may be hyd/and aboue alle
thyng is myghty saue my lord the kynge and my
lady the quene and gyue hym grace to knowe who
hath right and who hath wronge/ For ther lyue many
in the world that seme otherwise outward than they be
withinne/I wolde that god shewde openly euery mans
mysdedes/and alle theyr trespaces stoden wretton in theyr
forehedes/and it coste me more than I now saye/ And that
ye my lord the kynge knewe as moche as/ I doo /how I dispose
me bothe erly and late in your seruyse/And therefore am I
complayned on of the euyl shrewys and wyth lesynges am
put out of your grace and consayte/and wold charge me with
grete offencis wythoute deseruyng ayenst al right/Wherfore
I crye out harowe on them that so falsely haue belyed me/
and brought me in suche trouthe/how be it I hope and
knowe you bothe my lorde and my lady for so wyse and
discrete/that ye be not ledde nor bileue suche lesyngis ne
false talis out of the right waye for ye haue not be woned so
to doo/Therefore dere lorde I biseche you to considre by

your wysedom alle thyng by right and lawe/is it in deede
or in speche/do euery man right/I desire no better he that is
gylty and founde fawty late hym be punysshed/men shal wel
knowe er I departe out of this courte/who that I am/I can
not flatre I wil allewey shewe openly my heed.

How the kynge answerd vpon reynarts excuse.

Alle they that were in the palays weren alle styll
and wondred that the foxe spack so stoutly /
the kynge sayde/ha reynart how wel can ye
your falacye and salutacion doon but your fayr
wordes may not helpe you I thynke wel that ye shal this
daye for your werkis be hanged by your necke/I wil not
moche chyde wyth you But I shal shorte your payne /that ye
loue vs wel /that haue ye wel shewde on the cony and on
corbant the roeck /your falsenes and your false Inuencions
shal without longe taryeng make you to deye /A pot may goo
so longe to water /that at the laste it cometh to broken
hoom /I thynke your potte that so ofte hath deceyued vs /shal
now hastily be broken /

reynart was in grete fere of these wordes he wold wel. he
had ben at coleyn /when he cam thedyr /Thenne thought
he I muste her thurgh /how that I doo

my lorde the kynge seyde he /it were wel reson that ye herde
my wordes alle out /though I were dampned to the deth /yet
ought ye to here my wordes out. I haue yet here to fore tyme
gyuen to you many a good counseyl and prouffitable / And in
nede alwey haue byden by yow where other beestis haue wyked
and goon theyr way /yf now the euyl beestis with false maters
haue to fore you wyth wronge belyed me /and I myght not
come to myn excuse /ought I not thenne to playne /I haue
to fore this seen that I shold be herde by fore another /yet
myght these thyngis wel change and come in theyr olde
state /Olde good dedes ought to be remembrid /I see here
many of my lygnage and frendes standyng that seme they
sette now lytyl by me /Whiche neuertheles sholde sore dere
in theyr hertes. that ye my lord the kynge sholde destroye
me wrongfully yf ye so dyde he sholde destroye the trewest
seruant that ye haue in alle your landes /what wene ye syr

kyngge / hadde I knowen my self gylty in ony feat or broke. that I wold haue comen hether to the lawe emonge alle myne enemyes / Nay sire nay / not for alle the world of rede gold / ffor I was fre and at large / What nede had I to do that / but god be thanked I knowe my self clere of alle mysdedes that I dar wel come openly in the lyghte and to answere to alle the complayntes that ony man can saye on me / but whan grymbert brought me first thise tydyngis / tho was I not wel plesed but half fro my self that I lepe here and there as an vnwyse man / And had I not ben in the censures of the chyrche / I had wythoute taryeng haue comen / but I wente dolyngge on the heeth / and wist not what to doo for sorowe /

And thenne it happed that mertyne myn eme the ape mette wyth me. Whiche is wyser in clergie than somme preest. he hath ben aduocate for the bysshop of cameryk ix yere duryng. he sawe me in this grete sorow and heuynes. and saide to me / dere cosyn me thynketh ye ar not wel wyth your self / what eyleth yow. who hath dyspleseyth yow. Thyngge that thoucheth charge ought to be gyuen in knowleche to frendis. A triew frende is a grete helpe. he fyndeth ofte better counseyl than he that the charge resteth on. ffor who someuer is charged wyth maters is so heuy and acombred with them that ofte he can not begynne to fynde the remedye. ffor suche be so woo lyke as they had loste theyr Inwytte.

H Saide dere eme ye saye trouthe. For in lyke wyse is fallen to me. I am brought in to a grete heuynes vnderuid and not gylty / by one to whom I haue alway ben an herty and grete frende / that is the cony whiche cam to me yesterday in the morenyng where as I sattufore my hows and sayd matyns /

He tolde me he wolde goo to the court and salewed me frendly and I hym agayn /

Tho sayd he to me / good reynard I am an hongred and am wery / haue ye ony mete.

I saide ye ynowh come nere

Tho gaf I hym acopel of maynchettis with swete butter / It was vpon a wednesday on whiche day I am not wonte to ete ony flessch / And also I fasted by cause of this feste of whitsontyd whiche approuched / For who that wylle taste of the ouerest wysehede / and lyue goostly in kepyng the com-

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mandements of our lord / he muste faste and make hym redy
ayenst the hye festes / Et vos estote parati / dere eme I gaf hym
fayr whyte breed with swete butter / wherwyth a man myght
wel be easid that were moche hongry.:

And whan he had eten his bely fulle / tho cam russel my
yongest sone / and wold haue taken away that was lefte /
For yonge chyldren wold alway fayne eten / And with
that he tasted for to haue taken somewhat / the cony smote
russel to fore his mouthe that his teeth bledde / and [he] fyl
doun half a swoun / whan reynardyn myn eldest sone sawe
that. he sprange to the cony and caught hym by the heed. and
shold haue slayn hym. had I not reskowed hym I helpe hym
that he wente fro hym / and bete my chyde sore therfore.

lapreel the cony ran to mylord the kyng and saide I wold haue
murdred hym See eme thus come I in the wordes / and I am
leyde in the blame. And yet he complayneth and I playne not /

After this cam corbant the roek fleyng wyth a sorouful
noyse / I asked what hym eyed.

and he said alas my wyf is deed / yonder lyeth a dede hare
full of mathes and wormes / and there she ete so moche therof.
that the wormes haue byten a two her throte /

I axed hym how cometh that by / he wold not speke a
worde more but flewe his waye / And lete me stande

Now saith he that I haue byten and slayn her / how shold
I come so nygh her / for shee fleeth / and I goo a fote. beholde
dere eme thus am I born an honde. I may saye wel that I am
vnhappy / But parauenture it is for myn olde synnes / hit were
good for me yf I coude paciently suffre it.

The ape saide to me / Neuw ye shal goo to the courte to
fore the lordes and excuse yow /

ALas eme that maynot be. ffor the archedeken hath put
me in the popes curse / by cause I counseyllled ysegrym
the wulf for to leue his religyon at elmare and forsake
his habyte / he complayned to me that he lyuyd so straytly as
in longe fastyng and many thyngis redyng and syngyng that
he coude not endure it. Yf he shold longe abyde there he
shold deye. I had pyte of his complaynyng / And I helpe
hym as a trewe frende that he cam oute. Whiche now me
sore repenteth. for he laboureth al that he can ayenst me
to the kyng for to do me behanged. thus doth he euyl for

good. See eme thus am I at the ende of al my wyttes and of counseyl. For I muste goo to rome for an absolucion. And thenne shal my wyf and chyldren suffre moche harme and blame. For thise euyl bestis that hate me / shulle do to hem alle the hurte they maye and fordryue them wher they can / And I wold wel defende hem yf I were fre of the curse / for thenne wold I goo to the court and excuse me / where now I dar not / I shold do grete synne yf I cam emonge the good peple / I am aferde god sholde plaghe me.

Ay cosyn be not aferd' er I shold suffre you in this sorow I knowe the way to rome wel. I vnderstande me on this werke. I am called ther mertyne the bissshops clerke. and am wel byknowen there. I shal do syte the archedeken and take a plee ayenst hym. and shal brynge with me for you an absolucion ayenst his wil / for I knowe there alle that is for to be doon or lefte there dwelleth symon myn eme whiche is grete and myghty ther. who that may gyue ought / he helpeth hym anon / ther is prentout' wayte scathe / and other / of my frendis and alyes Also I shal take somme money with me / yf I nede ony. the preyer is wyth yeftes hardy. wyth money alleway the right goth forth. A trewe frende shal for his frende auenture both lyf and good / and so shal I for you in your right Cosyn make good chere I shal not reste after to morow til I come to rome / and I shal solycyte your maters / And goo ye to the court as sone as ye may / all your mysdedes / and tho synnes that haue brought you in the grete sentence and curse / I make you quyte of them and take them in my self / whan ye come to the court ye shal fynde there rukenawe my wyf / her two susters and my thre chyldren and many mo of our lignage / dere cosyn speke to them hardely / my wyf his sondrely wyse / and wil gladly do somme what for her frendis / who that hath nede of helpe shal fynde on her grete frendship / one shal alway seke on his frendis / though he haue angred them / for blood must krep / where it can not goo / And yf so be that ye be so ouer chargyd that ye may haue no right / thenne sende to me by nyght and day to the courte of rome / and late me haue knowleche therof / and alle tho that ben in the lande is it kyng or quene / wyf or man I shall brynge then alle in the popes curse / and sende there an Inderdicte that noman shal rede ne syngen ne crystene

chylidren / ne burye the deede ne receyue sacramente / tyl that
ye shal haue good ryght / Cosyn this shal I wel gete / for the
pope is so sore old that he is but lytil sette by / And the
cardynal of pure gold hath alle the myght of the court /
he is yonge and grete of frendis he hath a concubyne / whom
he moche loueth / And what she desyreth that geteth she
anone / see cosyn / she is myn nece / and I am grete and may
doo moche with her in suche wyse / what I desyre / I faylle
not of it / but am alway furtherd therin / wherfore cosyn byd
my lord the kyng that he doo you right / I wote wel he wil
not warne you / for the right is heuy ynough to euery man /

MY lord the kyng whan I herde this I lawhed / and wyth
grete gladnes cam hether and haue told you alle trouthe /
yf ther be ony in this court that can leye on me ony other
mater wyth good wisse and preue it as ought to be to a noble
man / late me thenne make amendes acording to the lawe /
and yf he wil not leue of [f] herbi / thenne sette me day and feld
and I shal make good on hym also ferre as he be of as good
birthe as i am and to me lyke / and who that can wyth fyghtyng
gete the worship of the felde / late hym haue it / this right
hath standen yet hetherto. And I wil not it sholde be broken
by me. the lawe and right doth noman wrong /

Alle the beestis both poure and riche were alle styll whan
the foxe spak so stoutly / the cony laprel and the roek
were so sore afeide that they durste not speke but
pyked and stryked them out of the court bothe two. and whan
they were a room fer in the playne they saide. god graunte that
this felle murderare may fare euyl. he can bywrappe and couere
his falshede. that his wordes seme as trewe as the gospel herot
knoweth noman than we. how shold we brynge wytnesse. it
is better that we wyke and departe than we sholde holde a felde
and fyghte with hym he is so shrewde. ye [a] though ther of vs
were fyue we coude not defende vs. but that he shold sle vs alle.

Isegrym the wulf and bruyne the bere / were woo in hem
self whan they sawe thise tweyne rume the court /

THe kinge sayde / yf ony man wil complayne late hym
come forth / and we shal here hym yesteryday camen
here so many where ben they now Reynart is here /

He foxe saide. my lord ther ben many that complayne /
that and yf they sawe their aduersarye they wold be
style and make no playnte / wites now of laprel the
cony and Corbant the roek / whiche haue complayned on me to
yow in my absence / but now that I am comen in your presence
they flee away / And dar not abyde by theyr wordes / yf men
shold byleue false shrewes / it shold do moche harme and
hurte to the good men / as for me it skylleth not Neuertheles
my lord yf they had by your commandement axed of me
forygnes / how be it they haue gretly trespaced / yet I had for
your sake pardoned and forgyue them / for I wil not be out of
charyte / ne hate ne complayne on myne enemyes / but I
sette alle thyng in goddes hand he shall werke and auenge
it as it plesyth hym.

He kynge sayde reynart / me thynketh ye be greuyd as
ye saye / ar ye withinforth as ye seme outward / Nay
it is not so cleer ne so open nowher nyghe / as ye here
haue shewed / I muste saye what my gryef is / whiche towcheth
your worship and lyf / that is to wete / that ye haue don a
foule and shameful trespaas / whan I had pardoned you alle
your offencis and trespacis / and ye promysed to goo ouer the
see on pylgremage / And gaf to you male and staf / And after
this ye sente me by bellyn the ramme the male agayn and
theryn kywarts heed / how myght ye do amore reprobable
trespaas / how were ye so hardy to dore to me doo suche a
shame / is it not euyl don to sende to a lorde / his seruaunts
heed / ye can not saye nay here agaynst for bellyn the ram
whiche was our chapelayn tolde vs al the mater how it
happed / suche reward as he had whan he brought vs the
message / the same shal ye haue or right shal faylle /

tho was reynart so sore aferd that he wist not what to saye /
he was at his wittes ende / and loked aboute hym pytously and
sawe many of his kyn and alyes that herde alle this but
nought they saide / he was al pale in his visage but noman
proferd hym hand ne fote to helpe hym /

the kinge said thou subtyl felaw and fals shrewe why
spekest thou not [art thou] nowe dombe.

The foxe stode in grete drede and syghed sore that alle
herde hym / But the wulf and the bere were glad herof.

Trans. by
W. Caxton
June 1481.

RUKENAW THE SHE APE ANSWERS FOR REYNARD.] 73

How dame rukenawe answerd for the fore to the
kyng. capitulo xxix^o.

