THE ALLEGORY 
OF LOVE: 
A STUDY IN 
MEDIEVAL TRADITION
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A GALAXY BOOK 
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I. COURTLY LOVE

"When in the world I lived I was the world's commander." SHAKESPEARE.

THE allegorical love poetry of the Middle Ages is apt to repel the modern reader both by its form and by its matter. The form, which is that of a struggle between personified abstractions, can hardly be expected to appeal to an age which holds that 'art means what it says' or even that art is meaningless—for it is essential to this form that the literal narrative and the significatio should be separable. As for the matter, what have we to do with these medieval lovers—'servants' or 'prisoners' they called themselves—who seem to be always weeping and always on their knees before ladies of inflexible cruelty? The popular erotic literature of our own day tends rather to sheikhs and 'Salvage Men' and marriage by capture, while that which is in favour with our intellectuals recommends either frank animalism or the free companionship of the sexes. In every way, if we have not outgrown, we have at least grown away from, the Romance of the Rose. The study of this whole tradition may seem, at first sight, to be but one more example of that itch for 'revival', that refusal to leave any corpse ungalvanized, which is among the more distressing accidents of scholarship. But such a view would be superficial. Humanity does not pass through phases as a train passes through stations; being alive, it has the privilege of always moving yet never leaving anything behind. Whatever we have been, in some sort we are still. Neither the form nor the sentiment of this old poetry has passed away without leaving indelible traces on our minds. We understand our present, and perhaps even our future, the better if we can succeed, by an effort of the historical imagination, in reconstructing that long-lost state of mind for which the allegorical love poem was a natural mode of expression. But we shall not
be able to do so unless we begin by carrying our attention back to a period long before that poetry was born. In this and the following chapter, I shall trace in turn the rise both of the sentiment called "Courtly Love" and of the allegorical method. The discussion will seem, no doubt, to carry us far from our main subject: but it cannot be avoided.

Every one has heard of courtly love, and every one knows that it appears quite suddenly at the end of the eleventh century in Languedoc. The characteristics of the Troubadour poetry have been repeatedly described. With the form, which is lyrical, and the style, which is sophisticated and often "aurate" or deliberately enigmatic, we need not concern ourselves. The sentiment, of course, is love, but love of a highly specialized sort, whose characteristics may be enumerated as Humility, Courtesy, Adultery, and the Religion of Love. The lover is always abject. Obedience to his lady's lightest wish, however whimsical, and silent acquiescence in her rebukes, however unjust, are the only virtues he dares to claim. There is a service of love closely modelled on the service which a feudal vassal owes to his lord. The lover is the lady's "man". He addresses her as "mimes", which etymologically represents not "my lady" but "my lord". The whole attitude has been rightly described as "a feudalisation of love". This solemn amatory ritual is felt to be part and parcel of the courtly life. It is possible only to those who are, in the old sense of the word, polite. It thus becomes, from one point of view the flower, from another the seed, of all those noble usages which distinguish the gentle from the vile in modern life. Only the courteous can love, but it is love that makes them courteous. Yet this love, though neither playful nor licentious in its expression, is always what the nineteenth century called "dishonourable" love. The poet normally addresses it as "mimes", which etymologically represents not "my lady" but "my lord". The whole attitude has been rightly described as "a feudalisation of love".

The characteristics of this sentiment, and its systematic coherence throughout the love poetry of the Troubadours as a whole, are so striking that they easily lead to a fatal misunderstanding. We are tempted to treat "courtly love" as a mere episode in literary history—an episode that we have finished with as we have finished with the peculiarities of Skaldic verse or Euphuistic prose. In fact, however, an unmistakable continuity connects the Provençal love song with the love poetry of the later Middle Ages, and thence, through Petrarch and many others, with that of the present day. If the thing at first escapes our notice, this is because we are so familiar with the erotic tradition of modern Europe that we mistake it for something natural and universal and therefore do not inquire into its origins. It seems to us natural that love should be the commonest theme of serious imaginative literature: but a glance at classical antiquity or at the Dark Ages at once shows us that what we took for "nature" is really a special state of affairs, which will probably have an end, and which certainly had a beginning in eleventh-century Provence. It seems—or it seemed to us till lately—a natural thing that love (under certain conditions) should be regarded as a noble and ennobling passion; it is only if we imagine ourselves trying to explain this doctrine to Aristotle, Virgil, St. Paul, or the author of "Beowulf", that we become aware how far from natural it is. Even our code of etiquette, with its rule that women always have precedence,
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is a legacy from courtly love, and is felt to be far from
natural in modern Japan or India. Many of the features
of this sentiment, as it was known to the Troubadours,
have indeed disappeared; but this must not blind us to
the fact that the most momentous and the most revolu­
tionary elements in it have made the background of
European literature for eight hundred years. French
poets, in the eleventh century, discovered or invented, or
were the first to express, that romantic species of passion
which English poets were still writing about in the nine­
tenth. They effected a change which has left no corner
of our minds, for a moment, nearly all that makes the food
both of modern sentimentality and modern cynicism. We
must conceive a world emptied of that ideal of 'happiness'—a
happiness grounded on successful romantic love—

which still supplies the motive of our popular fiction. In
ancient literature love seldom rises above the levels of
merry sensuality or domestic comfort, except to be treated
as a tragic madness, an érm which plunges otherwise sane
people (usually women) into crime and disgrace. Such is the
love of Medea, of Phaedra, of Dido; and such the love from
which maidens pray that the gods may protect them.1 At
the other end of the scale we find the comfort and utility
of a good wife acknowledged: Odysseus loves Penelope as
he loves the rest of his home and possessions, and Aristotle
rather grudgingly admits that the conjugal relation may
now and then rise to the same level as the virtuous friend­
ship between good men.2 But this has plainly very little

1 Euripides, Medea, IV; hippolox, 299.
2 Aristotle, Ethics, 1864 a. 441. 2 for mk 112. 143. 10.

to do with 'love' in the modern or medieval sense; and if
we turn to ancient love-poetry proper, we shall be even
more disappointed. We shall find the poets loud in their
praises of love, no doubt,

'tis love, 'tis that which brings delight

What is life without love, tra-la-la?' as the later song has
it. But this is no more to be taken seriously than the
countless panegyrics both ancient and modern on the al­
consoling virtues of the bottle. If Catullus and Propertius
vary the strain with cries of rage and misery, this is not
so much because they are romantics as because they are
exhibitionists. In their anger or their suffering they care
not who knows the pass to which love has brought them.
They are in the grip of the érm. They do not expect their
obsession to be regarded as a noble sorrow—they have no
'silks and fine array'.

Plato will not be reckoned an exception by those who
have read him with care. In the Symposium, no doubt, we
find the conception of a ladder whereby the soul may
ascend from human love to divine. But this is a ladder
in the strictest sense; you reach the higher rungs by leaving
the lower ones behind. The original object of human love
who, incidentally, is not a woman—has simply fallen out
of sight before the soul arrives at the spiritual object. The
very first step upwards would have made a courtly lover
blush, since it consists in passing on from the worship of
the beloved's beauty to that of the same beauty in others.
Those who call themselves Platonists at the Renaissance
may imagine a love which reaches the divine without aban­
doning the human and becomes spiritual while remaining
also carnal; but they do not find this in Plato. If they
read it into him, this is because they are living, like our­
selves, in the tradition which began in the eleventh
century.

