



# The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer Volume III: The House of Fame - The Legend of Good Women - The Treatise on the Astrolabe (Volume 3)

Geoffrey Chaucer

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### INTRODUCTION TO THE HOUSE OF FAME

- § 1. It is needless to say that this Poem is genuine, as Chaucer himself claims it twice over; once in his Prologue to the Legend of Good Women, 1. 417, and again by the insertion in the poem itself of the name *Geffrey* (1. 729).
- § 2. Influence of Dante. The influence of Dante is here very marked, and has been thoroughly discussed by Rambeau in Englische Studien, iii. 209, in an article far too important to be neglected. I can only say here that the author points out both general and particular likenesses between the two poems. In general, both are visions; both are in three books; in both, the authors seek abstraction from surrounding troubles by venturing into the realm of imagination. As Dante is led by Vergil, so Chaucer is upborne by an eagle. Dante begins his third book, Il Paradiso, with an invocation to Apollo, and Chaucer likewise begins his third book with the same; moreover, Chaucer's invocation is little more than a translation of Dante's....

INTRODUCTION TO THE LEGEND OF GOOD WOMEN. § 1. Date of the Poem: A.d. 1385. The Legend of Good Women presents several points of peculiar, I might almost say of unique interest. It is the immediate precursor of the Canterbury Tales, and enables us to see how the poet was led on towards the composition of that immortal poem. This is easily seen; upon consideration of the date at which it was composed.

The question of the date has been well investigated by Ten Brink but it may be observed beforehand that the allusion to the 'queen' in 1. 496 has long ago been noticed, and it has been thence inferred, by Tyrwhitt, that the Prologue must have been written after 1382, the year when Richard II married his first wife, the 'good queen Anne.' But Ten Brink's remarks enable us to look at the question much more closely....

INTRODUCTION TO A TREATISE ON THE ASTROLABE. § I. Description of the MSS. The existing MSS. of the 'Astrolabe' are still numerous. I have been successful in finding no less than twenty-two, which I here describe. It is remarkable that, although many printed editions of the treatise have appeared, no first-class MS. has ever hitherto come under the notice of any one of the various editors. This point will appear more clearly hereafter.

§ 2. A. — MS. Dd. 3. 53 (part 2) in the Cambridge University Library. The 'Treatise on the Astrolabie' begins at fol. 212 of the MS. considered as a whole, but the folios are now properly renumbered throughout the treatise. The MS. is of vellum, and the writing clear and good, with a great number of neatly drawn diagrams, which appear wherever the words 'lo here thi figure' occur in the text. This MS. I have made the

basis of the text, and it is followed with sufficient exactness, except when notice to the contrary is given in the Critical Notes....



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