DAme rukenawe the she ape reynarts aunte was not well plesyd / She was grete wyth the quene and wel belouyd / hit happed wel for the foxe that she was there. ffor she vnderstood alle wysedom / And she durste wel speke / where as it to doo was / where euer she cam euerich was glad of her /

she sayde my lord the kyng ye ought not to be angry whan ye sytte in Iugement / ffor that becometh not your noblesse / A man that sytteth in Iugement ought to put fro hym alle wrath and angre / A lorde ought to haue dyscrecion that shold sytte in Iustyse / I knowe better the poyntes of the lawe / than somme that were furryd gownes / ffor I haue lerned many of them / and was made connyng in the lawe / I had in the popes palays of woerden a good bedde of heye / where other beestes laye on the harde grounde and also whan I had there to doo / I was suffred to speke / and was herd to fore another / by cause I knewe so wel the lawe / Seneca wryteth that a lorde shal oueral doo right and lawe / he shal charge none to whom he hath gyuen his saufgarde to aboue the right and lawe / the lawe ought not to halte for noman / And euery man that stondest here wolde wel bethynke hym what he hath doon and bydryuen in his dayes he shold the better haue pacience and pyte on Reynarte / late euery man knowe hym self / that is my counseyl / ther is none that stondest so surely / but otherwhyle he falleth or slydeth / who that neuer mysdede ne synned / is holy and good and hath no nede to amende hym / whan a man doth amys / and thenne by counseyl amendeth it / that is humaynly / and so ought he to doo / but away to mysdo and trespase / and not to amende hym / that ys euyl and a deuely lyf / Merke thenne what is wretton in the gospel Estote misericordes / be ye merciful yet standeth ther more / Nolite iudicare / et non iudica bimini / deme ye noman / and ye shal not be demed / Ther standeth also how the pharisees brought awoman taken in aduoultrye and wold haue stoned her to deth / they axed our lord what he said therto / he said who of yow alle is withoute synne / late

hym caste the fyrste stone/tho abode noman but lefte her there standyng.

ME thynketh it is so hyere/ther be many that see a strawe in an others [e]ye / that can not see a balke in his owne / there be many that deme other / and hym self is worst of alle / though one falle ofte / and at laste aryseth vp and cometh to mercy / he is not therof dampned God receyueth alle them that desyre hys mercy late noman condampne another / though they wyste that he had don amys / yet late them see theyr owne defawtes / and thenne may they them self correcte fyrst / and thenne reynert my cosyn shold not fare the werse for his fadre and his graunfadre / haue alway ben in more loue and reputaconn in this court than Isegrym the wulf or bruyne the bere with al theyr frendis and lignage / hit hath ben here to fore an vnlyke comparison / the wysedom of Reynart my cosyn / and the honour and worship of hym that he hath doon and the counseyl of them / ffor they knowe not how the world gooth / me thynketh this court is al torned vp so doon / These false shrewes flaterers and deceyuours arise and wexe grete by the lordes and ben enhaused vp / And the good triewe and wyse ben put down / For they haue ben woned to counseylle truly and for th[e h]onour of the kyng I can not see how this may stonde longe /

Thenne said the kynge / dame yf he had don to yow suche trespaas as he hath don to other it shold repente yow. Is it wonder that I hate hym / he breketh alway my saufgarde / haue ye not herde the complayntes that here haue ben shewde of hym of murdre / of theefte / And of treson / haue ye suche trust in hym / Thynke ye that he is thus good and cleer / thenne sette hym vp on the awter and worshipe and praye to hym as to asaynte / But ther is none in alle the world that can saye any good of hym / ye maye saye moche for hym / but in th[e] ende ye shal fynde hym al nought / he hath nether kyn ne wyn ne frende that wylle enterprise to helpe hym he hath so deseruyd / I haue grete meruaylle of yow / I herde neuer of none that hath felawshippid with hym that euer thanked hym or saide any good of hym / sauf yow now / but alway he hath stryked hem with his tayl /

the she ape ansuerd and said / my lord I loue hym and

haue hym in grete cherte. And also I knowe a good dede that he ones in your presence dyde/wherof ye coude hym grete thanke/though now it be thus torned/yet shal the heuyest/weye moste/a man shal loue his frende by mesure / and not his enemye hate ouermoche / stedfastnes and constauce is fyttyng and behoueth to the lordes. how someuer the world torneth. Me ought not preyse to[o] moche the daye. tyl euen be come. good counseyl is good for hym that wil doo ther after.

**A parable of aman that delyuered a serpent fro
peryl of deth. capitulo rrrº.**

NOw two yere passid cam a man and a serpent here in to this court for to haue Iugement. whiche was to yow and youres right doubtful. The serpent stode in an hedche where as he supposed to haue gon thorough/ but he was caught in a snare by the necke. that he myght not escape without helpe but shuld haue lost his lyf there. the man cam forth by. and the serpente called to hym and cryde. and prayd the man that he wolde helpe hym out of the snare. or ellis he muste there dye :

The man had pyte of hym and saide/yf thou promyse to me that thou wilt not enuename me ne do me none harme ne hurte I shal helpe the[e] out of this peryl /

The serpente was redy and swore a grete othe that he now ne neuer sholde doo hym harme ne hurte

Thenne he vnlosed hym and delyuerd hym out of the snare / And wente forth to gydre a good whyle / that the serpente had grete hongre for he had not eten a grete while to fore. and sterte to the man and wold haue slayn hym. the man sterte awaye and was a ferde aní said / wilte thou now sle me / hast thou forgotten the oth that thou madest to me that thou sholdest not mysdoo ne hurte me

The serpent answerd I maye do it good / to fore al the world that I doo / the nede of hongre may cause a man to breke his oth /

The man saide yf it may be not bettre / gyue me so longe respyte tyl we mete and fynde that may Iuge the mater by right /

The serpente graunted therto / thus they wente to gydre

so longe that they fonde tyselyn the rauē / And slyndpere his
sonne / there rehersed they theyr resons /

Tiselyn the rauē Iuged anon that he shold ete the man /
he wolde fayn haue eten his parte and his sone also /

The serpent said to the man / how is it now / what thynke
ye haue I not wonne /

The man saide / how sholde a robber Iuge this he shold
haue auayle therby / and also he is allone / ther muste be
two or thre atte leste to gydre and that they vnderstande the
right and lawe and that don / late the sentence gon / I am
neuertheles yl on ynough /

They a greed and wente forth bothe to gydre so longe that
they fonde the beer and the wulf to whom they tolde theyr
mater /

And they anon Iuged that the serpent shold sle the man /
For the nede of hongre breketh oth alway / the man thenne
was in grete doubte and fere / and the serpent cam and cast
his venym at hym / but the man lepe a way from hym with
grete payne /

And said ye doo grete wronge that ye thus lye in a wayte
to slee me / ye haue no right therto /

The serpent sayde / Is it not ynough yet / hit hath ben
twyes Iuged /

ye[a] sayd the man that is of them that ben wonte to
murdre and robbe. Alle that euer they swere and promyse
they holde not / but I appele this mater in to the court to
fore our lord the kyng / And that thou mayst not forsake
And what Iugement that shal be gyuen there / I shal obeye
and suffre / and neuer doo the contrarye.

He bere and the wulf sayden that it shold be so / And
that the serpent desired no better / They supposed yf
it shold come to fore yow / It shold goo there as they
wolde. I trowe ye be wel remembrid herof. Tho cam they
alle to the court to fore yow / And the wulues two chyldren
cam with theyr fader. Whiche were callyd empty bely and
neuer full / by cause they wold ete of the man. ffor they
howlyd for grete hongre wherfore ye commaunded them to
auoyde your court /

The man stode in grete drede / And called vpon your
good grace and tolde how the serpente wolde haue taken

his lyf from hym to whom he had sauyd his lyf and that
about his oth and promyse he wold haue deuoured hym /

The serpente answerd I haue not trespaced / And that I
reporte me hoolly vn[to] the kyng / For I dyde it to saue my
lyf / ffor nede of lyf / one may breke his oth and promyse /

My lord that tyme were ye and alle your counseyl here wyth
acombyrd For your noble grace sawe the grete sorow of the
man / And ye wold not that a man shold for his gentilnes and
kyndenenes be Iuged to deth / And on that other sith hongre
and nede to saue the lyf seketh narrowly to be holpen / hier
was none in al the court that coude ne knewe the right
hierof / There were somme that wolde fayn the man had be
holpen / I see them hier stondyng / I wote wel they sayde that
they coude not ende this mater /

Thenne commanded ye that reynard my neuwe shold come
and saye his aduys in this mater / that tyme was he about
alle other byleuyd and herd in the court / And ye bad hym
gyue sentence acordyng to the best right / and we alle shal
folowe hym / For he knewe the grounde of the lawe /

reynard said my lord / it is not possyble to yeue a trewe
sentence after theyr wordes / for in here sayeng ben ofte
lesynges / But and yf I myght see the serpent in the same
paryl and nede that he was in whan the man loosed hym and
vnbonde / Thenne wyste I wel what I shold saye / And who
that wolde doo otherwise he shold mysdoo agayn[st] right /

Thenne sayd ye my lord reynard that is wel said we alle
acorde herto / ffor noman can saye better /

Thenne wente the man and the serpente into the place wher
as he fonde the serpente / Reynart bad that the serpent shold
be sette in the snare in lyke wyse as he was / And it was don /

Thenne sayd ye my lord / reynart how thynketh yow now /
what Iugement shal we gyue.

Thenne sayd reynart the foxe. My lord now ben they bothe
lyke as they were to fore. they haue neyther wonne ne
loste See my lord how I Iuge for a right also ferre as it shal
plese your noble grace. yf the man wil now lose and vnbynde
the serpent vpon the promyse and oth. that he to fore made
to hym. he may wel doo it. But yf he thynke that he for any
thyng shold be emcombyrd or hyndred by the serpent. or for
nede of hongre wold breke his othe and promyse. Thenne
Iuge I that the man may goo frely where he wyl. and late the

serpente abyde styll bounden. like as he myght haue don at the begynnyng. ffor he wold haue broken his oth and promyse/ where as he helpè hym out of suche fereful peryl / Thus thynketh me a ryghtful Iugement that the man shal haue his fre choys / like as he to fore hadde.

FO my lord this Iugement thought yow good / and alle your counseyl whiche at that tyme were by you / and folowed the same / And preysed reynardis wysedom that he had made the man quyte and free / Thus the foxe wysely kepte your noble honour and worship / as a triewe seruaunt is bounde to doo to his lord / wher hath the beer or the wulf don euer to yow so moche worship They conne wel huylen and blasen stele and robbe / and ete fatte morsellis and fylle theyr belyes / And thenne Iuge they for right and lawe that smale theuis that stele hennys and chekyns shold be hanged / But they hem self that stelen kyen oxen and horses / they shal goo quyte and be lordes / And seme as though they were wyser than salamon / Auycene or aristotiles / And eche wil be holden hye proud / and preised of grete dedes and hardy But and they come where as it is to doo / they ben the firste that flee / Thenne muste the symple goo forth to fore / And they kepe the rereward behynde / Och my lorde these and other lyke to them be not wyse / but they destroye towne. castel. lande and peple. They retche not whos[e] hows brenneth. so that they may warme them by the coles They seke alle theyr owne auayll and synguler proffyte / But Reynart the foxe and alle his frendis and lignage sorowen and thynke to preferre the honour worship. fordeel and proffyte of theyr lord. and for wise counseyl whiche ofte more prouffyteth here than pryde and boost / This doth reynard / though he haue no thanke / Atte longe it shal be wel knowen / who is beste and doth moste prouffyt / My lord ye saye / that his kynne and lignage drawe al afterward from hym / and stonde not by hym / for his falsshede and deceyuable and subtyl touchis / I wolde an other had sayde that / ther sholde thenne suche wrake be taken therof / that hym myght growle that euer he sawe hym / But my lorde we wyl forbere you / ye maye saye your playsir / and also I saye it not by yow / Were ther ony that wolde bedryue ony thyng ayenst yow with wordes or with werkes / hym

Trans. by
W. Caxton
June 1481.

wold we soo doo to / that men shold saye we had ben there /
Ther as fyghtyng is / we ben not woned to be aferd. My
lorde by your leue I may wel gyue you knoweleche of
reynardis frendis and kynne. ther ben many of them that for
his sake and loue wille auenture lyf and good. I know
my self for one. I am a wyf. I shold yf he had nede sette
my lyf and good for hym also I haue thre ful waxen children
which ben hardy and stronge / whom I wold alle to gydre
auenture for his loue. rather than I shold see hym destroyed /
yet had I leuer dye than I sawe them myscarye to fore myn
eyen. so wel loue I hym.

**Whiche ben frendes and kynne vnto Reynard the
fore. capitulo xxxj^o.**



He fyrste chylde is named byteluys. whiche is
moche cherysshid and can make moche sporte and
game / wherfore is gyuen to hym the fatte trenchours
and moche other good mete whiche cometh wel to
prouffyt of fulrompe hys brother / and also my thyrd chylde
is a doughter and is named hatenette / she can wel pyke
out lyce and netis out of mens heedis / these thre ben to
eche other tryewe / wherfor I loue them wel /

dame rukenawe called hem forth and sayde / welcome my dere
chylde to me forth and stande by reynard your dere neuw /
Thenne sayde she / Come forth alle ye that ben of my kynne
and reynarts / and late us praye the kynge that he wille doo
to reynart ryght of the lande /

Tho cam forth many a beest anon / as the squyrel / the
musehout / the fychews / the martron / the beuer wyth his wyf
ordegale / the genete / the ostrole / the boussyng / and the fyret /
these tweyne ete as fayne palayl as doth reynart / The oter
and pantecroet his wyf whom I had almoste forgotten / yet
were they to fore wyth the beuer enemyes to the foxe / but
they durst not gaynsaye dame rukenawe / for they were aferd
of her She was also the wysest of al his kynne of counseyl
and was moste doubted / Ther cam also mo than xx other
by cause of her for to stande by R[e]ynard / Ther cam also
dame atrote with her ij sustres / the wesel / and her mell the
asse / the backe / The watreratte and many moo to the nombre
of xl / whiche alle camen and stoden by reynard the foxe /

MY lord the kyng saide rukenawe come and see hier yf reynart haue ony frendis / here may ye see / we ben your trewe subgettis whiche ffor yow wold auenture both lyf and good yf ye had nede / Though ye be hardy myghty and stronge / Oure welwyllyd frendship can not hurte you / late reynard the foxe wel bethynke hym vpon thise maters that ye haue leyd ayenst hym / And yf he can not excuse them / thenne doo hym right we desire no better / And this by right ought to noman be warned /

The quene thenne spack. this saide I to hym yesterday / But he was so fyers and angry that he wold not here it.

the lupaerd saide also. Syre ye may Iuge no ferther than your men gyue theyr verdyte. ffor yf ye wold goo forth by wyl and myghte that were not worshipful ffor your estate here allewaye bothe partyes and thenne by the beste and wysest counseyl gyue Iugement discretly acordyng to the beste right.

the kyng saide. this is al trewe but I was so sore meuyd when I was enformed of kywarts deth and sawe his heed. that I was hoot and hasty. I shal here the foxe. can he answere and excuse hym of that is leyd ayenst hym. I shal gladly late hym goo quyte. And also atte requeste of his good frendis and kynne.