Perhaps the most characteristic of the ancient writers on
love, and certainly the most influential in the Middle
Ages, is Ovid. In the piping times of the early empire—
when Julia was still unbanished and the dark figure of
Tiberius had not yet crossed the stage—Ovid sat down to
compose for the amusement of a society which well under­
stood him an ironically didactic poem on the art of seduc­
tion. The very design of his Art of Love presupposes an
audience to whom love is one of the minor peccadilloes of
life, and the joke consists in treating it seriously—in writ­
ing a treatise, with rules and examples en rigle for the nice
conduct of illicit loves. It is funny, as the ritual solemnity
of old gentlemen over their wine is funny. Food, drink,
and sex are the oldest jokes in the world; and one famili­
ary form of the joke is to be very serious about them. From
this attitude the whole tone of the Ars Amatoria flows.
In the first place Ovid naturally introduces the god Amor
with an affectation of religious awe—just as he would have
introduced Bacchus if he had written an ironic Art of
Getting Drunk. Love thus becomes a great and jealous
god, his service an arduous militia: offend him who dares,
Ovid is his trembling captive. In the second place, being
thus mockingly serious about the appetite, he
is
of neces­
sity mockingly serious about the woman. The real objects
of Ovid’s ‘love’, no doubt, he would have ordered out of
the room before the serious conversation about books,
or politics, or family affairs began. The moralist may treat
them seriously, but the man of the world (such as Ovid)
certainly does not. But inside the convention of the poem
they are the ‘demnition charmers’, the mistresses of his
fancy and the arbitresses of his fate. They rule him
with
a rod of iron, lead him a slave’s life. As a result we find
this sort of advice addressed to the ‘prentice lover:
Go early ere th’ appointed hour to meet
The fair, and long await her in
the street.
Through shoulderling crowds on all her errands run,
Though graver business wait the while undone.
If she commands your presence on her way
Home from the ball to lackey her, obey!
Or if from rural scenes she bids you, ‘Come’,
Drive if you can, if not, then walk, to Rome.

No one who has caught the spirit of the author will mis­
understand this. The conduct which Ovid recommends
is felt to be shameful and absurd, and that is precisely why
he recommends it—partly as a comic confession of the
depths to which this ridiculous appetite may bring a man,
and partly as a lesson in the art of fooling to the top of her
bent the last baggage who has caught your fancy. The
whole passage should be taken in conjunction with his
other piece of advice—‘Don’t visit her on her birthday:
it costs too much.’ But it will also be noticed—and this
is a pretty instance of the vast change which occurred
during the Middle Ages—that the very same conduct
which Ovid ironically recommends could be recommended
seriously by the courtly tradition. To leap up on errands,
to go through heat or cold, at the bidding of one’s lady,
or even of any lady, would seem but honourable and
natural to a gentleman of the thirteenth or even of the
seventeenth century; and most of us have gone shopping
in the twentieth with ladies who showed no sign of regard­
ing the tradition as a dead letter. The contrast inevitably
raises in our minds a question as to how far the whole tone
of medieval love poetry can be explained by the formula,
‘Ovid misunderstood’, and though we see at once that

1 Ars Amatoria, I. 233.

2...
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this is no solution—nor if it were granted, we should still have to ask why the Middle Ages misunderstood him so consistently—yet the thought is a good one to keep in mind as we proceed.

The fall of the old civilization and the coming of Christianity did not result in any deepening or idealizing of the conception of love. The fact is important, because it refutes two theories which trace the great change in our sentiments respectively to the Germanic temperament and to the Christian religion—especially to the cult of the Blessed Virgin. The latter view touches on a real and very complex relationship; but as its true nature will become apparent in what follows, I will here content myself with a brief and dogmatic statement. That Christianity in a very general sense, by its insistence on compassion and on the sanctity of the human body, had a tendency to soften—or at least to moderate—to some extent, the more extreme brutalities and flippancies of the ancient world in all departments of human life, and therefore also in sexual matters, may be taken as obvious. But there is no evidence that the quasi-religious tone of medieval love poetry has been transferred from the worship of the Blessed Virgin: it is just as likely—it is even more likely—that the colouring of certain hymns to the Virgin has been borrowed from the love poetry. Nor is it true in any unequivocal sense that the medieval church encouraged reverence for women at all: while it is a ludicrous error (as we shall presently see) to suppose that she regarded sexual passion, under any conditions or after any possible process of refinement, as a noble emotion. The other theory turns on a supposedly innate characteristic in the Germanic race, noted by Tacitus. But what Tacitus describes is a primitive awe of women as uncanny and probably prophetic beings, which is as remote from our comprehension as the primitive reverence for lunacy or the primitive horror of twins; and because it is thus re-

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note, we cannot judge how probably it might have developed into the medieval Frauluinn, the service of ladies. What is certain is that where a Germanic race reached its maturity untouched by the Latin spirit, as in Iceland, we find nothing at all like courtly love. The position of women in the Sagas is, indeed, higher than that to which they enjoy in classical literature; but it is based on a purely commonsensible and unemphatized respect for the courage or prudence which some women, like some men, happen to possess. The Norsemen, in fact, treat their women not primarily as women but as people. It is an attitude which may lead in the fullness of time to an equal franchise or a Married Women’s Property Act, but it has very little to do with romantic love. The final answer to both theories, however, lies in the fact that the Christian and Germanic period had existed for several centuries before the new feeling appeared. ‘Love’, in our sense of the word, is as absent from the literature of the Dark Ages as from that of classical antiquity. Their favourite stories were not, like ours, stories of how a man married, or failed to marry, a woman. They preferred to hear how a holy man went to heaven or how a brave man went to battle. We are mistaken if we think that the poet in the Song of Roland shows restraint in disposing so briefly of Ade, Roland’s betrothed. Rather by bringing her in at all, he is doing the opposite: he is expatiating, filling in details, dragging in for our delectation the most interesting after those of primary importance have had their due. Roland does not think about Ade on the battle-field; he thinks of his praise in pleasant France. The figure of the betrothed is shadowy compared with that of the friend, Oliver. The deepest of worldly emotions in this period is the love of man for man, the mutual love of warriors who die together fighting against odds, and the affection between vassal and lord. We shall never understand this last, if we think of it in the light of our own moderated and impersonal loyalties. We must

1 See p. 43.
4 Ibid. 1054.
not think of officers drinking the king's health; we must think rather of a small boy's feeling for some hero in the sixth form. There is no harm in the analogy, for the good vassal is to the good citizen very much as a boy is to a man. He cannot rise to the great abstraction of a res publica, but he loves and reverences only what he can touch and see; he loves only what he can touch and see; he loves it to allow except to sexual love, hence to the old vassal in the English poem, parted from his lord,

*The feeling is more passionate and less ideal than our patriotism. It rises more easily to heroic prodigality of service, and it also breaks more easily and turns into hatred; hence feudal history is full of great loyalties and great treacheries, Germanic and Celtic legend, no doubt, had bequeathed to the barbarians some stories of tragic love between man and woman—love 'star-crossed' and closely analogous to that of Dido or Phaedra. But the theme claims no preeminence, and when it is treated the interest turns at least as much on the resulting male feeling and the disturbance of which produced it. Ovid, too, was known to the learned; for the use of confessors. Of romance, of reverence for there is hardly a hint. The centre of gravity is elsewhere—fidelities of the feudal hall. But, as we have seen, these things about 'friendship' in the ancient world—were there more important the fact that landless knighthood—knighthood without a place in the territorial hierarchy of

Like the formula 'Ovid misunderstood', it is inadequate to explain the appearance of the new sentiment; but it goes far to explain why that sentiment, having appeared, should make haste to become a ' feudalization' of love. What is new usually wins its way by disguising itself as the old. The new thing itself, I do not pretend to explain. Real changes in human sentiment are very rare—there are perhaps three or four on record—but I believe that they occur, and that this is one of them. I am not sure that they have 'causes', if by a cause we mean something which would wholly account for the new state of affairs, and so explain away what seemed its novelty. It is, at any rate, certain that the efforts of scholars have so far failed to find an origin for the content of Provençal love poetry. Celtic, Byzantine, and even Arabic influence have been suspected; but it has not been made clear that these, if granted, could account for the results we see. A more promising theory attempts to trace the whole thing to Ovid; but this view—a view—apart from the inadequacy which I suggested above—finds itself faced with the fatal difficulty that the evidence points to a much stronger Ovidian influence in the north of France than in the south. Something can be extracted from a study of the social conditions in which the new poetry arose, but not so much as we might hope. We know that the crusading armies thought the Provençals milk-sops, but this will seem relevant only to a very hardened enemy of Frangöflästen. We know that this period in the south of France had witnessed what seemed to contemporaries a signal degeneracy from the simplicity of ancient manners and an alarming increase of luxury. But what age, what land, by the same testimony, has not? Much more important is the fact that landless knighthood—knighthood without a place in the territorial hierarchy of
feudalism—seems to have been possible in Provence. The unattached knight, as we meet him in the romances, respectable only by his own valour, amiable only by his own courtesy, predestined lover of other men’s wives, was therefore a reality; but this does not explain why he loved in such a new way. If courtly love necessitates adultery, adultery hardly necessitates courtly love. We come much nearer to the secret if we can accept the picture of a typical Provençal court drawn many years ago by an English writer, and since approved by the greatest living authority on the subject. We must picture a castle which is a little island of comparative leisure and luxury, and therefore at least of possible refinement, in a barbarous country-side. There are many men in it, and very few women—the lady, and her damsels. Around these throng the whole male society, the inferior nobles, the landless knights, the squires, and the pages—haughty creatures enough in relation to the peasantry beyond the walls, but feudally inferior to the lady as to her lord—her ‘men’ as feudal language had it. Whatever ‘courtesy’ is in the place flows from her: all female charm from her and her damsels. There is no question of marriage for most of the court. All these circumstances together come very near to being a ‘cause’; but they do not explain why very similar conditions elsewhere had to wait for Provençal example before they produced like results. Some part of the mystery remains inviolate.

But if we abandon the attempt to explain the new feeling, we can at least explain—indeed we have partly explained already—the peculiar form which it first took; the four marks of Humility, Courtesy, Adultery, and the Religion of Love. To account for the humility we need no more than has already been said. Before the coming of courtly love the relation of vassal and lord, in all its intensity and warmth, already existed; it was a mould into which romantic passion would almost certainly be poured.

And if the beloved were also the feudal superior the thing becomes entirely natural and inevitable. The emphasis on courtesy results from the same conditions. It is in courts that the new feeling arises: the lady, by her social and feudal position, is already the arbiter of manners and the scourge of ‘villainy’ even before she is loved. The association of love with adultery—an association which has lasted in continental literature down to our own times—has deeper causes. In part, it can be explained by the picture we have already drawn; but there is much more to be said about it than this. Two things prevented the men of that age from connecting their ideal of romantic and passionate love with marriage.

The first is, of course, the actual practice of feudal society. Marriages had nothing to do with love, and no ‘nonsense’ about marriage was tolerated. All matches were matches of interest, and, worse still, of an interest that was continually changing. When the alliance which had answered would answer no longer, the husband’s object was to get rid of the lady as quickly as possible. Marriages were frequently dissolved. The same woman who was the lady and ‘the dearest dread’ of her vassals was often little better than a piece of property to her husband. He was master in his own house. So far from being a natural channel for the new kind of love, marriage was rather the drab background against which that love stood out in all the contrast of its new tenderness and delicacy. The situation is indeed a very simple one, and not peculiar to the Middle Ages. Any idealization of sexual love, in a society where marriage is purely utilitarian, must begin by being an idealization of adultery.

The second factor is the medieval theory of marriage—what may be called, by a convenient modern barbarism, the ‘sexology’ of the medieval church. A nineteenth-century Englishman felt that the same passion—romantic love—could be either virtuous or vicious according as it

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1 Fauvel, op. cit., tom. i, pp. 373 et seq.
3 See Fauvel, op. cit., tom. i, pp. 497 et seq. Cf. the wooing scene in Chrétien’s Erec quoted below.
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was directed towards marriage or not. But according to the medieval view passionate love itself was wicked, and did not cease to be wicked if the object of it were your wife. If a man had once yielded to this emotion he had no choice between 'guilty' and 'innocent' love before him: he had only the choice, either of repentance, or else of different forms of guilt.

This subject will delay us for a little, partly because it introduces us to the true relations between courtly love and Christianity, and partly because it has been much misrepresented in the past. From some accounts we should conclude that medieval Christianity was a kind of Manicheism seasoned with prurience; from others, that it was a sort of carnival in which all the happier aspects of Paganism took part, after being baptized and yet losing none of their jollity. Neither picture is very faithful. The views of medieval churchmen on the sexual act within marriage (there is no question, of course, about the act outside marriage) are all limited by two complementary agreements. On the one hand, nobody ever asserted that the act was intrinsically sinful. On the other hand, all were agreed that some evil element was present in every concrete instance of this act since the Fall. It was in the effort to determine the precise nature of this concomitant evil that learning and ingenuity were expended. Gregory, at the end of the sixth century, was perfectly clear on this question: for him the act is innocent but the desire is morally evil. If we object to the conception of an intrinsic evil, provided it is 'excused' by the good ends of marriage, such as offspring;1 he goes out of his way to combat the rigorous view that a marriage caused by beauty is no marriage: Jacob, as he reminds us, married Rachel for her beauty.2 On the other hand, he is clear that if we had remained in the state of innocence we should have generated sine carnis incitamento. He differs from Gregory by considering not only the desire but the pleasure. The latter he thinks evil, but not morally evil: it is, he says, not a sin but the punishment of a sin, and thus arrives at the baffling conception of a punishment which consists in a morally innocent pleasure.3 Peter Lombard was much more coherent. He located the evil in the desire and said that it was not a moral evil, but a punishment for the Fall.4 Thus the act, though not free from evil, may be free from moral evil or sin, but only if it is 'excused by the good ends of marriage'. He quotes with approval from a supposedly Pythagorean source a sentence which is all-important for the historian of courtly love—omnis amor proprie uxoris adulter est, passionate love of a man's own wife is adultery.5 Albertus Magnus takes a much more genial view. He sweeps away the idea that the pleasure is evil or a result of the Fall: on the contrary, pleasure would have been greater if we had remained in Paradise. The real trouble about fallen man is not the strength of his pleasures but the weakness of his reason: an unfallen man could have enjoyed any degree of pleasure without losing sight, for a moment, of the First Good.6

1 Hugo of St. Victor, Sermo IV., Tract. VII, cap. 2. (The traditional attribution of this work need not, for our purpose, be questioned.)
2 Ibid. cap. 3.
3 Pet. Lomb. Sententiarum, iv, Dict. xvi; Quod non ens.
4 Ibid., De comositione cosa. For the real identity of Section (or Xynag) see Plutarch, on Unilingual, Hist. of Philosophy, vol. 1, p. 164; Cudbert E. Kiper, op. cit., 4 v. 151, 164.
5 Alb. Magnus De Fec. Legis, Summa iv, Dict. xxvii, Art. 7.