Reynart was glad of thise wordis. and thoughte god thanke myn aunte. She hath the rys doo blosme aagayn. She hath wel holpen me forth now. I haue now a good foot to daunse on. I shal now loke out of myne eyen. And brynge forth the fayrest lesyngis that euer man herde. and brynge my self out of this daunger.

How the fore wyth subtylte excused hym for the deth of kywart the hare and of alle other maters that were leyde ayenst hym and how wyth flaterynge gate agayn his pees of the kyng. capitulo xxxij^o.

Henne spak reynart the foxe and saide / Alas what saye ye is kywart deed / and where is bellyn the ramme what brought he to yow / whan he cam agayn / ffor I delyuerd to hym thre^e iewellis / I wold fayn knowe where they ben be comen / That one of hem shold he haue gyuen to yow my lord the kyng / And the other ij to my lady the quene /

The kynge saide/bellyn brought vs nought ellis but
kywarts heed/lyke as I saide you to fore/wherof I toke on
hym wrake/I made hym to lose his lyf/ffor the foule kaytyf
said to me/that he hym self was of the counseyl of the
lettres makynge that were in the male/

Alas my lord is this very trouthe/woo to me kaytyf that euer
I was born sith that thise good Iewellis be thus lost myn
herte wil breke for sorowe/I am sorry that I now lyue/what
shal my wyf saie whan she hereth herof/she shal goo out of
her wytte for sorow/I shal neuer also longe as I lyue haue
her frendship she shal make moche sorowe whan she hereth
therof/

The she ape saide Reynard dere neuwe/what prouffyteth
that ye make al this sorowe late it passe/And telle vs what
thise Iewellis were/paraventure we shalle fynde counseyl to
haue them agayn yf they be aboue erthe Mayster akeryn shal
laboure for them in his bookis/and also we shal curse for
them in alle chirchys vnto the tyme that we haue knowleche
wher they been/They maye not be loste/

Nay aunte thynke not that/ffor they that haue them
wyl not lightly departe fro them. ther was neuer kynge
that euer gaf so riche Iewellis as thise be/Neuertheles
ye haue somewhat wyth your wordes easyd myn herte and
made it lighter than it was/Alas loo here ye may see how he
or they to whomme a man trusteth moost is ofte by hym or
them deceyuyd/though I shold goo al the world thorough
and my lyf in auenture sette therfore/I shal wyte wher thise
Iewellis ben becomen.

Wyth a dissymlyd and sorouful speche saide the foxe
herken ye alle my kynne and frendys/I shal name to
yow/thise Iewellis what they were/And thenne may
ye saie that I haue a grete losse/that one of them was a
rynge of fyn gold/and within the ryng next the fynge were
wreton lettres enameld with sable and asure and ther were
thre hebrews names therin/I coude not my self rede ne spelle
them/for I vnderstonde not that langage/but maister abryon
of tryer he is a wyse man/he vnderstandeth wel al maner of
langages and the vertue of al maner herbes/and ther is no
beest so fiers ne stronge but he can dompte hym/for yf he
see hym ones he shal doo as he wyl/And yet he bileueth not

on god / He is a Iewe / The wysest in connyng and specially he knoweth the vertue of stones. I shewde hym ones this rynge / he saide that they were tho thre names that seth brought out of paradys whan he brought to his fadre Adam the oyle of mercy / And who someuer bereth on hym these thre names / he shal neuer be hurte by thondre ne lyghtnyng ne no witchecraft shal haue power ouer hym ne be tempted to doo synne / And also he shal neuer take harm by colde though he laye thre wynters longe nyghtis in the feelde / though it snowed stormed or frore neuer so sore / so grete myght haue these wordes / wytnes of maister abrion / withoute forth on the rynge stode a stone of thre maner colours / the one part was lyke rede cristalle / and shoon lyke as fyre had ben therin / in suche wyse that yf one wold goo by nyght / hym behoued non other lighte for the shynnyng of the stone made and gaf as grete a lyghte as it had ben mydday / That other parte of the stone was whyte and clere as it had ben burnysshid / Who so had in his eyen ony smarte or sorenes / or in his body ony swelllyng / or heed ache / or ony sykenes withoutforth yf he stryked this stone on the place wher the gryef is / he shal anon be hole / or yf ony man be seke in his body of venym / or ylle mete in his stomack / of colyk / stranguyllyon / stone / fystel or kanker or ony other sekenes / sauf only the very deth late hym leye this stone in a litle watre / And late hym drynke it / and he shal forthwyth be hole and al quyte of his seknessis / Alas said the foxe we haue good cause to be sory to lese suche a Iewel / fforthermore the thirde colour was grene lyke glas / But ther were somme sprynklis therin lyke purpure / the maister told for trouthe / that who that bare this stone vpon hym shold neuer be hurte of his enemye / and that noman were he neuer so stronge and hardy that myght mysdoo hym / and where euer that he fought he shold haue vycторыe were it by nyght or by daye also ferre as he behelde it fastyng / and also therto where someuer he wente and in what felawship / he shold be bylouyd / though they hadde hated hym to fore / yf he had the ring vpon hym / they shold forgete theyr angre as sone as they sawe hym / Also though he were al naked in a felde agayn an hondred armed men / he shold be wel herted and escape fro them with worship / but he muste be a noble gentle man / and haue no chorles condicions / ffor

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THE FEIGNED JEWELS. A MIRROR, AND A COMB.] 83

thenne the stone had no myght / and by cause this stone was so precious and good / I thought in myself that I was not able ne worthy to bere it / and there fore i sente it to my dere lord the kyng / for i knowe hym for the moste noble that now lyueth / and also alle our welfare and worship lyeth on hym / and for he shold be kepte fro alle drede nede and vngheluck.

Fonde this ryng in my fadres tresour / and in the same place I toke a glasse or a mirroure and a combe whiche my wyf wold algates haue / a man myght wondre that sawe this Jewellis / I sent thise to my lady the quene / for I haue founden her good and gracious to me / this Combe myght not beto[o] moche preysed / Hit was made of the bone of a clenoble beest named Panthera / whiche fedeth hym bytwene the grete Inle and erthly paradyse / he is so lusty fayr and of colour / that ther is no colour vnder the heuen / but somme lyknes is in hym / therto he smelleth so swete / that the sauour of hym boteth alle syknessis and for his beaute and swete smellyng all other beestis folowe hym / for by his swete sauour they ben heled of alle syknessis / this panthera hath a fair boon brode and thynne / whan so is that this beeste is slayn al the swete odour restid in the bone which can not be broken ne shal neuer rote ne be destroyed by fyre / by water / ne by smytyng / hit is so hardy ty[g]ht and faste / and yet it is lyght of weyght / The swete odour of it hath grete myght / that who that smelleth it sette nought by none other luste in the world and is easyd and quyte of alle maner diseases and Infirmytes / And also he is ioconde and glad in his herte / this combe is polysshid as it were fyne syluer / and the teeth of it be small and strait / And bytween the gretter teeth and the smaller is a large felde and space where is coruen many an ymage subt[i]lly made and enameld aboute with fyn gold / thefelde is checked with sable and siluer / enameld with cybore and asure / And ther in is th[e] historye how venus Juno and pallas strof for th[e] apple of gold / whiche eche of them wold haue had / whiche contrauersye was sette vpon parys / that he shold gyue it to the fayrest of them thre.

Parys was that tyme an herde man and kepte his faders beestis and sheep withoute troye / whan he had resceyuid th[e] apple / Iuno promysed to hym yf he wolde

Iuge that she myght haue th[e]apple / he shold haue the moste richesse of the world / pallas said yf she myght haue th[e]apple she wold gyue hym wysedom and strengthe and make hym so grete a lorde that he shold ouercome alle his enemyes / and whom he wold / venus saide what nedest thou richesse or strengthe / art not thou pryamus sone / and hector is thy brother whiche haue al asye vnder their power / art not thou one of the possessours of grete troye / yf thou wylt gyue to me th[e]apple i shal gyue the[e] the richest tresour of the world and that shal be the fayrest woman that euer had lyf on erthe / ne neuer shal none be born fairer than she / thenne shal[t] thou be richer than riche / And shal clymme aboue al other / ffor that is the tresour that noman can preyse ynough / for honest / fair and good women can put a way many a sorow fro the herte / they be shamefast and wyse / and brynge a man in very Ioye and blysse / Parys herde this venus whiche presented hym this grete Ioye and fair lady and prayd her to name this fayr lady / that was so fair and where she was / venus saide / it is helene kynge menelaus wyf of grece / ther lyueth not anobler. richer. gentiller. ne wyser wyf in al the world / Thenne parys gaf to her th[e] apple and said that she was fayrest / how that he gate afterward helene by the helpe of venus and how he brought her in to troye and wedded her / the grete loue and ioly lyf that they had to gydre / was al coruen in the felde euery thyng by hym self / and the storye wreton.

Now ye shal here of the mirrour / the glas that stode theron was of suche vertu that men myght see therin / all that was don within a myle / of men of beestis and of al thyng that me wold desire to wyte and knowe / and what man loked in the glasse had he ony dissease / of prickyng or motes / smarte or perles in his eyen he shold be anon heled of it / Suche grete vertu had the glas / is it thenne wondre yf I be meuyd and angry for to lose suche maner Iewellls. The tree in whiche this glas stode was lyght and faste and was named cetyne / hit sholde endure euer er it wold rote or wormes shold hurte it / and therefore kynge salamon seelyd his temple wyth the same wode withynforth / Men preysed it derrer than fyn gold / hit is like to tre of hebenus / of whiche wode kynge Crompart made his hors of tree for loue of kynge morcadigas doughter that was so fayr / whom

he had wende for to haue wonne/ That hors was so made
within/ that w[h]o someuer rode on hit yf he wolde/ he shold
be within lesse than on hour/ an hondred myle thens/ And
that was wel preuyd ffor cleomedes the kynges sone wolde
not byleue that/ That hors of tree had suche myght and
vertue/ He was yonge lusty and hardy/ And desyred to doo
grete dedes of prys for to be renomed in this world/ And leep
on this hors of tree/ Crompart torned a pynne that stode on his
brest/ And anon the horse lyfte hym vp and wente out of the
halle by the wyndowe and er one myght saye his pater noster/
He was goon more ten myle [a]waye cleomedes was sore aferd
and supposed neuer to haue torned agayn/ as th[e h]istorye
therof telleth more playnly/ but how grete drede he had/ and
how ferre that he rood vpon that horse made of the tree of
hebenus er he coude knowe the arte and crafte how he shold
torne hym/ and how Ioyeful he was whan he knewe it/ and
how men sorowed for hym/ and how he knewe alle this and
the ioye therof whan he cam agayn al this I passe ouer for
losyng of tyme/ but the moste parte of alle cam to by the
vertue of the wode/

of whiche wode the tree that the glas stode in was made/
and that was without forth of the glas half a foot brood/
wherin stode somme strange hystoriese whiche were of gold/
of sable/ of siluer/ of yelow/ asure and cynope/ thyse sixe
colowrs were therin wrought in suche wise as it behoued/
and vnder euery hystorie the wordes were grauen and
enameld that euery man myght vnderstande what eche
hystorie was/ After my Iugement ther was neuer myroure so
costly so lustly ne so playsaunt/ in the begynnyng stode there
an horse made fatte stronge and sore enuyous vpon an herte
whiche ran in the feeld so ferre and swyftly that the hors was
angry that he ran so ferre to fore hym and coude not ouertake
hym he thought he shold cacche hym and subdue hym.
though he shold suffre moche payne therefore. the horse
spack tho to a herdeman in this wyse. yf thou cowdest
taken an herte that I wel can shewe the[e]/ thou sholdest haue
grete prouffyt therof. thou sholdest selle dere his hornes his
skyn and his flesshe. the herdeman sayd how may I come
by hym. the hors saide sytte vpon me. and I shal bere the[e]
and we shal hunte hym til he be take. The herdeman sprange
and satte vpon the hors and sawe the herte and he rode after

but the herte was lyght of foot and swyft. and out ran the hors ferre they honted so ferre after hym that the horse was wery and said to the herdeman that satte on hym. now sytte of[f] I wil reste me / I am al wery. and gyue me leue to goo fro the[e]. The herdeman saide I haue arested the[e] thow mayst not escape fro me. I haue a brydle on thy hede and sporis on my heles thou shalt neuer haue thanke herof / I shal bydwyng and subdue the[e] haddest thou sworn the contrarye.

see how the horse brought hym self in thraldom and was taken in his owne nette. how may one better be taken than by his owne propre enuye suffre hym self to betaken and riden. ther ben many that laboure to hurte other. and they them seluen ben hurt and rewarded with the same

Her was also made an asse and an hound / whiche dwelled bothe with a riche man / The man louyd his hound wel / ffor he pleyde ofte with hym as foike doo with houndis / the hound leep vp and pleyd with his tayl / And lyckyd his maister aboute the mouth / this saw howdwyn the asse / and had grete spyte therof in his herte / and said to hym self / how may this be and what may my lorde see on his fowle hound / whom I neuer see doth good ne proffyt / sauf spryngeth on hym and kysseth hym / But me whom men putten to laboure / to bere and drawe / and doo more in a weke than he wyth his xv shold doo in a hole yere and yet sytteth he neuertheles by hym at the table / and there eteth bones flessch and fatte trenchours / And I haue nothyng but thystles and nettles / And lye on nyghtes on the harde erthe and suffre many ascorn / I wyl no lenger suffre this / I wylle thynke how I may gete my lordes loue and frendship lyke as the hounde doth / Therwyth cam the lorde / And the asse lyft vp his tayl and sprang with his fore feet on the lordes sholdres / And blered grennyd and songe and with his feet made two grete bules aboute his eres / And put forth his mouth and wolde haue kyssed the lordes mouth as he had seen the hound doon / Tho cryde the lorde sore aferde help / help / this asse wil slee me / Thenne cam his seruauntis with good stauis and smyten and bete the asse so sore that he had wende he shold haue loste his lyf / Tho retorned he to his stable and ete thistles and nettles and was an asse as he to fore was.

In lyke wyse who so haue enuye and spyte of an others

welfare / and were seruyd in lyke wyse / it shold be wel behoefful.
Therfor it is concluded that the asse shal ete thistelis and
netteles and bere the sacker / though men wold doo hym
worship he can not vnderstonde it / but muste vse olde lewde
maners / Where as asses geten lordshippis / there men see
selde good rewle / For they take hede of nothyng but on theyr
synguler prouffyt / yet ben they take up and rysen grete / the
more pyte is /

Herken ferther how my fadre and tybert the catte
wende to gydre / and had sworn by theyr trouthe that
for loue ne hate they shold not departe. And what they
gate / they shold departe to eche the half / Thenne on atyme
they sawe hunters comyng ouer the felde with many houndes /
They leep and ronne faste fro them ward al that they myghte
as they that were aferd of theyr lyf /

Tybert said the foxe whyther shal we now beste flee / the
hunters haue espyed vs / knowe ye ony helpe my fadre trusted
on the promyse that eche made to other, And that he wolde
for no nede departe fro hym / Tybert said he / I haue a sack
ful of wyles yf we haue nede / as ferre as we abyde to gydre
we nede not to doubtte hunters ne houndes /

Tybert bigan to syghe and was sore aferd / And saide /
Reynart what auayllen many wordes / I knowe but one wyle.
and theder must I too.

And tho clamme he vpon on hye tree in to the toppe vnder
the leuys / Where as hunter ne hounde myghte doo hym non
harmer And lefte my fadre allone in Ieoparde of his lyf. ffor the
hunters sette on hym the houndes alle that they coude / Men
blewe the hornes and cryed and halowed the foxe / Slee and
take. Whan tybert the catte sawe that. he mocked and scorned
my fadre and said what reynart cosyn vnbynde now your
sakke wher al the wylis ben in / it is now tyme ye be so wyse
called / helpe your self / ffor ye haue nede /

this moche muste my fadre here of hym to whom he had
most his trust on / And was almoste taken and nygh his deth
and he ranne and fledde wyth grete fere of his lyf and lete his
male slyde of[f] by cause he wold be the lighter / yet al that
coude not helpe hym for the houndes were to[o] swyft and
shold haue byten hym / But he had one auenture that ther by
he fo[u]nd an old hole / wherin he crepte / and escaped thus the
honters and houndes /

Thus helde this false deceyuer tibaert his sykernes that he had promysed/Alas how many ben there now a dayes that kepe not theyr promyse/and sette not therby though they breke it/And though I hate tybaert herfore/is it wonder but I doo not sikerly/I loue my sowle to[o] wel therto/Neuertheles yf I sawe hym in auenture and mysfalle in his body or in his goodes/I trowe hit shold not moche goo to my herte so that another dyde it/Neuertheles I shal neyther hate hym ne haue enuye at hym/I shal ffor goddes loue forgyue hym yet is it not so clere out of myn herte/but a lytyl ylle wylle to hymward abideth therin as this cometh to my remembraunce/And the cause is that the sensualyte of my flessch fyghteth ayenst reson.

Her stode also in that myrroure of the wulf/how he fonde ones vpon an heth a dede hors flayn but al the flessch was eten thenne wente he and bote grete morsellis of the bones that for hungre he toke thre[e] or iiij attones and swolowed them in/ffor he was so gredy that one of the bones stack thwart in his mouth/Wherof he had grete payne. And was in grete fere of his lyf/He soughte al aboute for wyse maisters and surgyens and promysed grete yeftis for to be heled of his disease/Atte laste whan he coude nowher fynde remedye he cam to the crane wyth his longe necke and bille/and prayde hym to helpe hym and he wolde loue and rewarde hym so wel that he sholde euer be the better/The crane herked after this grete rewarde and put his heed in to his throte and brought out the boon wyth his bylle/

The wulf sterte a syde wyth the pluckyng/and cryde out alas thou doost me harme/but I forgyue it the[e]/doo no more soo/I wolde not suffre it of an other/

The crane saide/Sir Isegrym goo and be mery for ye be al hool now gyue to me that ye promysed

The wulf saide/wyl ye here what he sayth/I am he that hath suffred and haue cause to playne/and he wille haue good of me/he thanketh not me of the kyndnes that I dyde to hym he put his heed in my mouth/and I suffred hym to drawe it out hole without hurtyng/And he dyde to me also harme/And yf ony hier shold haue a reward it shold be I by ryght/

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REYNARD'S FEIGNED SORROW OVER HIS JEWELS.] 89

Thus the vnkynde men now adayes rewarde them that doo them good/whan the false and subtyl aryse and become grete/thenne goth worship and prouffyt al to nought/Ther ben many of right that ought reward and doo good to suche as haue holpen hem in her nede/that now fynde causes and saye they be hurte and wolde haue amendis/where they ought to rewarde and make amendes them self/Therefore it is said and trowthe it is/whoo that wyl chyde or chastyse/see that he be clere hym self.

Alle this and moche more than I now can wel remembre was made and wrought in this glasse/The maister that ordeyned it/was aconnyng man and a profounde clerk in many sciencis/And by cause thise Iewells were ouer good and precious for me to kepe and haue/Therefore I sente them to my dere lord the kynge and to the quene in presente/Where ben they now that gyue to theyr lordes suche presentes/The sorowe that my ij chyldren made whan I sente away the glasse was grete for they were woned to loke therin and see them self how theyr clothyng and araye bycam them on their bodyes/O alas I knewe not that kywart the hare was so nyghe his deth whan I delyueryd hym the male with this iewellis/I wiste not to whom I myght better haue taken them. though It shold haue coste me my lyf. than hym and bellart the ramme/They were two of my best frendis/Oute alas I crye vpon the murderar/I shal knowe who it was. though I shold renne thurgh al the world to seke hym. ffor murdre abydeth not hyd. it shal come out perauenture he is in this companye that knoweth where kywart is bicomen. though he telleth it not. ffor many false shrewys walke wyth good men. fro whom noman can kepe hym. they knowen theyr craft so wel and can wel couere their falsenes. but the most wondre that I haue is that my lord the kyng hier saith so felly. that my fadre nor I dyde hym neuer good/that thynketh me/meruayl of a kynge/but ther come so many thyngis to fore hym that he forgeteth that one wyth that other/and so faryth by me/Dere lorde remembre not ye whan my lord your fadre lyuyd/and ye an yonglyng of two yere were that my fadre cam fro skole fro Montpellier/where as he had fyue yere studyed in receptes of medycynes/he knewe al the tokenes of the vryne as wel as his honde/And also alle the

herbes and nature of them whiche were viscosse or laxatyf / he was a synguler maister in that science / he myght wel were cloth of sylke and a gylt gyrdle / whan he cam to court he fonde the kyng in a grete sekenes / wherof he was sory in his hert / For he louyd hym aboue alle other lordes / The kyng wold not forgoo hym / ffor whan he cam alle other had leue to walke where they wold he trusted none so moche as hym /

he said reynard I am seke and fele me the lenger the werse /

My fadre said / my dere lord here is an vrynal / make youre water therin and assone as I may see it I shal telle what sekenes it is and also how ye shal be holpen /

the kyng dyde as he conseilled hym for he trusted noman better that lyuyd / Though so were that my fader dyde not as he shold haue don to you / But that was by counseyl of euyl and foule beestis I had wonder therof / but it was a rasyng ayenst his deth / he said my lord yf ye wyl be hole / Ye muste ete the lyuer of a wulf of vij yere old / that may ye not leue / or ellis ye shal deye / for your vryne sheweth it playnly /

the wulf stode ther by and said nought /

But the kyng said to hym sir ysegrym now ye here wel that I muste haue your lyuer / yf I wil be hool /

Tho answerd the wulf and saide / Nay my lord not soo / I wote wel I am not yet fyue yere olde / I haue herde my moder saie soo /

My fadre sayd / what skylleth this wordes / late hym be opened and I shal knowe by the lyuer yf it be good for yow or not /

And therwyth the wulf was had to kychen / and his lyuer taken out / whiche the kyng ete and was anon al hole of alle his sekenes / thenne thanketh he my fadre moche / and commanded alle his houshold upon their lyuys that after that tyme they shold calle hym mayster reynard

HE abode styll by the kyng and was byleuid of alle thyngis / and muste allewey go by his syde / And the kyng gaf to hym a garlond of rooses. whiche he muste alway were on his heed. but now this is al torned. Alle the old good thinges that he dyde. ben forgotten. And thise couetouse and rauinous shrewys ben taken vp and sette

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REYNARD IS BELIEVED OF ALL THINGS.] 91

on the hye benche and ben herde and made grete. And the wyse folke ben put a back. by whiche thise lordes ofte lacke. And cause them to be in moche trouble and sorowe ffor whan a couetous man of lowe byrthe is made a lorde and is moche greet and aboue his neyghbours hath power and myght / Thenne he knoweth not hym self / ne whens he is comen And hath no pyte on nomans hurte. ne hereth nomans requeste. but yf he may haue grete yeftis. al his entent and desyre is to gadre good and to be gretter. O how many couetous men ben now in lordes courtes. they flatre and smeke / and plesse the prynce for theyr synguler auayl / But and the prynce had nede of them or their good they sholde rather suffre hym to deye or fare right hard er they wold gyue or lene hym / They be lyke the wulf / that had leuer the kinge had deyed than he wolde gyue hym his lyuer / Yet had I leuer er that the kyng or the quene shold fare amys / that xx suche wulues shold lose theyr lyues / hit were also the leest losse / My lorde al this bitelle in your yougthe that my fader dyde thus / I trowe ye haue forgotten it /

And also I haue my self don yow reuerence worship and courtosye / Vnroused be it / though ye now thanke me but lytyl / but parauenture ye remembred not that I shal now saye / not to ony forwytyng of yow / for ye be worthy alle worship and reuerence that ony man can doo / that haue ye of almyghty god by enheritaunce of your noble progenytours / wherfor I your humble subgette and seruaunt am bounden to doo to yow alle the seruyse that I can or maye / I cam on a tyme walkyng with the wulfe Isegrym / And we hadde gotten vnder vs bothe a swyne / And for his lowde cryyng we bote hym to deth / and syre ye cam fro ferre out of a groue ayenst vs. ye salewed vs frendly and saide we were welcome. and that ye and my lady the quene whiche cam after yow hadde grete hongre. and had nothyng for to ete / and prayd vs for to gyue yow parte of our wynnyng / Isegrym spack so softe that a man vnnethe myght here hym. but I spack out and saide. ye[a] my lord with a good will. though it were more we wil wel that ye haue parte And thenne the wulf departed as he was wont to doo / departed and toke that on half for hym self / And he gaf yow a quarter. ffor yow and for the quene / That other quarter he ete and bote as hastely as he myghte / bicause he wolde ete it allone / And he gaf to me but half the longes that I pray god that euyl mote he fare.



Hus shewde he his condicions and nature/ er men
shold haue songen a Credo ye my lord had eten your
part/ And yet wold ye tain haue had more/ ffor ye
were not ful/ And bicause he gaf yow no more ne profred
yow/ Ye lyft vp your right fote and smote hym bytwene the
eris that ye tare his skynne ouer his eyen/ and tho he myght
no lengre abyde but he bledde/ howled and ran away and
leste his part there lye/ Tho said ye to hym haste yow
agayn hether and brynge to vs more/ And here after see
better to how ye dele and parte/ Thenne saide I my lord yf
it please yow I wylle goo wyth hym/ I wote wel what ye
saide/ I wente wyth hym/ he bledde/ and groned as sore as
he was al softly/ he durst not crye lowde/ we wente so ferre.
that we brought a calf/ And whan ye saw vs come therwyth/
ye lawhyd for ye were wel plesyd/ ye said to me that I was
swyft in hontyng. I see wel that ye can fynde wel whan ye
take it vpon yow/ ye be good to sende forth in a nede/ The
calf is good and fatte. herof shal ye be the delar I saide my
lord wyth a good wyl/ The one half my lord shal be for yow.
And that other half for my lady the quene. the moghettis.
Lyuier longes and the Inward shal be for your chyldren/ the
hed shal Isegrym the wulf haue/ and I wil haue the feet.
Tho said ye Reynart who hath taught you to departe so
courtoisly/ my lord said I. that hath don this preest that
sytteth her with the bloody crowne/ he lost his skynne wyth
the vncourtoys departyng of the swyn. And for his couetyse
and rauyne he hath hurte and shame

Alas ther ben many wulues now a dayes that without right
and reson destroye and ete them that they may haue the
ouerhand of/ they spare neyther flesh ne blood/ frende ne
enemye/ what they can gete. that take they/ O woo be to that
lande and to townes. where as the wulues haue the ouerhand/

My lord this and many other good thing haue I don for
you/ that I cowde wel telle yf it were not to[o] long/ of whiche
now ye remembre litil by the wordes that I her of yow. yf ye
wold al thyng ouersee wel/ ye wold not saye as ye doo. I haue
seen the day/ that ther shold no grete mater be concluded in
this court without myn aduyse/ al be yt that this auenture is
now fallen/ It myght happen yet that my wordes shal be herd
and also bileuyd as wel as an others as ferre as right wyl
for I desyre none other/ ffor yf ther be ony can saye and make

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THEY ALL SORROW FOR THE JEWELS.] 93

good by sufficient witnessis that I haue trespaced I wil abyd
al the right and lawe that may come therof and yf ony saie
on me ony thyng of whiche he can brynge no wytnesses. Let
me thenne be rewlyd after the lawe and custome of thys court

the kynge saide Reynart ye saye resonably I knowe not
of kywarts deth more than that bellyn the Ramme brought
his heed hether In the male/therof I lete yow goo quyte
ffor I haue no wytnes therof/

My dere lord said [Reynart] god thanke yow / sykerly ye doo
wel for his deth maketh me so sorowful / that me thynketh my
herte wyl breke in two / owhan they departed fro me myn herte
was so heuy / that me thought I shold haue swowned / I wote
wel it was a token of the losse that tho was so nyghe
comyng to me /



Alle the moost parte of them that were there and herde
the foxes wordes of the Iewellis and how he made his
contenance and stratchid hym / had veryly supposed
that it had not be fayned but that it had be tryewe. they were
sory of his losse and mysaventure. and also of his sorowe
The kynge and the quene had bothe pyte of hym. And bad hym
to make not to[o] moche sorowe / But that he sholde endeuore
hym to seche hem. For he had so moche preysed hem. that
they had grete wyl and desyre to haue them / And by cause he
had made them to vnderstonde that he had sente these Iewellis
to them. though they neuer had them yet they thankyd hym.
And prayd hym to helpe that they myght haue them.