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1 Gregory to Augustine, epd. Bede, Eclog. Hist. 1, xxvi (p. 57 in Plummer's ed.). The authenticity of this letter has been questioned; but my argument does not depend on it.
The desire, as we now know it, is an evil, a punishment for the Fall, but not a sin. The conjugal act may therefore be not only innocent but meritorious, if it has the right causes—desire of offspring, payment of the marriage debt, and the like. But if desire comes first ('first' in what sense I am not quite sure) it remains a mortal sin.

Thomas Aquinas, whose thought is always so firm and clear in itself, is a baffling figure for our present purpose. He seems always to take away with one hand what he holds out to us with the other. Thus he has learned from Aristotle that marriage is a species of amicitia. On the other hand, he proves that sexual life would have existed without the Fall by the argument that God would not have given Adam a woman as a 'help' except for this purpose; for any other, a man would obviously have been so much more satisfactory. He is aware that affection between the parties concerned increases sexual pleasure, and that union even among the beasts implies a certain kindliness—amor amicitiae—and thus seems to come to the verge of the modern conception of love. But the very passage in which he does so is his explanation of the law against incest: he is arguing that unions between close kinsfolk are bad precisely because kinsfolk have mutual affection, and such affection would increase pleasure. His general view deepens and subtilizes that of Albertus. The evil in the sexual act is neither the desire nor the pleasure, but the submergence of the rational faculty which accompanies them: and this submergence, again, is not a sin, though it is an evil, a result of the Fall.

It will be seen that the medieval theory finds room for innocent sexuality: what it does not find room for is passion, whether romantic or otherwise. It might almost be said that it denies to passion the indulgence which it reluctantly accords to appetite. In its Thomist form the theory acquits the carnal desire and the carnal pleasure, and finds the evil in the ligamentum rationis, the suspension of intellectual activity. This is almost the opposite of the view, implicit in so much romantic love poetry, that it is precisely passion which purifies; and the scholastic picture of unfallen sexuality—a picture of physical pleasure at the maximum and emotional disturbance at the minimum—may suggest to us something much less like the purity of Adam in Paradise than the cold sensuality of Tiberius in Capri. It must be stated at once that this is entirely unjust to the scholastics. They are not talking about the same kind of passion as the romantics. The one party means merely an animal intoxication; the other believes, whether rightly or wrongly, in a 'passion' which works a chemical change upon appetite and affection and turns them into a thing different from either. About 'passion' in this sense Thomas Aquinas has naturally nothing to say—as he has nothing to say about the steam-engine. He had not heard of it. It was only coming into existence in his time, and finding its first expression in the poetry of courtly love.

The distinction I have just made is a fine one, even as we make it centuries after the event with all the later expressions of romantic passion in mind. Naturally it could not be made at the time. The general impression left on the medieval mind by its official teachers was that all love—at least all such passionate and exalted devotion as a courtly poet thought worthy of the name—was more wicked than it was. And this impression, combining with the nature of feudal marriage as I have already described it, produced in the poets a certain wilfulness, a readiness to emphasize rather than to collate the antagonism between their amatory and their religious ideals. Thus if the Church tells them that the ardent lover even of his own wife is in mortal sin, they presently reply with the rule of Filostrato:
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that true love is impossible in marriage. If the Church
says that the sexual act can be 'excused' only by the desire
for offspring, then it becomes the mark of a true lover,
like Chauntecleer, that he served Venus.

More for delay than world to multiply.

This cleavage between Church and court, or, in Professor
Vinaver's fine phrase, between Carbonek and Camelot,
which will become more apparent as we proceed, is the
most striking feature of medieval sentiment.

Finally we come to the fourth mark of courtly love—
its love religion of the god Amor. This is partly, as we
have seen, an inheritance from Ovid. In part it
is due to
that same law of transference which determined that all
the emotion stored in the vassal's relation to his seigneur
should transfer itself to the new kind of love: the forms
of religious emotion would naturally tend to get into the love
poetry, for the same reason. But in part (and this is,
perhaps, the most important reason of the three) this
erotic religion arises as a rival or a parody of the real re-
ligion and emphasizes the antagonism of the two ideals. The
quasi-religious tone is not necessarily strongest in the most
serious love poetry. A twelfth-century jeu d'esprit called
the Concilium in Monte Romarici is here illuminating.

In obedience to the she-cardinal, a number of the sisters
(two of whom are named) made public confession of their
principles and practice in the matter of love. It soon be-
came apparent that the convent was divided into two
distinct parties, whereof the one had been scrupulous to
admit to their favours no lover who was not a clerk (clericus),
while the other, with equal pedantry, had reserved their
kindness exclusively for knights (sllanitia). The reader,
who has doubtless grasped what kind of author we are
dealing with, will not be surprised to learn that the Cardi-
nalis domina pronounces emphatically in favour of the
clerk as the only proper lover for a nun, and urges the
heretical party to repentance. The curses denounced upon
them in case of obstinacy or lapse are very exhilarating:

In reward of their iniquity,
Terror, Travail, Grief, Anxiety,
Inuendia omniom Virgum agminibus
Lecta in medium Quem angeling
Precepta Ovidii Doctoris egregii
Legum teae proprii Poet eranecii
Era de Danubio Potei in officio
Anxia suscepit (in officio alii
Commorunt nigrae Magna virgum parvulae.
Gentes mohosanias Et amans servas
Cantorum perier.

1 Zeitschrift für deutschem Alterthum, vii, pp. 198 et seq., lines 40-72:
Invenisti sanctiss Virginesque
Lecta sunt in medium Quem angeling
Praecepta Ovidii Doctoris egregii
Legum teae proprii Poet eranecii
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Commorunt nigrae Magna virgum parvulae.
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2 Ibid., lines 51 et seq.:
Amor done sensibus Quatuor saeptam
Me non visue Rit visum inquireste.
COURTLY LOVE

Fear and Discord, Strife and Gloom,
Still attend them as their doom!
Let all those who in their blindness
Upon laymen waste their kindness
Be a scorn and execration
To the derb of every nation,
And let clerks at every meeting
Pass them by without a greeting! . . .
To which malversation we
Say Amen, so may it be!

The whole poem illustrates the influence of Ovid, and
the religion of love, very well; but it is by no means an
instance of 'Ovid misunderstood'. The worship of the god
Amor had been a mock-religion in Ovid's Art of Love. The
French poet has taken over this conception of an erotic
religion with a full understanding of its flippancy, and
proceeded to elaborate the joke in terms of the only re-
ligion he knows—medieval Christianity. The result is a
close and impudent parody of the practices of the Church,
in which Ovid becomes a doctor egregius and the Art Amo-
toria a gospel, erotic heterodoxy and orthodoxy are dis-
tinguished, and the god of Love is equipped with cardinals
and exercises the power of excommunication. The Ovi-
dian tradition, operated upon by the medieval taste for
humorous blasphemy, is apparently quite sufficient to pro-
duce a love religion, and even in a sense a Christianized
love religion, without any aid from the new seriousness
of romantic passion. As against any theory which would
derive medieval Fraualendien from Christianity and the
worship of the Blessed Virgin, we must insist that the love
religion often begins as a parody of the real religion. This
1 Ibid., vi., pp. 160, 166, 196, 216 et seq.
2 Morin, God, Time et Creation,
3 Labor, Salvation, Love et Amour,
4 Time and Eternity, Belief et Discernment,
5 Omnibus heribilibus Et abhominabilibus
6 Sempiternus Deus Qui Salvit Iacob.
7 Nostra volo res, Ars dicta obscurum.
(Am consolem omnium dicente Amo.)
8 For a discussion of its possible connexion with the mystical theology of

St. Bernard, see E. Gilson, La Theologie Mystique de St. Bernard (Paris 1934),
Appendix IV.
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Courtly love may be any of these, or any combination of them. It may even be the open enemy of religion—as when Aucassin roundly declares that he would rather follow all the sweet ladies and goodly knights to hell than go without them to heaven. The ideal lady of the old love poems is not what the earliest scholars took her to be. The more religiously she is addressed, the more irreligious the poem usually is.

I'm no the Queen o' Heavn, Thomas;
I never carried my head so hee,
For I am but a lady gay
Come out to hunt in my follce.

Before we proceed to examine two important expressions of courtly love, I must put the reader on his guard against a necessary abstraction in my treatment of the subject. I have spoken hitherto as if men first became conscious of a new emotion and then invented a new kind of poetry to express it: as if the Troubadour were necessarily 'sincere' in the crudely biographical sense of the word: as if convention played no part in literary history. My excuse for this procedure must be that a full consideration of such problems belongs rather to the theory of literature in general than to the history of one kind of poem: if we admit them, our narrative will be interrupted in every chapter by abnost metaphysical digressions. For our purpose it is enough to point out that life and letters are inextricably intermixed. If the feeling came first a literary convention would soon arise to express it: if the convention came first it would soon teach those who practised it a new feeling. It does not much matter what view we hold provided we avoid that fatal dichotomy which makes every poem either an autobiographical document or a 'literary exercise'—as if any poem worth writing were either the one or the other. We may be quite sure that the poetry which initiated all over Europe so great a change of heart was not a 'mere' convention: we can be quite as sure that it was poetry.

Before the close of the twelfth century we find the French conception of love spreading out in two directions from the land of its birth. One stream flows down into Italy and, through the poets of the Dolce Stil Nuovo, goes to swell the great sea of the Divine Comedy; and there, at least, the quarrel between Christianity and the love religion was made up. Another stream found its way northward to mingle with the Ovidian tradition which already existed there, and so to produce the French poetry of the twelfth century. To that poetry we must now turn.

II

Chrétien de Troyes is its greatest representative. His Lancelot is the flower of the courtly tradition in France, as it was in its early maturity. And yet this poet is not wholly the product of the new conceptions: when he began to write he seems scarcely to have accepted them. We must conceive him as a poet of the same type with Dryden: one of those rare men of genius who can trim their sails to every breeze of novelty without forfeiting their poetic rank. He was among the first to welcome the Arthurian stories; and to him, as much as to any single writer, we owe the colouring with which the 'matter of Britain' has come down to us. He was among the first (in northern France) to choose love as the central theme of a serious poem; such a poem he wrote in his Erec, even before he had undergone the influence of the fully developed Provençal formula. And when that influence reached him, he was not only the first, but perhaps the greatest, exponent of it to his fellow countrymen; and, combining this element with the Arthurian legend, he stamped upon men's minds literally the conception of Arthur's court as the home par excellence of true and noble love. What was theory for his own age had been practice for the knights of Britain. For it is interesting to notice

1 G. Paris, Le Conte de la Chevre (Remarque, ed). On the degree to which the new sentiment appears in the Romances of Erec and Yvain, and the influence which these works may have had on Chrétien, see Gustave Cohen, Chrétien de Troyes et ses amours, 1937, pp. 38-73 et passim.
COURTLY LOVE

that he places his ideal in the past. For him already 'the age of chivalry is dead.' It always was: let no one think the worse of it on that account. These phantom periods for which the historian searches in vain—the Rome and Greece that the Middle Ages believed in, the British past of Malory and Spenser, the Middle Age itself as it was conceived by the romantic revival—all these have their place in a history more momentous than that which commonly bears the name.

An appreciation of Chretien's work as a whole would here be out of place. That he has claims on our attention, far beyond the restricted purpose for which I cite him now, must surely be admitted. It is his fate to appear constantly in literary history as the specimen of a tendency. He has deserved better. And the tragedy of the thing is that he himself was never really subdued to that tendency. It is very doubtful whether he was ever dazzled by the tradition of romantic adultery. There are protests in Cligé which seem to come from the heart. He tells us in the opening lines of Lancelot that he wrote it at the command of the Countess of Champagne, and that she furnished him with both the story and the treatment. What does this mean? I am probably not the first reader in the opening lines of Malory and Spenser, the Middle Age itself as it was conceived by the romantic revival—all these have their place in a history more momentous than that which commonly bears the name. What does this mean? I am probably not the first reader in the opening lines of Malory and Spenser, the Middle Age itself as it was conceived by the romantic revival—all these have their place in a history more momentous than that which commonly bears the name.

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In Erec—almost certainly an early work—the later rules of love and courtesy are outraged at every turn. It is indeed a love story; but it is a story of married love. The hero has married the heroine before the main action of the poem begins. This, in itself, is an irregularity; but the method of his wooing is worse. Erec seen Enide in her father's house, and falls in love with her. There are no passages of love between them: no humility on his part, no crudity on hers. Indeed it is not clear that they converse at all. When he comes to the house, the maiden, at her father's command, leads his horse to stable and grooms it with her own hands. Later, when they are seated, the father and the guest talk of her in her presence as if she were a child or an animal. Erec asks her in marriage, and the father consents. It does not seem to occur to the lover that the lady's will could be a relevant factor in this arrangement. We are given to understand that she is pleased, but only a passive role is expected of her, or indeed
allowed to her. The whole scene, however true it may be to the marriage practices of the time, is strangely archaic compared with the new ideals of love. We are back in a world where women are merely the mute objects of gift or barter, not only in the eyes of their fathers, but even in the eyes of their lovers. When we pass on to the main story, this lack of 'courtesy' is even more striking. The tale of Erec's behavior to his wife will be familiar to every one from Tennyson's *Geraint and Enid*. Chretien renders it more credible by following a version in which the plot does not turn wholly on the absurd device of a soliloquy overheard, and in which the husband has subtler and truer motives for his anger than Tennyson can give him. But this does not alter the inherent brutality of the theme. The story belongs to the same general type as that of Griselda—the story of wifely patience triumphing over ordeals imposed by the irresponsible husband—and, as such, it cannot possibly reconcile itself with even the most moderate ideal of courtesy. But Erec does not confine his discourtesy within the limits of the ordeal. Just as he had allowed Enide to groom his horse for him before their marriage, so, in their journeyings, he lets her watch and hold the horse all night, while he himself sleeps at ease beneath the cloak which she has taken from her own back to cover him.

When we turn to the *Lancelot* all this is changed. The Chretien of *Lancelot* is first and foremost the Chretien who has translated Ovid's *Ars Amoris*, and who lives at the court of my lady of Champagne—herself an ultimate authority on all questions of courtly love. As against the married life of Erec and Enide we have the secret love of Lancelot and Guinevere. The story turns mainly on the Queen's captivity in the mysterious land of Gorre, where those that are native can go both in and out but strangers can only go, and on her rescue thence by Lancelot. It

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1 A soliloquy is overheard in Chretien, but it is the romidling conversation which matters (Erec, 953-83).  
2 Erec, 309-10.  
3 C樨, 3.  
4 *Lancelot*, 1769 et seq.
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Lancelot very chere makesk
Yet by a lover he taketh
In meeknesse and sevyth humblely.

'Dame, I am grieved certesly;
Yet for the cause of your chiding,
I dar nat asken for no thing'.

Greet playnte tho to make him liste
If that the Queen wolde his liere,
But to encrose his were and wo,
She yeveth him no wordes mo.