He foxe vnderstode theyr menyng wel. he thought
toward them but lytyl good for al that he said god
thanke you my lord and my lady that ye so frendly
comforte me in my sorow. I shal not reste nyght ne day ne
alle they that wyl doo ony thyng for me but Renne and praye /
Thretene and aske alle the four corners of the world / Though
I shold euer seche tyl that I knowe where they ben bicomen /
and I pray you my lord the kynge / That yf they were in
suche place as I cowde not gete them by prayer / by myght
ne by request that ye wold assiste me and abide by me / ffor
it towcheth your self / and the good is youris / And also it is
your part to doo Iustyse on thefte and murdre whiche bothe
ben in this caas /

Reynart said the kynge that shal I not leue whan ye knowe
wher they ben / Myn helpe shalbe alway redy for you /

O dere lorde this is to[o] moche presented to me / yf I had
power and myght I sholde deserue ayenst yow /

Now hath the foxe his mater fast and fayr / ffor he hath
the kynge in his hand as he wold / hym thought that he was
in better caas than it was lyke to haue be / he hath made so
many lesynges / that he may goo frely wher he wyl without
complaynyng of ony of them alle /

Sauf of Isegrym which was to hymward angry and
dysplesyd and saide / O noble kynge ar ye so moche chyldyssh
that ye byleue this false and subtyl shrewe / and suffre your
self wyth false lyes thus to be deceyuyd / Of fayth it shold be
longe or I sholde byleue hym / he is in murdre and treson
al be wrapped / And he mocketh you to fore your visage / I
shal telle hym a nother tale I am glad that I see now hym
here / al his lesynges shal not a vaylle hym er he departe fro
me.

**How psegrym the wulf complayned agayn on the
fore. capitulo xxriij^o**

MY lord I pray you to take hede / this false thief
betraied my wyf ones fowle and dishonestly / hit was
so that in a wynters day that they wente to gyder
thurgh a grete water / and he bare / my wyf an honde
that he wold teche her take fysshe wyth her tayl / and that
she shold late it hange in the water a good while and ther
shold so moche fysshe cleue on it that foure of them shold not
conne ete it. The fool my wyf supposed he had said trouthe /
And she wente in the myre to the bely to[o] er she cam in to
the water / And whan she was in the deppest of the water. he
bad her holde her tayl / til that the fysshe were comen. she
helde her tayl so longe that it was from harde in the yse and
coude not plucke it out / And whan he sawe that. he sprange
vp after on her body. Alas there rauysshyd he and forcyd my
wyf so knauisshly that I am ashamed to telle it. she coude
not defende her self the sely beest. she stode so depe in the
myre. herof he can not saye naye. ffor I fonde hym with the
dede. for as I wente aboue vpon the banke I sawe hym
by nethe vpon my wyf shouyng and stekyng as men doo whan

they doo suche werke and playe. Alas what payne suffred I tho at my herte I had almost for sorow lost my fyue wyttes and cryde as lowde as I myght reynart what do ye there / and whan he sawe me so nyghe tho leep he of[f]. and wente his waye. I wente to her in a grete heuinesse. And wente depe in that myre and that waterer I coude breke the yse and moche payne suffred she er she coude haue out her taylle / and yet lefte a gobet of her tayle behynd her / And we were lyke bothe therby to haue lost our lyues / for she galped and cryde so lowde for the smarte that she had er she cam out / that the men of the village cam out with stauys and byllis / with flaylis and pykforkes / And the wyuis wyth theyr distauis / and cryed dyspytously sle sle / and smyte down right / I was neuer in my lyf so aferde / ffor vnnethe we escape / we ran so fast that we swette ther was a vylayne that stake on vs wyth a pyke / whiche hurted vs sore he was stronge and swyfte a fote / hadde it not be nyght / Certaynly we had ben slayn / The fowle olde que[a]nes wold fayne haue beten vs / they saide that we had byten theyr sheep / They cursed vs with many a curse / Tho cam we in a felde ful of brome and brembles there hydde we vs fro the vylaynes / And they durst not folowe vs ferther by nyght / but retorned home agayn See my lorde thys fowle mater / this is murdre / rape / and treson / whiche ye ought to doo Iustyce theron sharply.

Reynard answerd and said / yf this were trewe / it shold go to[o] nyghe myn honour and worship / god forbede that it shold be founde trewe / hit is wel trewe that I taught her how she [s]holde in a place catche fysshe / and shewe her a good way for to goo ouer in to the water without goyng in to the myre / But she ranne so desyrously whan she herde me name the fyssh / That she nether way ne path helde / But wente in to the yse wherein she was forfrorn / And that was by cause she abode to[o] longe she had fissh ynough yf she coude haue be plesyd wyth mesure it falleth ofte / who that wold haue all / leseth alle / Ouer couetous was neuer good / For the beest can not be satisfyed / And whan I sawe her in the yse so faste / I wente to haue holpen her / and heef and shoef and stack here and there to haue brought her out / But it was al payne loste / ffor she was to[o] heuy for me / Tho cam ysegrym and sawe how I shoef and stack and dyde al my

beste and he as a fowle chorle· fowle and rybadously sklaundryth me wyth her. as thyse fowle vnthriftes ben wonte to doo· But my dere lord it was none otherwyse. he belyeth me falsely paraurenture his eyen daselyd as he loked from aboue doun. he cryde and cursed me and swore many an oth I shold dere aby[d]e it / whan I herde hym so curse and thretene / I wente my waye / and lete hym curse and menace til he was wery / And tho wente he and heef and shoef and halpe his wyf out / and thenne he leep and ran and she also for to gete them an hete and to warme them / or ellis they shold haue deyed for colde / And what someuer I haue saide a fore or after / that is clerely al trouthe / I wolde not for a thousand marke of fyn gold lye to yow one lesyng it were not fyttyng for me / what someuer falle of me I shal saye the trouthe / lyke as myn elders haue alway don / syth the tyme that we fyrst vnderstode reson / and yf ye be in doubte of ony thyng that I haue said otherwyse than trouthe / gyue me respyte of viij dayes that I may haue counseyl / and I shal brynge suche Informacion wyth good tryew and suffycient recorde / that ye shal alle your lyf duryng truste and byleue me / and so shal all your counseyl also / what haue I to doo wyth the wulf / hit is to fore clerly ynnowh shewde that he is a foule vylaynous kaytyf / and an vnclene beest / Whan he deled and departed the swyn / So is it now knowen to you alle by hys owen wordes that is a deffamer of wymmen as moche as in hym is ye may wel marke euerychone / Who shold luste to do that game to one so stedfast a wyf beyng in so grete peryll of deth now aske ye hys wyf / yf it be so as he sayth / yf she wyl saye the trouthe I wote wel / she shal saye as I doo /

Tho spack erswynde the wulfis wyf / Ache felle reynart / noman can kepe hym self fro the[e] / thou canst so wel vttre thy wordes and thy falsenes and reson sette forth / but it shall be euyl rewarded in the ende / How broughtest thou me ones in to the welle where the two bokettys henge by one corde rennyng thurgh one polley whiche wente one vp and another doun / thou sattest in that one boket bynethe in the pytte in grete drede / I cam theder and herde the[e] syghe and make sorowe / And axed the[e] how thou camest there / thou saidest that thou haddest there so many good fysshes eten out of the water that thy bely wolde breste / I said telle me how I shal come to

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REYNARD, ISEGRIM, AND THE SHE APE.] 97

the[e]/Thenne saidest thou aunte sprynge in to that boket that
hangeth there/and ye shal come anon to me/I dyde so/and
I wente downward/and ye cam vpward tho was I alle angry/
thou saidest thus fareth the world that one goth vp/and
another goth down/tho sprang ye forth and wente your
waye and I abode there allone syttyng an hole day sore an
hongryd and a colde/And therto had I many a stroke er I
coude gete thens/

Aunte sayd the foxe/though the strokes dyde you harme I
had leuer ye had them than I/ffor ye may better bere them/
for one of vs must nedes haue had them/I taught yow good/
wyl ye vnderstande it and thynke on it/that ye another
tyme take better hede and bileue noman ouer hastely/is he
frende or cosyn/for euery man seketh his owne prouffyt/They
be now fooles that do not soo/And specyally whan they be
in Ieopardye of theyr lyues.

A fayr parable of the fore and the wulf Ca° xxxiiij°

MY lord said dame Erswyn I pray yow here how he
can blowe with alle wyndes/And how fayr bryngeth
he his maters forth/

Thus hath he brought me many tyme in scathe
and hurte said the wulf/he hath ones bytrayed me to the
she ape myn aunte/where I was in grete drede and fere/for
I lefte there almost myn one ere/yf the foxe wil telle it how
it byfel/I wyl gyue hym the fordele therof/for I can not
telle it so wel/but he shal beryspe me/

wel said the foxe I shal telle it wythout stameryng I shal
saye the trouth/I praye yow herken me/he cam in to the
wode and complayned to me/that he had grete hongre ffor
I sawe hym neuer so ful/but he wold alway haue had fayn
more/I haue wonder where the mete becometh that he
destroyeth/I see now on his contenance that he begynneth
to grymme for hongre/Whan I herde hym so complayne I
had pyte of hym/And I saide I was also hongry/thenne
wente we half a day to gydre and fond nothyng/tho whyned
he and cryed/and said he myght goo no ferther Thenne
espyed I a grete hool standyng in the myddys vnder an
hawe whiche was thych of brembles/and I herde a russhyng

therin I wist not what it was / thenne said I goo therin and
loke yf ther be ony thyng ther for vs / I wote wel ther
is somewhat / tho saide he cosyn I wolde not crepe in to that
hole for twenty pound but I wist fyrst what is therin / me
thynketh that ther is some perylous thyng but I shal abyde
here vnder this tree / yf ye wil goo therin to fore / but come
anon agayn / And late me wete what thyng is therin / Ye can
many a subtylte and can wel helpe your self and moche
better than I. See my lord the kyng / Thus he made me
poure wight to goo to fore in to the daunger / and he whiche
is grete longe and stronge abode withoute and rested hym in
pees / awayte yf I dyde not for hym there.

I Wold not suffre the drede and fere that I there suffred
for al the good in erthe / but yf I wyste how to escape /
I wente hardyly in / I fonde the way derke / longe and
brood / Er I right in the hool cam soo espyed I a grete light
whiche cam in fro that one syde ther laye in a grete ape with
tweyne grete wyde eyen / and they glymmed as a fyre / And
she had a grete mouth with longe teeth and sharp naylles
on hir feet and on hir handes / I wende hit had be a mermoyse /
a baubyn or a mercatte / for I sawe neuer fowler beest / and
by her laye thre of her children whiche were right fowle ffor
they were ryght lyke the moder / whan they sawe me come /
they gapeden wyde on me and were al styll / I was aferd /
And wold wel I had ben thens / but I thoughte I am therin /
I muste ther thurgh and come out as wel as I maye / as I
sawe her me thought she semed more than ysegrym the
wulf / And her chyldren were more than I / I sawe neuer a
fowler meyne / they laye on fowle heye whiche was al be
pyssed / They were byslabbed and byclagged to their eres
to[o] in her owen donge / hit stanke that I was almost smoldred
therof I durst not saye but good / and thenne I saide /
Aunte god gyue yow good daye and alle my cosyns your
fayr chyldren / they be of theyr age the fayrest that euer I
sawe O lord god how wel plese they me / how louely / how
fayr ben they eche of them for their beaute myght be a grete
kyngis sone / Of right we ought to thanke yow / that ye thus
encrece oure lygnage / Dere aunte whan I herde saye that ye
were delyuered and leyd down I coude no lenger abyde but
muste come and frendly vysite yow / I am sory that I had
not erst knowen it /

Reynard cosyn said she ye be welcome / ffor that ye haue found me and thus come see me I thanke yow. Dere cosyn ye be right trewe and named right wyse in alle londes / and also that ye gladly furthre and brynge your lignage in grete worship / Ye muste teche my chyldren with the youris som wysedom that they may knowe what they shal doo and leue / I haue thought on yow / for gladly ye goo and felawship with the good /

O how wel was I plesyd whan I herde these wordes / this deseruyd I at the begynnyng whan I callyd her aunte / how be it that she was nothyng sybbe to me / ffor my right aunte is dame rukenawe that yonder standeth / Whiche is woned to brynge forth wyse chyldren /

I saide aunte my lyf and my good is at your commandement / and what I may doo for yow by nyght and by daye / I wylle gladly teche them alle that I can.

I wolde fayn haue be thens for the stenche of them. and also I had pyte of the grete hongre that Isegrym had.