Into a house she paceth nouthe,
And ever as forthrow as he couthe
'This Lancelot with eyes two
His folowed and with herte also'.

It is only later that he learns the cause of all this cruelty.
The Queen has heard of his momentary hesitation int the
stepping on to the tumbril, and this lukewarmness in the
service of love has been held by her sufficient to annihilate
all the merit of his subsequent labours and humiliations.

Even when he is forgiven, his trials are not yet at an end.
The tournament at the close of the poem gives Guinevere
another opportunity of exercising her power. When he
has already entered the
list, in disguise, and all, as usual,
is going down before him, she sends him a message ordering
him to do his poorest. Lancelot obediently lets himself be
unhorsed by the next knight that comes against him, and

The submission which Lancelot shows in his actions is
accompanied, on the subjective side, by a feeling that
deliberately ape religious devotion. Although his love is
by no means supersensual and is indeed carnally rewarded
in this very poem, he is represented as treating Guinevere
with sainty, if not divine, honours. When he comes before
the bed where she lies he kneels and adores her: as Chretien
elegantly tells us, there is no correpty in whom he has
greater faith. When he leaves her chamber he makes a
genuflexion as if he were before a shrine. The irreligion
of the religion of love could hardly go further. Yet
Chretien—whether he is completely unconscious of the
paradox, or whether he wishes, clumsily enough, to make
some amends for these revolting passages—represents his
Lancelot as a pious man and
goes out of his
way to show
his piety.

Chretien de Troyes, judged by modern standards, is
on the whole an objective poet. The adventures still occupy
the greater part of his stories. By the standard of his own
times, on the other hand, he must have appeared strikingly
subjective. The space devoted to action that goes forward
only in the souls of his characters was probably beyond all
medieval precedent. He was one of the first explorers
of the human heart, and is therefore rightly to be num
bered among the fathers of the novel of sentiment. But

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these psychological passages have usually one characteristic which throws special light on the subject of this book. Chrétiens can hardly turn to the inner world without, at the same time, turning to allegory. No doubt the Provencals here served him as a model; no doubt both the poet and his audience loved the method for its own sake, and found it clever and refined. Yet it would not surprise us if Chrétiens found some difficulty in conceiving the inner world on any other terms. It is as if the insensible could not yet knock at the doors of the poetic consciousness without transforming itself into the likeness of the sensible: as if men could not easily grasp the reality of moods and emotions without turning them into shadowy persons. Allegory, besides being many other things, is the subjectivism of an objective age. When Lancelot hesitates before mounting the cart, Chrétiens represents his indecision as a debate between Reason which forbids, and Love which urges him on. A later poet would have told us directly—though not, after all, without metaphor—what Lancelot was feeling: an earlier poet would not have attempted such a scene at all. In another place Lancelot is asked by a lady for the head of a knight whom he has just disabled. The knight begs for mercy, and two duties within the chivalrous code are thus brought into collision. The resulting state of Lancelot’s mind becomes for Chrétiens a debate between Largesse and Pite. Each fears defeat and between them they hold him a prisoner. Again, in Twain, where Gawain and the hero, who are fast friends, meet without recognition and fight, the contrast between their amicable intentions and their hostile acts is worked up into a very elaborate allegory of Love and Hate—Hate looking from the windows, Hate mounting into the saddle, while Love (here used in its larger sense), who shares the same house, is upbraided for skulking in an inner room and not coming to the rescue. This certainly seems frigid to a modern reader, and does not rise as naturally from the

1 Lancelot, 549 et sq.
2 Ibid., 2446-47.
3 Twain, 600 et seq.
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confesses that love chastens him thus in order to instruct him. 'Let him do with me as he will, for I am his.' Sondamours, in the same poem, acknowledges that Love has humbled her pride by force, and doubts whether such exerted service will find favour. In the same spirit Yvain determines to offer no resistance to his passion; not only to resist love, but even to yield unwillingly, is an act of treason against the god. Those who have thus sinned against him deserve no happiness. In Lancastor the same doctrine is carried further. It is only the noblest hearts which Love deigns to enslave, and a man should prize himself the more if he is selected for such service. We find also the conception of lovers as the members of an order of Love, modelled upon the orders of religion: of an art of Love, as in Ovid; and of a court of Love, with solemn customs and usages, modelled upon the feudal courts of the period. It will be seen that no final distinction is possible between the erotic religion, the erotic allegory, and the erotic mythology.

In Chrétien de Troyes we see the developed theory of love put into action in the course of stories. His teaching takes the form of example rather than precept, and, to do him justice, the purely narrative interest is never for long subordinated to the didactic. Having thus studied the new ideal in the OTH, embodied and partly concealed in story, we naturally look next for a professedly theoretical work out at once the kind of love that is called 'Platonic'. Such a work is ready for us in the De Arte Honesta Amanti of Andreas Capellanus. It was probably written early in the thirteenth century, and is in Latin prose. The style is agreeable and easy, though the author's favourite verse often makes his sentences end like hexameters in a way strange to classical ears.

The De Arte takes the form of methodical instruction

1 Ovid, 5.144, 386; 11.142; 15.111. 2 Ed. Troyes (Ponet, 1532), p. 142. 3 Cligé, 2.41., 378; Thomas, ed. 4 Ed. Troyes (Ponet, 1532), p. 142. For chronology of C. Pons, op. cit.

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in the art of love-making given by the Chaplain to a certain Walter; but after a very few definitions and preliminary considerations the author proceeds to illustrate his subject by a series of ideal dialogues, adapted for the use of lovers in various social positions. We are shown by specimen conversations how a man who is nobilior ought to approach a woman who is nobilior; or how a plebeius should woo a nobilior; even how a plebeius ought to woo a nobilior or a nobilior. It thus comes about that during the greater part of his work Andreas is not speaking in his own person, and that he uses, through these imaginary mouthpieces, the most different kinds of argument. This would present us with a serious difficulty if it were our object to give an account of the author's mind; but it is less serious if we wish to study (what is very much more interesting) the characteristics of the theory of love as it existed in the general mind of the period. The occurrence of a given opinion in these imaginary dialogues does not tell us what Andreas thought; but it is tolerably good evidence that such an opinion was part of the body of floating ideas on the subject. We can hardly suppose that he would hold up, for the imitation of his pupil, speeches containing arguments and ideas which were not 'correct' by the standard of the best courtly tradition. I cannot promise that I shall not fall into such convenient expressions as 'Andreas says'; but all these are to be understood under the caveat given above.

The definition of love on the first page of this work rules out at once the kind of love that is called 'Platonic'. The aim of love, for Andreas, is actual fruition, and its source is visible beauty: so much so, that the blind are declared incapable of love, or, at least, of entering upon love after they have become blind. On the other hand, love is not sensuality. The sensual man—the man who suffers from
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abundantia voluptatis—is disqualified from participating in it. It may even be claimed that love is a ‘kind of chastity’, in virtue of its severe standard of fidelity to a single object. The lover must not hope to succeed, except with a foolish lady, by his formae virtutum, but by his eloquence, and, above all, by his morum probitatis. The latter implies no mean or one-sided conception of character. The lover must be truthful and modest, a good Catholic, clean in his speech, hospitable, and ready to return good for evil. He must be courageous in war (unless he is a clerk) and generous of his gifts. He must at all times be courteous. Though devoted in a special sense to one lady, he must be ready to perform ministeria et obsequia for all. With such a conception of the lover’s qualifications, it is not surprising that Andreas should return again and again to the power of love for good. It is agreed among all men that there is no good thing in the world, and no courtesy, which is not derived from love as from its fountain.