I saide aunte I shal commytte yow and your fayr chyldren to god and take my leue / My wyf shal thynke longe after me /

Dere cosyn saide she ye shal not departe til ye haue eten / for yf ye dyde I wold saie ye were not kynde /

Tho stode she vp and brought me in an other hool where as was moche mete of hertes and hyndes / roes / fesaunts / partrychs and moche other venyson that I wondred for whens al this mete myghte come / And whan I had eten my bely ful she gaf me a grete pece of an hynde fro to ete wyth my wyf and wyth my houshold / whan I come home / I was a shamed to take it / But I myght none other wyse doo / I thankyd her and toke my leue / she bad me I shold come sone agayn / I sayd I wolde

And so departed thens meryly / that I so wel had spedde / I hasted me out / and whan I cam and sawe ysegrym whiche laye gronyng. And I axed hym how he ferde / he said neuw al euyl / ffor it is wonder that I lyue / brynge ye ony mete to ete I deye for hongre. tho had I compassion of hym and gaf hym that I had. And saued hym there his lyf / wherof thenne thanked me gretly. how be it that he now oweth me euyl wyl.

HE had eten this vp anon. tho said he Reynard dere
cosyn what fonde ye in that hoel. I am more hongry
now than I was to fore / my teeth ben now sharpened
to ete.

I saide thenne / Eme haste yow thenne lyghtly into that
hool. Ye shal fynde there ynough. there lieth myn aunte
wyth her chyldren' yf ye wyl spare the trowth and lye grete
lesynges / ye shal haue there al your desire / But and ye saye
trowth / ye shal take harme /

My lord was not this ynough sayd and warned / who so
wold vnderstonde it / that al that he fonde he shold saye
the contrarye But rude and plompe beestis can not
vnderstonde wysedom / therefore hate they alle subtil
Inuencions / ffor they can not conceyue them. Yet
neuertheles / he saide he wolde goo Inne / and lye so many
lesyngis er he sholde myshappe that all man sholde haue
wondre of it. and so wente forth in to that fowle stynkyng
hool. and fonde the marmosette. She was lyke the deuyls
doughter. and on her chyldren hynged moche fylth cloterd in
gobettis.

Tho cryde he alas me growleth of thyse fowle nyckers /
Come they out of helle. men may make deuylles a ferd
of hem. goo and drowne them that euyl mote they fare.
I sawe neuer fowler wormes. they make al myn heer to
stande right vp /

sir ysegrym said she. what may I doo therto. they
ben my chyldren. And I muste be their moder. what
lyeth that in your weye' whether they be fowl or fayr.
They haue yow nothyng coste. here hath ben one to day
byfore yow whiche was to them ny[g]he of kyn. And was
your better and wyser and he sayde that they ware fayr. who
hath sente yow hyther with thyse tydynges.

dame wyl ye wytte I wylle ete of your mete. hit is better
bestowed on me than on thyse fowle wyghtes.

She sayde hier is no mete /
he saide here is ynough.

And ther wyth he sterte with his hede toward the mete.
and wolde haue goon in to the hool wher the mete was.
But myn aunte sterte vp wyth her chyldren. and ronned to
hym wyth their sharp longe nayles so sore that the blode
ran ouer his eyen / I herde hym crye sore and howle /

Trans. by
W. Caxton
June 1481.

AND IS ALL TORN BY THE SHE APE.] 101

but I knowe of no defence that he made / but that he
ran faste out of the hool / And he was there cratched and
byten / and many an hool had they made in his cote and
skyn / his visage was alle on a blood / and almost he had loste
his one ere / he groned and complayned to me sore /

thenne asked I hym yf he had wel lyed

he sayd I saide lyke as I sawe and fonde / and that was
a fowle bytche wyth many fowle wyghtis /

Nay eme said I / ye shold haue said / Fayr nece how fare ye
and your fair chyldren whiche ben my welbelouid cosyns /

the wulf sayd / I had leuer that they were hanged er I
that saide /

ye eme therfore muste ye resseyue suche maner payment /
hit is better otherwhile to lye than to saye trouthe / They
that ben better / wyser and strengre than we be haue doon so
to fore vs /

See my lord the kyng thus gate he his rede coyf / Now
stondeth he al so symply as he knewe no harme / I pray
yow aske ye hym yf it was not thus / he was not fer of yf I
wote it wel

**How psegrym proferd his gloue to the fore for to
fyght wyth hym capitulo xxxv.**

He wulf sayd I may wel forbere your mockes and
your scornes and also your felle venymous wordes
strong thief that ye ar / ye saide that I was almost
dede for hungre / when ye helpe me in my nede /
that is falsely lyed. for it was but aboon that ye gaf to me /
ye had eten away alle the flessch that was theron / And ye
mocke me and saye that I am hongry here where I stande /
that toucheth my worship to[o] nygh / what many a spyty
worde haue ye brought forth wyth false lesyngis / And that I
haue conspyred the kynges deth fro the tresour that ye haue
seid to hym / is in hulsterlo / And ye haue also my wyf shamed
and sklandred / that she shal neuer recoure it / and I shold
euer be disworshipped therby yf I auengyd it not / I haue
forborn yow longe / but now ye shal not escape me / I can not
make her of greet preef / But I saye here to fore my lord
and to fore alle them that ben here that thow art a false

traytour and a morderar/And that shal I proue and make
good on thy body wythin lystes in the felde. and that
body ayenst body And thenne shal our stryf haue an ende/
And therto I caste to the[e] my gloue/and take thou it vp/I
shal haue right of the[e] or deye therfore/

Reynard the foxe thought how come I on this Campyng/
we ben not bothe lyke/I shal not wel conne stonde ayenst
this stronge thief/all my proof is now come to an ende.

**How the fore took vp the gloue. And how the kynge
sette to them daye and felde for to come and doo
theyr bataylle capitulo xxxvj^o**



Et thought the foxe I haue good auantage. the
clawes of his for feet ben of[f]. and his feet ben yet
sore therof. whan for my sake he was vnshoed. he
shal be somewhat the weyker.

Thenne sayde the foxe who that saith that I am a traytour
or a morderar. I saie he lieth falsely and that art thou specyally
ysegrym/thou bryngest me/there as I wolde be/this haue I
ofte desyred/lo here is my plegge/that alle thy wordes ben
falls/And that I shal defende me/and made good that thou
lyest/

The kynge receyuyd the plegges/and amytted the bateyll
And asked borowes of them bothe/that on the morn they
shold come and performe theyr batayll/and doo as they ought
to doo/Thenne the bere and the catte were borowes for the
wulf/And for the foxe were borowys grymbert the dassse/and
byteluys.

**How rukenawe the she ape counseylled the fore
how he sholde byhaue hym in the felde ayenst the
wulf Capitulo xxxvij^o**



He she ape saide to the foxe/Reyner neuew/See
that ye take hede in your batayll/be colde and wyse
Your eme taught me ones a prayer that is of moche
vertue to hym that shal fyghte/And a grete maister

and a wyse clerk. and was abbot of boudelo that taughted hym/he saide who that sayde deuoutly this prayer fastyng shal not that day be ouercomen in batayl ne in fyghting therfore dere neuwe be not aferd/I shal rede it ouer yow to morow/thenne may ye be sure ynough of the wulf hit is better to fyghte/than to haue the necke asondre/

I thanke you dere aunte said the foxe/The quarel that I haue is rightful therfore I hope I shal spede wel/and that shal gretely be myne helpe/

Alle his lygnage abode by hym al the nyght/and helpe hym to dryue a way the tyme/

Dame rukenawe the she ape his aunte thoughte alway on his prouffyt and fordele/And she dyde alle his heer fro the heed to the tayl be shorn of[f] smothe/and she anoynted alle his body wyth oyl of olyue/ And thenne was his body also glat and slyper/that the wulf sholde haue none holde on hym/And he was round and fatte also on his body/

And she said to hym dere cosyn ye muste now drynke moche/that to morowe ye may the better make your vryne/but ye shal holde it in tyl ye come to the felde/ And whan nede is and tyme/so shall ye pysse ful your rowhe tayll/and smyte the wulf therwyth in his berde/And yf ye myght hytte hym therwyth in his eyen' thenne shal ye byneme hym his syght/that shold moche hyndre hym/but ellis hold alway your tayl faste bytwene your legges that he catche yow not therby/and holde doun your eris lyeng plat after your heed/that he holde you not therby/And see wisely to your self/and at begynnyng flee fro his strokes. And late hym sprynge and renne after yow/and renne to fore where as moste dust is/and styre it wyth your feet that it may flee in his eyen and that shal moche hyndre his syght/ And whyle he rubbeth his eyen take your auantage and smyte and byte hym there as ye may most hurte hym/And alleway to hytte hym wyth your tayll ful of pysse in his visage and that shal make hym so woo/that he shal not wyte where he is/And late hym renne after yow for to make hym wery/Yet his feet ben sore/of that ye made hym to lose his shooes/and though he be greet/he hath no herte/Neuwe certainly this is my counseyll.

He connyng goth to fore strengthe/therfore see for
your self/ And sette your self wysely atte defence/that
ye and we alle may haue worship therof/I wold be
sory yf ye mys[s]happed/I shal teche you the wordes that your
eme mertyn taught me/that ye may ouercome your enemye/
as I hope ye shal doo wythout doubte/

therwyth she leyde her hand vpon his heed and saide these
wordes/Blaerde Shay Alphenio/Kasbue Gorfons alsbuifrio/
Neuw now be ye sure fro alle myschief and drede/and
counseyle yow that ye reste you a lytyl/for it is by the daye/
ye shal be the better dysposed/we shal awake you in al in
tyme/

aunte said the foxe I am now glad/god thanke you ye
haue don to me suche good/I can neuer deserue it fully
agayn/me thynketh ther may no thyng hurte me syth that
ye haue said thyse holy wordes ouer me/

Tho wente he and leyd hym down vnder a tre in the grasse
and slepte tyl the sonne was rysen/tho cam the otter and
waked hym and bad hym aryse/and gaf hym a good yong
doke/and said/dere cosyn I haue this nyght made many a
leep in the water er I coude gete this yonge fatte doke/I haue
taken it fro a fowler/take and ete it/

Reynart sayde this is good hansele/yf I refused I were a
fool/I thanke yow cosyn that ye remembre me/yf I lyue I
shal rewarde yow/

The foxe ete the doke with oute sawce or breed it sauourd
hym wel and wente wel in/And he dranke therto iiij grete
draughtis of water/Thenne wente he to the bataylle ward and
alle they that louyd hym wente wyth hym.

How the ffore cam in to the felde and how they foughten /capitulo xxxviii^o

WHan the kynge sawe reynart thus shorn and oyled
he said to hym/Ey foxe how wel can ye see for
your self/

he wondred therof he was fowle to loke on/
but the foxe said not one worde but kneled down lowe to
th[er]the vnto the kynge and to the quene and stryked hym
forth in to the felde/

The wulf was ther redy and spack many a proud word /
the rulers and kepars of the felde was the lupaert and
the losse / they brought forth the booke / on whiche sware
the wulf that the foxe was a traytour and a morderar / and
none myght be falsar than he was / and that he wolde preue
on his body and make it good / Reynart the foxe sware that
he lyed as a false knaué and a cursyd thief and that he wold
doo good on his body /

Whan this was don the gouernours of the felde / bad them
doo theyr deuoyr / Thenne romed they alle the felde sauf dame
rukenawe the she ape / she abode by the foxe and bad hym
remembre wel the wordes that she had sayd to hym / she said
see wel too / whan ye were vij yer olde ye were wyse ynowh
to goo by nyght wythout lanterne / or mone shyne / Where
ye wyste to wynne ony goode / ye ben named emong the peple
wyse and subtyl / payne your self to werke soo that ye wynne
the prys / thenne may ye haue euer honour. and worship / and
al we that ben your frendys /

he answerd my derest aunte I knowe it wel / I shal doo my
beste and thynke on your counseyl / I hope so to doo that
alle my lignage shal haue worship therby / and myn enemyes
shame and confusion /

she sayde god graunte it yow.

How the foxe and the wulf foughten to gydre
ca^o xxxix^o

THerwyth she wente out of the felde / and lete them
tweyne goo to gydre / the wulf trade forth to the foxe
in grete wrath and opened his fore feet / and supposed
to haue taken the foxe in hem / But the foxe sprang
from hym lyghtly / For he was lyghter to fote than he / The
wulf sprange after and hunted the foxe sore / theyr frendes
stode / withoute the lystes and loked vpon hem / The wulf
stode wyder than reynard dyde and ofte ouertoke hym / And
lyfte vp his foot and wende to haue smyten hym / but the foxe
sawe to / and smote hym wyth his rowhe tayle / Whiche he had
al be pyssed in his visage / tho wende the wulf to haue ben
plat blynde / the pysse sterte in his eyen / thenne muste he
reste for to make clene his eyen / Reyner thoughte on his

fordele and stode aboute the wynde skrabbing and casting
wyth his feet the duste that it flewe the wulfis eyen ful/the
wulf was sore blynded ther wyth in suche wyse that he mus'e
leue the rennyng after hym/ffor the sonde and pyse cleuyd
vnder his eyen that it smerted so sore/that he muste rubbe
and washe it a way/

Tho cam reynar in a grete angre and bote hym thre grete
woundes on his heed wyth his teeth/and said/what is that
syr wulf/hath one there byten yow/how is it wyth yow/I
wyl al otherwyse on yow yet/abyde I shal brynge yow
somm newe thyng/ye haue stole many a lambe and
destroyed many a symple beest/and now falsely haue
appeled me and brought me in this trouble/al this shal I now
auenge on the[e]/I am chosen to reward the[e] for thyn old
synnes ffor god wyl no lenger suffre the[e] in thy grete rauayn
and shrewdnes/I shal now assoylle the[e] and that shal be
good for thy soule take patiently this penannce/for thou
shalt lyue no lenger/the helle shal be thy purgatorye/Thy lyf
is now in my mercy/but and yf thou wilt knele down and
aske me forgyfnes/and knowleche the[e] to be ouercomen/yet
though thou be euyl/yet I wyl spare the[e]/for my conscience
counseylleth me/I shold not gladly slee no man/

Isegrym wende wyth thyse mockyng and spytous wordes
to haue goon out of his wytte/And that dered hym so moche
that he wyste not what to saye buff ne haff/he was so angry
in his herte/The woundes that reynart had gyuen hym
bledde and smarted sore/And he thought how he myghte
best auenge it.

Wyth grete angre he lyft vp his foot and smote the foxe
on the heed so grete a stroke/that he fyl to the
ground/tho sterte the wulf to[o] and wende to haue take
hym/but the foxe was lyght and wyly and roose lyghtly vp
and mette wyth hym fiersly and there began a felle bataylle
whiche dured longe/the wulf had grete spyte on the foxe as
it wel semed/he sprange after hym x tymes eche after other/
and wold fayn haue had hym faste/but his skyn was so
slyper and fatte of the oyle that alway he escaped fro hym O
so subtyl and snelle was the foxe/that many tymes whan the
wulf wende wel to be sure of hym/he sterte thenne bytwene
his legges and vnder his bely and thenne torned he agayn and

Trans. by
W. Caxton
June 1481.

ISEGRIM SMITES REYNARD TO THE GROUND.] 107

gaf the wulf a stroke wyth his tail ful of pysse in his eyen that Isegrym wende he sholde haue loste his syght / and this dyde he often tymes / And alwey whan he had so smyten hym thenne wolde he goo aboute the wynde and reyse the duste / that it made his eyen ful of stufs / Isegrym was woo begon / and thought he was at an afterdele / yet was his strengthe and myght moche more than the foxes / Reynard had many a sore stroke of hym / whan he raught hym / They gaf eche other many a stroke and many a byte whan they saw theyr auantage / And eche of hem dyde his best to destroye that other / I wold I myght see suche abaytaylle / that one was wyly / and that other was stronge / that one faught wyth strengthe / and that other with subtylte.

He wulf was angry that the foxe endured so longe ayenst hym yf his formest feet had ben hole / the foxe had not endured so longe / but the sores were so open that he myght not wel renne / And the foxe myght better of[f] and on than he / And also he swange his tayl wyth pysse ofte vnder his eyen / and made hym that hym thoughte that his eyen shold goo out /

Atte laste he sayd to hym self / I wyl make an ende of this bataylle / How longe shal this caytyf dure thus ayenst me / I am so grete / I shold yf I laye vpon hym presse hym to deth / hit is to me a grete shame that I spare hym so longe / Men shal mocke and poynte me wyth fyngres to my shame and rebuke for I am yet on the werst syde / I am sore wounded / I blede sore / and he drowneth me / wyth his pysse / and caste so moche dust and sande in myne eyen / that hastely I shal not conne see / yf I suffre hym ony lenger / I wyl sette it in auenture / and seen what shal come therof /

wyth that he smote wyth his foot reynard on the heed that he fyll down to the ground And er he cowde aryse he caught hym in his feet and laye vpon hym as he wold haue pressed hym to deth. Tho began the foxe to be a ferd. and so were alle his frendis whan they sawe hym lye vnder. And on that other syde alle ysegryms frendes were ioyeful and glad. The foxe defended hym faste wyth his claws as he laye vward wyth his feet. And gaf hym many a clope. The wulf durste not wyth his feet doo hym moche harme but wyth his teeth snatched at hym as he wold haue

byten hym. whan the foxe sawe that he shold be byten and was in grete drede. he smote the wulf in the heed wyth his formest clawes and tare the skynne of[f] bytwene his browes and hys eeres. and that one of his eyen henge out. Whiche dyde hym moche payne he howlyd. he wepte he cryde lowde. and made a pyteuous noyse for the blode rann doun as it had ben a streme

How the fore beyng vnder the wulf wyth flaterynge wordes glosed hym. that the fore cam to his aboute agayn. capitulo xl^o

THe wulf wyped his eyen. the foxe was glad whan he sawe that he wrastled so sore / that he sprang on his feet whyles he rubbed his eyen / the wulf was not well plesyd therwyth alle / And smote after hym er he escaped and caught hym in his armes and helde hym faste / notwythstandyng that he bledde / Reynard was woo thenne / There wrastled they longe and sore / The wulf waxe so angry that he forgat al his smarte and payne and threw the foxe al plat vnder hym / whiche cam hym euyl to passe / ffor his one hand by whiche he deffended hym sterte in the fallyng in to ysegryms throte / and thenne was he aferd to lese his hand /

The wulf sayd tho to the foxe / Now chese whether ye wyl yelde yow as ouercome / or ellis I shal certaynly slee yow / the skateryng of the dust / thy pysse / thy mockyng ne thy deffence / ne alle thy false wylys / may not now helpe the[e] / thou mayste not escape me / Thou hast here to fore don me so moche harme and shame / and now I haue lost myne one eye / and therto sore woundeed /

Whan reynard herde that it stode so rowme / that he shold chese to knowleche hym ouercomen and yelde hym / Or ellis to take the deth / he thought the choys was worth ten marke / And that he muste saye that one or that other / he had anon concluded what he wold saie / and began to saye to hym wyth fayr wordes in this wyse /

Dere eme I wyl gladly become your man wyth alle my good / And I wyl goo for you to the holy graue / and shal gete pardon and wynnynge for your cloistre / of alle the chyrches that ben in the holy lande / Whiche shal moche prouffyte to your sowle

and your elders sowles also / I trowe ther was neuer suche a
prouffre / prouffred to ony kynge / And I shal serue you / lyke as
I shold serue our holy fader the pope / I shal holde of you al
that I haue and euer ben your seruaunt and forth I shal make
that al my lignage shal do in lyke wyse / Thenne shal ye be a
lord a boue alle lordes / who shold thenne dare doo ony thyng
ayenst you / And furthermore what someuer I take of polaylle /
ghees / partrych or plouyer / fysshe or flesshe or what someuer
it be / therof shal ye fyrst haue the choys / and your wyf and
your chyldren / er ony come in my body / Therto I wyl alway
abyde by you / that where ye be ther shal no hurte ne scathe
come to yow / ye be strong and I am wyly / late vs abyde to
gydre / that one wyth the counseyl and that other wyth the
dede / then may ther nothyng mysfalle to vs ward / and we
ben so nygh of kynne eche to other / that of right shold be no
angre bytwene vs / I wold not haue foughten ayenst yow yf I
myght haue escaped / But ye appeled me fyrst vnto fyghte /
Tho muste I doo / that I not doo wold gladly / And in this
bataylle I haue ben curtoys to yow / I haue not yet shewde
the vtterist of my myght on yow / like as I wold haue doon yf
ye had ben a straunger to me / ffor the neuwe ought to spare
the eme / it is good reson and it ought so to bee / Dere eme so
haue I now doo / And that maye ye marke wel whan I ran to
for yow. myn herte wold not consente therto. ffor I myght
haue hurte yow moche more than I dyde. but I thought it
neuer ffor I haue not hurte yow ne don yow so moche harm
that may hyndre yow sauf only that myshappe that is
fallen on your eye / ach therefore I am sory and suffre moche
sorow in my herte. I wold wel dere Eme that it had not
happed yow. But that it had fallen on me. so that ye ther
wyth had ben plesyd. how be it. that ye shal haue therby a
grete auantage. For whan ye here after slepe ye nede not
to shette but one wyndowe. where another muste shette two.
My wyf and my children. and my lignage shal falle downn to
your feet / to fore the kynge and to fore alle them that ye
wyl desyre and praye yow humbly / that ye wyl suffre reynart
your neuwe lyue and also I shal knowleche ofte to haue
trespaced ayenst yow / and what lesynges I haue lyed vpon
yow / How myght ony lord haue more honour than I proffre
yow / I wold for no good do this to another / therefore I praye
yow to be plesyd here wyth al

Wote wel yf ye wolde ye myght now slee me / but
and ye so don had / what had ye wonne / so muste ye
euer after this tyme kepe yow fro my frendes and
lignage / Therefore he is wyse that can in his angre / mesure
hym self and not be ouer hasty / and to see wel what may
falle or happe afterward to hym / what man that in his angre
can wel aduyse hym certaynly he is wyse / Men fynde many
fooles that in hete hasten hem so moche / that after they
repente hem / and thenne it is to[o] late / but dere Eme
I trowe that ye be to[o] wyse so to doo / hit is better to haue
prys honour / reste / and pees / And many frendes that be redy
to helpe hym / than to haue shame / hurte / vnreste / and also
many enemyes lyeng in a wayte to doo / hym harme / Also it
is lityl worship to hym that hath ouercomen aman / thenne to
slee hym / it is grete shame / not for my lyf / Though I were
deed / that were a lityll hurte.

Segrym the wulf said / Ay / theef how fayn woldest
thow he losed and dyscharged fro me / that here I wel
by thy wordes / were thou now fro me on thy free feet /
Thou woldest not sette by me an egge shelle / Though thou
promysedest to me alle the world of fyn rede gold / I wold not
late the[e] escape / I sette lityl by the[e] and alle thy frendes
and lignage / Alle that thou hast here said is but lesyngis and
fayned falsenes / Wenest thou thus to deceyue me / it is longe
syth that I knewe the[e] / I am no byrde to be locked ne take by
chaf / I know wel ynowh good corn / O how woldest thou
mocke me / yf I lete the[e] thus escape / thou myghtest wel haue
said this to one that knewe the[e] not / but to me thou locest
thy flatteryng and swete floytyng / ffor I vnderstande to[o] wel
thy subtyl lyeng talys / Thow haste so ofte deceyued me / that
me behoueth now to take good hede of the[e]. Thou false
stynkvng knaue thou saist that thou hast spared me in this
batayl. loke hetherward to me / is not myn one eye out / and
therto hast thou wounded me in xx places in my heed. thou
woldest not suffre me so longe to reste. as to take ones my
breeth. I were ouer moche a fool yf I shold now spare the[e].
or be mercyful to the[e]. so many a confusion and shame as thou
hast don to me. and that also that toucheth me most of alle.
that thou hast disworshipped me and sklaundred erswyn my
wyf. Whom I loue as wel as my self. and falsely forsest and

deceyuedest her. whiche shal neuer out of my herte. ffor as ofte as it cometh to myn mynde/alle myn angre and hate that I haue to the e] reneweth.

In the mene w[h]ylle that ysegrym was thus spekyng. The foxe bithoughte hym how he myght helpe hym self. And stack his other hond after bytwene his legges. And grepe the wulf fast by the colyons. And he wronge hem so sore that for woo and payne/he muste crye lowde and howle / Thenne the foxe drewe his other hond out of his mouth / The wulf had so moche payne and anguyssh of the sore wryngyng that the foxe dowed and wronge his genytours / that he spytte blood / And for grete payne he byshote hym self

**How ysegrym the wulf was ouercomen and how
the batayl was taken vp and fynysshid / And how the
fore had the worship capitulo** rlj^o

THis payne dyde hym more sorow and woo / than his eye dyde that so sore bledde / and also it made hym to ouerthrowe alle in a swowne ffor he had so moche bledde / and also the threstyng that he suffred in his colyons made hym so faynt that he had lost his myght. Thenne reynard the foxe lepe vpon hym wyth al his myght / And caught hym by the legges and drewe hym forth thurgh the felde / that they alle myght see it / and he stack and smote hym sore / Thenne were ysegryms frends al ful of sorowe / and wente al wepyng vnto theyr lord the kynge / And prayde hym that he wold doo sece the batayll and take it vp in to his hande /

The kynge graunted it / and thenne wente the kepars / of the felde the lupaerd and the lossem and saide to the foxe and to the wulf / Our lord the kynge wil speke wyth yow / and wyl that this batayl be ended / he wil take it in to his hand / he desyreth that ye wyl gyue your stryf vnto hym ffor yf ony of yow here were slayn / it shold be grete shame on bothe sydes / For ye haue as moche worship of this felde as ye may haue /

and they sayde to the foxe / Alle the bestis gyue to yow the prys / that haue seen this bataylle /

The foxe said therof I thanke hem/and what that shal
plese my lord to commande that shal not I gaynsaye/
I desire no better/but to haue wonne the felde/late my
frendes come hether to me/I wil take aduys of them what
I shal doo/

They saide/that they thought it good/And also it was
reson in weyghty maters a man shold take aduys of his
frendes/

thenne cam dame slopecade/and grymbert the dasse her
husbond /dame rukenawe wyth her ij susters /Byteluys
and fulrompe her ij sones and hatenet her doughter/the
flyndermows and the wezel/And ther cam moo than xx/
whiche wolde not haue comen yf the foxe had loste the feeld.
So who that wynneth and cometh to hys aboue. he geteth
grete loos and worship/And who that is ouer throwen* And
hath the werse. to hym wyl no man gladly come. Ther cam
also to the foxe/the beuer. the otter and bothe theyr wyues
panthecrote and ordecale. And the ostrole. the Martre the
fychews. the fyret. the mowse. and the squyrel and many
moo than I can name. And alle bycause he had wonne
the feeld. ye[a] some cam that to fore had complayned on
hym and were now of his next kynne. and they shewde
hym right frendly chier and contenance. Thus fareth the
world now. who that is riche and hye on the wheel. he hath
many kynnesmen and frendes* that shal helpe to bere out his
welthe. But who that is nedy and in payne or in pouerte.
fyndeth but fewe frendes and kynnesmen* ffor euery man
almost es[c]heweth his companye and waye.

There was thenne grete feste/they blewe vp trompettis and
pyped wyth shalmoyses/

They sayden alle dere neüew blessyd be god that ye haue
sped wel/we were in grete drede and fere whan we saw yow
lye vnder/

reynart the foxe thanked alle them frendly/and resceyued
them wyth grete Ioye and gladnes/Thenne he asked of them
what they counseyllid hym /yf he sholde gyue the felde vnto
the kyng or noo/

Dame slopecade sayde /ye[a] hardely cosyn /Ye may wyth
worship wel sette in it to his handes/And truste hym wel
ynough/

Thoo wente they alle wyth the kepars of the felde vnto the

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kynges/ And Reynard the foxe wente to fore them alle/ wyth
trompes and pypes and moche other mynstralcye/ The foxe
kneled down to fore the kynges/

The kynges bad hym stande vp/ and said to hym/ reynard
ye be now loyeful/ ye haue kepte your day worshipfully/ I
discharge yow. and late yow goo frely quyte where it plesyth
yow/ And the debate bytwene yow I holde it on me/ And shal
discusse it by reson and by counseyl of noble men and wil
ordeyne therof that ought be doon by reson. at suche tyme as
ysegrym shal be hool. And thenne I shal. sende for yow to
come to me. And thenne by goddes grace I shal yeue out
the sentence and Iugement.