It is the fountain and origin of all good things; without it ‘all usages of courtesy would be unknown to man’. The lady is allowed a free choice in her acceptance or rejection of a lover in order that she may reward the merit of the best: she must not abuse this power in order to gratify her own fancies. By admitting a worthy lover to her favours she does well. Only women who are ‘enlisted in the soldiery of love’ are praised among men. Even a young unmarried woman should have a lover. It is true that her husband, when she marries, is bound to discover it, but if he is a wise man he will know that a woman who had not followed the ‘commands of love’ would necessarily have less probitas. In fine, all that is in sacrae bonae, all that is good in this present world, depends solely upon love. And yet, if the author’s ideal of the probitas demanded in a lover goes far to explain this praise of love, we must yet remember that that

1 De Arti Honoris Amandi, l. i. (p. 13).
2 Ibid. i. 4. ‘nee nimirum historiae comitum quasi virorum deorumum’ (p. 19).
3 Ibid. i. 1 (p. 441).
4 Ibid. l. i (p. 46).
5 Ibid. l. i (p. 46).
6 Ibid. l. 6 a (p. 46).

As the source of all worldly goodness, love must be thought of as a state of mind; but the rules which Andreas lays down for its conduct remind us that it is also an art. The elaboration of the art has now become so subtle as to lead to hard cases which demand an expert solution; and he bases his judgements on the decisions given by certain noble ladies to whom such problems have been referred. The whole of his curious chapter Dy martis iudicata amoris is filled with them. Some of these problems arise concerning the limits of obedience. A lover has been commanded by his lady to cease to serve her. Later, hearing her defamed, he speaks in her defence. Is he then guilty of disobedience? The Countess of Champagne ruled that he was not; the lady’s command, being wrong in the first instance, has no binding force. What is the courtly law in the case of two lovers who find out that they are related within the degrees which would have forbidden their union by marriage? They must part at once. The table of kindred and affinity which applies to marriage applies also to loving per amorem. Rulings are given as to the presents which a lady may receive without being condemned as mercenary. The duty of secrecy in love—one of the legacies of this code to modern society—is strongly enforced, and the vice of detraction is blamed. But perhaps no rule is made clearer than that which excludes love from the marriage relation. ‘Dictas et stabili

1 Ibid. l. 1 (p. 13). Cf. the very close parallel in Malory, iii. 3; ‘she told the King and Merlin that when she was a maid and went to milk him, there met with her a strow height, and half by fire, etc.
2 Ibid. ii. 7 (p. 171-3).
3 Ibid. ii. 7 (p. 173).
4 Ibid. l. 6 a (p. 46).
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lito tenore firmatus amorem non posse suas inter duos iugales extendere vires.1 The disabling influence of marriage extends even after marriage has been dissolved; love between those who were formerly married to each other and are now divorced is pronounced by the lady of Champagne to be nefandus. And yet there are passages which suggest that the chivalrous code, however anti-matrimonial in principle, has already done something to soften the old harshness of the relations between husband and wife. Andreas finds it necessary to recognize the possibility of maritalis affectio and to prove at some length that it is different from Amor.2 The proof is very illuminating.

Conjugal affection cannot be "love" because there is in it an element of duty or necessity: a wife, in loving her husband, is not exercising her free choice in the reward of merit, and her love therefore cannot increase his probitas. There are minor reasons too—conjugal love is not furtive, and jealousy, which is of the essence of true love, is merely a pest in marriage. But it is the first reason which puts this 'theory of adultery' before us in its most sympathetic, and therefore in its truest, light. 'The love which is to be the source of all that is beautiful in life and manners must be the reward freely given by the lady, and only our superiors can reward. But a wife is not a superior.' As the wife of another, above all as the wife of 'great lord, she may be queen of beauty and of love, the distributor of favours, the inspiration of all knightly virtues, and the bridle of "villany";+ but as your own wife, for whom you have bargained with her father, she sinks at once from lady into mere woman. How can a woman, whose duty is to obey you, be the moder whose grace is the goal of all striving and whose displeasure is the restraining influence upon all uncourtly vices? You may love her in a sense; but that is not love, says Andreas, any more than the love of father and son is amicitia.1 We must not suppose that the rules of love are most frivolous when they are most opposed to marriage. The more serious they are, the more they are opposed. As I have said before, where marriage does not depend upon the free will of the married, any theory which takes love for a noble form of experience must be a theory of adultery.

To the love religion, or rather to the love mythology, Andreas makes interesting contributions. In the General of Remi1emb we have seen the god Amor already provided with a gospel, cardinals, visitations, and the power to curse his heretical subjects. Andreas goes far to complete his parallelism with the God of real religion. In one of the imaginary conversations a lady pleads to be excused on the ground that she does not reciprocate her lover's feelings, and there's an end of the matter. 'At that rate', retorts the lover, 'a sinner might plead to be excused on the ground that God had not given him grace.' 'On the other hand', says the lady, 'just as all our works without charity cannot merit eternal bliss, so it will be unavailing to serve Love non ex cordis affectione.' All that was left was to attribute to Love the divine power of reward and punishment after death, and this is actually done. The story which Andreas tells on this subject is one of the freshest passages of his work.3 Looking forward from it, we can foresee a well-known tale in Boccaccio, Gower, and Dryden: looking backward, we perhaps come into touch again with the buried stratum of barbarian mythology. It begins, as a good story should, with a young man lost in a forest.

1 De Ars Rumana Amandi, l. 14 (p. 153). 2 Ibid., pp. 141 et seq. 3 Even where a love ethic, conducted theatrically on the courtly model, ends in marriage, here medieval feeling regards this as completely reversing the previous relations of the lovers; cf. Anon dma of Canto (Shelley's translation 1819, vol. 10, pp. 175, 179, 186, c. 14): 'O holy, with what service can I require you, that by your consent our love are now made known?' Otanes answered, 'It is now, Sir, no longer time that you should profess such constrain, or that I should receive them. I am now to follow and observe you with that obedience which wise owes to husband.'