An ensample that the fore told to the kynges whan
he had wonne the feide. capitulo xliij^o

MY worthy and dere lord the kynges. saide the foxe
I am wel a greed and payd therwyth. But whan I
cam fyrst in to your court. ther wer many that
were felle and enuyous to me. Whiche neuer had
hurte ne cause of scathe by me/ but they thought that they
myght beste ouer me/ And alle they cryden wyth myn
enemyes ayenst me/ and wold fayn haue destroyed me/
by cause they thought that the wulf was better withholden
and gretter wyth you than I was whiche am your humble
subget/ They knewe none other thyng why ne wherfore/ They
thoughte not as the wyse be woned to doo/ that is what the
ende may happen/

My lorde thise ben lyke a grete heep of houndes whiche
I ones sawe stonde at a lordes place vpon a donghil/ where
as they awayted that men sholde brynge them mete/ Thenne
saw they an hound come out of the kyche/ and had taken
there a fayr rybbe of beef er it was gyuen hym/ And he
ran fast away wyth all/ but the cook had espyed or he wente
away/ and toke a grete bolle full of scaldyng water/ and caste
it on his hyppes behynde/ Wherof he thankyd nothyng the
cook/ ffor the heer behynde was skalded of/ And his skyn
semed as it had be thurgh soden/ Neuertheless he escaped
away/ and kepte that he had wonne/

And whan his felaws the other houndes saw hym come

wyth this fayr rybbe / They called hym alle and saide to hym /
O howe good a frende is the cook to the[e] / Whiche hath gyuen
to the[e] so good a boone / Wheron his so moche flessch /

The hounde saide ye knowe nothyng therof / Ye preyse
me lyke as ye see me to fore wyth the bone / But ye haue
not seen me behynde / take hede and beholde me afterwarde
on myn buttokkis. And thenne ye shal knowe how I haue
deseruyd it.

And whan they had seen hym behynde on his hyppes how
that his skynne and his flessch was al rawe and thurgh soden /
tho growled them alle and were aferd of that syedyng water /
and wold not of his felawship / but fledde and ran away from
hym / and lete hym ther allone /

SEe my lord this right haue thise false beestis / whan
they be made lordes and may gete their desire / and
whan they be myghty and doubted / thenne ben they
extorcionners and scatte and pylle the peple / and eten them
lyke as they were forhongred houndes / These ben they that
bere the bone in her mouth / Noman dar haue to doo wyth
hem / but preyse alle that they bedryue / Noman dar saye
other wyse / but suche as shal plese hem by cause they wold
not be shorn / and somme helpe them forth in theyr vnryghtwys
dedes by cause they wold haue parte and lykke theyr fyngres /
and strengthe them in theyr euyl lyf and werkis / O dere
lorde how lytyl seen they that do thus after behynde them
what the ende shal be atte laste they fal fro hye to lowe in
grete shame and sorowe / and thenne theyr weerkis come to
knowleche and be opene in suche wyse that noman hath
pyte ne compasconn on them / in theyr meschief and trouble /
and euery man curse them and saye euyl by them to their
shame and vylanye / many of suche haue ben blamed and
shorn ful nyghe that they had no worshipe ne prouffyt / but
lose theyr heer as the hound dyde. that is theyr frendes.
whiche haue holpe them to couere their mysdedes and
extorconns. lyke as the heer coueryth the skynn / And wehan
they haue sorow and shame for theyr olde trespaces. thenne
eche body pluckyth his hand fro hym. And flee. lyke as the
houndes dyde fro hym that was scalded wyth the syedyng
water / and lete hym thise extorcions in her sorow and nede /

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REYNARD MADE ONE OF THE KING'S JUSTICES.] 115

MY dere lorde kynge I beseche you to remembre this example of me/it shal not be ayenst your worship ne wysedom / What wene ye how many ben ther suche false extorcionners now in thise dayes / ye[a] moche werse than an hound / that bereth suche a bone in his mouth / in townes / in grete lordes courtes / whiche wyth grete facing and bracyng oppresse the poure peple wyth grete wronge / and selle theyr fredom and pryuelages / and bere them on hond of thyngis that they neuer knewe ne thoughte / And all for to gete good for theyr synguler proffyte / God gyue them all shame and soone destroye them who somme euer they be that so doo /

but god be thanked said the foxe / ther may noman endwyte me ne my lygnage ne kynne of suche werkys / but that we shal acquyte vs / And comen in the lyghte / I am not a ferd of ony / that can saye on me ony thyng that I haue don otherwyse than a trewe man ought to doo / Alleway the foxe / shall a byde the foxe though alle his enemyes hadde sworn the contrarye / My dere lorde the kynge I loue you wyth my herte aboue alle lordes / And neuer for noman wold I torne fro yow / But abyde by yow to the utterist how wel it hath ben otherwyse enformed your hyenes / I haue neuertheles always do the best / and forth so wylle doo alle my lyf that I can or may /

**Howe the kyng forgaf the fore alle thyngis / and
made hym souerayn and grettest ouer al his
landes. ca° clij°**

He kynge sayde Reynard ye be one of them that oweth me homage· whiche I wyl that ye allway so doo. And also I wylle that erly and late ye be of my counseyl. and one of my Iustyses / See wel to[o] that ye not mysdoo / ne trespace nomore. I sette yow agayn in alle your myght and power. lyke as ye were to fore and see that ye further alle maters to the beste righte· For whan ye sette your wytte and counseyl to vertue and goodnesse· thenne may not our court be wythout your aduyse and counseyl. ffor here is non that is lyke to yow in sharp and hye counseyll ne subtyller in fyndyng a remedye for a

meschief. And thynke ye on th[e]example that ye yourself haue tolde. And that ye haunte rightwysnes and be to me trewe. I will frohens forth werke and doo by your aduyse and counseyll. he lyueth not that yf he mysdede yow. But I shold sharply aduenge and wreke it on hym ye shalle oueralle speke and saye my wordes. And in alle my lande shall ye be aboute alle other souerayne and my bayle. That Offyce I gyue yow. ye may wel occupye it wyth worship/

Alle reynardis frendis and lignage thanketh the kynge heyly/

The kynge sayde/I wolde doo more ffor your sake /than ye wene/I pray yow alle that ye remembre hym that he be trewe /

Dame rukenawe thenne sayd yes sykerly my lord /that shal he euer be/And thynke ye not the contrary/for yf he were otherwyse/He were not of our kynne ne lignage And I wold euer myssake hym /and wold euer hyndre hym to my power /

Reynart the foxe thanked the kynge with fayr curtoys wordes/And sayd /dere lorde I am not worthy to haue the worship that ye doo to me/I shal thynke theron and be trewe to you also longe as I lyue/and shal gyue you as holsom holsom counseyl as shal be expedient to your good grace / here wyth he departed wyth his frendes fro the kynge /



Now herke how Isegrym the wulf dyde /bruyn the bere /thybert the catte /and erswynde and her chyldren wyth their lignage drewen the wulf out of the felde /and leyde hym vpon a lyter of heye /and couerd hym warm /and loked to his woundes whiche were wel. xxv and ther came wyse maistres and surgyens. Whiche bonde them and weeshe hem he was so seke and feble /that he had lost his felynge /But they rubbed and wryued hym vnder his temples and eyen /that he sprange out of his swound /and cryde so lowde that alle they were aferde /they had wende that he had been wood

But the maistres gaf hym a drynke that comforted his herte and made hym to slepe They comforted his wyf /And tolde to her that ther was no deth wounde ne paryl of his lyf Thenne the court brake vp /and the beestis departed and wente to their places and homes that they came froo.

How the fore wyth his frendis and lignage departed
nobly fro the kynge / and wente to his castel
malleperduys / capitulo clijj^o

BEynart the foxe toke his leue honestly of the kynge and of the quene. And they bad hym he shold not tarye longe. But shortly retorne to them agayn. he answerd and said dere kynge and quene alway at your commandement I shal be redy / yf ye nede ony thyng whiche god forbede I wold alway be redy wyth my body and my good to helpe yow / and also al my frendes and lignage in lyke wyse shal obeye your commandement and desire / ye haue hyely deseruyd it / god quyte it yow and yeue yow grace longe to lyue / And I desyre your licence and leue to goo home to my wyf and chyldren / And yf your good grace wil ony thyng / late me haue knowleche of it And ye shal fynde me alway redy / Thus departed the foxe wyth fayr wordes fro the kynge.

Now who that coude sette hym in reynardis crafte / and coude behaue hym in flatteryng and lyeng as he dyde / he shold I trowe be herde / bothe wyth the lordes spyrytuel and temporel / The[y] ben many and also the moste parte that crepe after his waye and his hole / The name that was gyuen to hym abydeyth alway styлле wyth hym / he hathe leste many of his crafte in this world / Whiche allewaye wexe and become myghty / for who that wyl not vse reynardis crafte now is nought worth in the world now in ony estate that is of myght. But yf he can crepe in reynardis nette / and hath ben his scoler / thenne may he dwelle with vs / For thenne knoweth he wel the way how he may aryse / And is sette vp aboue of euery man / Ther is in the world moche seed left of the foxe / whiche now oueral groweth and cometh sore vp / though they haue no rede berdes / Yet ther ben founden mo foxes now than euer were here to fore / The ryghtwys peple ben al loste / trouthe and rightwysnes ben exyled and fordriuen / And for them ben abyden wyth vs couetyse / falshede / hate and enuye / Thyse reyne now moche in euery contre / For is it in the popes court / the emperours / the kynges / dukes or ony

other lordes where someuer it be eche man laboureth to put other out fro his worship / offyce and power / for to make hym sylf to clymme hie with lyes / with flater yng / wyth symonye / wyth money / or wyth strengthe and force / ther is none thyng byloued ne knowen in the court now adays but money / the money is better byloued than god / For men doo moche more therefore / ffor who someuer bryngeth money. shal be wel receyuyd and shal haue alle his desyre / is it of lordes or of ladyes or any other / that money doth moche harme / Money bryngeth many in shame and drede of lyf / and bryngeth false wytnes ayenst true peple for to gete money. Hit causeth vnclennes of lyuyng lyeng. and lecherye. Now clerkes goon to rome / to parys and to many another place. for to lerne reynardis crafte / is he clerke / is he laye man / eueriche of them tredeth in the foxes path. and seketh his hole. The world is of suche condycion now. that euery man seketh hym self in alle maters. I wote not what ende shal come to vs herof Alle wyse men may sorowe wel herfore. I fere that for the grete falsenes thefte robberye and murdre that is now vsed so moche and comonly. and also the vnshamefast lecherye and auoultry bosted blowen a brood with the auaunt yng of the same. that wythout grete repentaunce and penaunce therfore / that god will take vengeance and punyssh she vs sore therfore / whom I humbly beseche and to whom nothyng is hyd that he wylle gyue vs grace to make amendes to hym therfore / and that we maye rewle vs to his playsyr /

And her wyth wil I leue ffor what haue I to wryte of these mysdedis / I haue ynnowh to doo with myn owne self / And so it were better that I helde my pees and suffre / And the beste that I can doo for to amende my self now in this tyme. And so I counseyle euery man to doo here in this present lyf / and that shal be most our prouffyt / For after this lyf / cometh no tyme that we may occupye to our auantage for to amende vs ffor thenne shal euery man answeere for hym self and bere his own burthen /

Reynardis frendes and lignage to the nombre of xl haue taken also theyr leue of the kyng / And wente alle to gydre wyth the foxe / whiche was right glad that he

had so wel sped/And that he stode so wel in the kynges grace. he thought that he had no shame. but that he was so grete with the kyng that he myght helpe and further his frendes/and hyndre his enemyes/and also to doo what he wolde. wythout he sholdbe blamed yf he wold be wyse/

The ffoxe and his frendis wente so longe to gydre that they camen to his burgh to Maleperduys. ther they alle toke leue eche of other wyth fayr and courtoys wordes/Reynard dyde to them grete reuerence and thanked them alle frendly. of theyr good fayth and alsoworship that they had don and shewd to hym. And profred to eche of them his seruyse yf they had nede wyth body and goodes/And herwyth they departed and eche of them wente to theyr own howses/

The foxe wente to dame ermelyn his wyf whiche welcomed hym frendly he tolde to her and to his chyldren/alle the wonder/that to hym was befallen in the court. And forgate not a worde/but tolde to them eury dele/how he had escaped/Thenne were they glad that theyr fader was so enhaunsed and grete wyth the kyng/And the foxe lyued forthon wyth his wyf and his chyldren in great Ioye and gladnes/

Now who that said to yow of the ffoxe more or lesse than ye haue herd or red/I holde it for lesynge/but this that ye haue herd or red/that may ye byleue wel/and who that byleueth it not/is not therfore out of the right byleue/how be it ther be many yf that they had seen it/they shold haue the lasse doubte of it/for ther ben many thynges in the world whiche ben byleuyd though they were neuer seen/Also ther ben many fygyres/playes founden/that neuer were done ne happed/But for an example to the peple/that they may ther by the better/vse and folowe vertue/and t[o]eschewe synne and vyces/in lyke wyse may it be by this booke/that who that wyl rede this mater/though it be of iapes and bourdes/yet he may fynde therin many a good wysedom and lernynges/By whiche he may come to vertue and worship. Ther is no good man blamed herein/hit is spoken generally/Late eury man take his owne part as it belongeth and behoueth/and he that fyndeth hym gylty in ony dele or part therof/late hym bettre and amende hym And he that is veryly good/I pray god

kepe hym therin And yf ony thyng be said or wreten herin /
that may greue or dysplease ony man / blame not me / but the
foxe / for they be his wordes and not myne /

Prayeng alle them that shal see this lytyl treatis / to correcte
and amende / Where they shal fynde faute / For I haue not
added ne mynussed but haue folowed as nyghe as I can
my cople whiche was in dutche / and by me william Caxton
translated in to this rude and symple englyssh in th[e]abbey
of westmestre. fynnyshed the vj daye of Juyn the yere of
our lord ·M.CCCC.Lxxxj. and the xxj yere of the regne of
kyng Edward the iiijth /

Here endeth the hystorie of Reynard the fore etc.