4 Cf. Chaucer, Canterbury Tales, 47: 'She bodebeth him in her manner With nothing but with mourning of her heart.'
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His horse had wandered while he slept, and as he searches for it he sees three companies go by. In the first, led by a lovely knight, rode ladies, richly harnessed and each attended by a lover on foot. In the second, there were ladies surrounded by such a crowd and tumult of contending servitors that they wished for nothing but to be out of the noise. But the third company rode bareback on wretched nags maculatos valde et graviter trotantes, unattended, clothed in rags, and covered with the dust of those that went before. As might be expected, the first party consists of ladies who in their life on earth served love wisely; the second, of those who gave their kindness to all that asked it; and the third swains mulierum miseriteriae, of those implacable beauties who were deaf to every lover's prayer. The mortal follows this procession through the woods, until he is brought into a strange country. There stood the thrones of the king and queen of Love beneath the shadow of a tree that bears all kinds of fruit; and beside them rose a fountain as sweet as nectar, from which innumerable rivulets overflowed and watered the surrounding glades, winding their way in every direction among the couches which were there prepared for the true lovers who rode in the first company. But beyond and around this pleasant place, which is called Amoritana, lay the realm of Humilitas. The streams from the central fountain had turned icy cold before they reached this second country, and there, collecting in the low ground, formed a great swamp, cold beneath, and treemess, but glacia under a fierce sun. Here was the appointed place for the ladies of the second company. Those of the third were confined in the outermost circle of all, the burning desert of Scoritis, and seated upon bundles of sharp thorn which the tormentors kept in continual agitation beneath them. Lest the outermost circle of all, the burning desert of the second company. Thoese of the third were confined in the fierce sun. Here was the appointed place for the ladies of this pleasant place, which is called Hymeniti. The streams from the central fountain had turned icy cold before they reached this second country, and there, collecting in the low ground, formed a great swamp, cold beneath, and treemess, but glacia under a fierce sun. Here was the appointed place for the ladies of the second company. Those of the third were confined in the outermost circle of all, the burning desert of Scoritis, and seated upon bundles of sharp thorn which the tormentors kept in continual agitation beneath them. Lest the second story which he tells is less theological; and though it also ends with the commandments of love, they are won, together with the Hawk of Victory, from Arthur's court and not from the next world. Elsewhere, as usual, there are things that lie on the borderland between allegory and mythology. Such passages, however audacious they may appear, are clearly flights of fancy, far removed, indeed, from the comedy of the Council, but equally far removed from anything that could be regarded as a serious 'religion of love'. Andreas is at his gravest not here but in those places, which I referred to above, where he dwells upon the power of love to call forth all knighthly and courtly excellences: love which makes beautiful the horizon and inculcates, which advances the most lowly born to true nobility, and humbles the proud. If this is not a religion, it is, at any rate, a system of ethics. Of its relation with the other, the Christian, system, Andreas tells us a good deal. As against the author of the Council, he states plainly that nuns ought not to be the servants of Love—and ends the passage with a comic account of his own experiences which is not one of his most chivalrous passages. With Clerici, on the other hand, the case is different. They are only men, after all, conceived in sin like the rest, and indeed more exposed than others to temptation propter eitiss multis et abundantiam rubrum. Indeed, it is very doubtful whether God seriously meant them to be more chaste than the laity. It is teaching, not practice, that counts. Did not Christ say "sermonem opera fuit?"

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1 De Arca Huncus Animad. i. 6 (p. 75): "Nostra sita sunt concussos viridamque et perecece post eum ignis et ipsum consumma post eam propter in anticulam mulierum dominicam saccis committeri."  2 Ibid. ii. 8 (pp. 293-294).  3 Ibid. 4 (p. 9).  4 Ibid. i. 4 (p. 35).  5 Ibid. 6 (pp. 160-161).  6 He interprets the passage from the Council as meaning "Credamus est dicta clericorum quam magnam Dei et quod eorum transmissionem honestus est resque, ut in insigni opinione et non constituit aliquo daretur."
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He is anxious to point out that the code of love agrees with 'natural morality'. 'Incensuous' and 'damnable' unions are equally forbidden by both. He includes ordinary piety and a reverence for the saints among the virtues without which no man is qualified to be a lover. Heresy in the equally forbidden by both.

And yet, he says, in a very significant passage, 'some people are so extremely foolish as to imagine that they recommend themselves to women by showing contempt for the Church.' We have a sudden glimpse of a party who had grasped the fundamental incompatibility between Frauenlob and religion, who delighted to emphasize it by a freedom (probably crude enough) of the tongue; and of another party, to which Andreas belongs, who want nothing less than emphasis. That may be the meaning, too, of the piety which Chrétien ascribes to Lancelot—an object-lesson for the ribald left wing of the courtly world. Yet while Andreas thus wishes to christianize his love theory as far as possible, he has no real reconciliation. His too, of the piety which Chrétien ascribes to Lancelot—

For the truth is that the rift between the two worlds is irreconcilable. Andreas repeatedly recognizes this. 'Amorem exhibere est graviter oiiendere deum.' Marriage offers no compromise. It is a mistake to suppose that the ochemens amor can escape sine crimine by the impropriety (from the courtly point of view) of loving his own

wife. Such a man is in properia usum adulter. His sin is heavier than that of the unmarried lover, for he has abused the sacrament of marriage. And that is precisely why the whole world of courtesy exists only by 'leaving the religious side of the question out for a moment'. Once bring that in, as the lover argues in the same passage, and you must give up, not only loving per amorem, but the whole world as well. As if this were not sufficiently clear, Andreas has a surprise for the modern reader at the beginning of the last book. Having written two books on the art of love, he suddenly breaks off and begins anew: 'You must read all this, my dear Walter, not as though you sought thence to embrace the life of lovers, but that being refreshed by its doctrine and having well learned how to provoke the minds of women to love, you may yet abstain from such provocation, and thus merit a greater reward.'

All that has gone before, we are given to understand, has been written in order that Walter, like Guyon, may see, and know, and yet abstain. 'No man through any good deeds can please God so long as he serves in the service of Love.'

'Quum igitur omnia sequantur ex amore nefandae ...' and the rest of the book is a palinode.

What are we to make of this sub-stance? That the Chaplain's love-love is pure joking, or that his religion is rank hypocrisy? Neither the one nor the other. It is more probable that he meant what he said when he told us that love was the source of everything in sacculo bonum, and it is our fault if we are apt to forget the limitation—in sacculo. It is significant that we cannot even translate it 'worldly' good. 'Worldliness' in modern, or at least in Victorian, language does not really refer to the values of this world (for sacculo) as contrasted with the values of eternity:

1 De Ave Honor. Amanti. i. 4. (p. 3) 'Guliopli natura amat amor amor; absurdum est.' Also I. 7, ibid. (p. 879).
2 Ibid. i. 6 (p. 60).
3 Ibid. i. 4 (p. 146): 'Creda manus in usum Deum gratiae offendi, non potest; non quid natura energea perversa falem endet expectationem mundi.' And p. 164.
4 Ibid., p. 159.
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It generally contrasts, inside a single world, what is considered base—as avarice, personal ambition, and the like—with what is considered noble, as conjugal love, learning, public service. But when Andreas talks of the Donum in saeculo he means what he says. He means the really good things in a human sense, as contrasted with the really bad things: courage and courtesy and generosity, as against baseness. But, rising like a sheer cliff above and behind this humane or secular scale of values, he has another which is not to be reconciled with it, another by whose standard there is very little to choose between the ‘worldly’ good and the ‘worldly’ bad. That very element of parodied or, at least, of imitated religion which we find in the courtly code, and which looks so blasphemous, is rather an expression of the divorce between the two. They are so completely two that analogies naturally arise between them: hence comes a strange reduplication of experience. It is a kind of proportion sum. Love is, in saeculo, as God is, in eternity.

Coronis affectio is to the acts of love as charity is to good works. But of course there is for Andreas, in a cool hour, no doubt as to which of the two worlds is the real one, and in this he is typical of the Middle Ages. When Frauentiens succeeds in fusing with religion, as in Dante, unity is restored to the mind, and love can be treated with a solemnity that is whole-hearted. But where it is not so fused, it can never, under the shadow of its tremendous rival, be more than a temporary truancy.

It may be solemn, but its solemnity is only for the moment. It may be touching, but it never forgets that there are sorrows and dangers before which those of love must be

1. The double standard of values, with a worldly and equally distinct from some ‘worldliness’ on the one hand, and from heaven only on the other, which is noted the origin of the idea of the gentleman, survived, of course, almost to our own times. In Wyatt’s Defence of Love I grant I do not profane charity, but yet I say not abomination. I have almost the air of the distinction between an Human School and a Poem school. It is bigamistic that the lady abandoner of the double standard in Victorian times (with the consequent attempt to include the wide of morality in the character of the gentleman) was the prelude to the gentleman’s disappearance as an ideal, for the same being new, I understand, still unregarded and given over to literal use. See p. 57, annex.