

## The Regius (or Halliwell) Manuscript

Written about 1390

### The Oldest Known Masonic Writing

Here begin the constitutions of the art of Geometry according to Euclid.

Whoever will both well read and look  
He may find written in old book  
Of great lords and also ladies,  
That had many children together, y-  
wisse; (certainly)  
And had no income to keep them with,  
Neither in town nor field nor frith;  
(enclosed wood)  
A council together they could them take,  
To ordain for these children's sake,  
How they might best lead their life  
Without great dis-ease, care, and strife;  
And most for the multitude that was  
coming  
Of their children after their ending  
They send them after great clerks,  
To teach them then good works;

And pray we them, for our Lord's sake.  
To our children some work to make,  
That they might get their living thereby,  
Both well and honestly full securely.  
In that time, through good geometry,  
This honest craft of good masonry  
Was ordained and made in this manner,  
Counterfeited of these clerks together;  
At these lord's prayers they  
counterfeited geometry,

And gave it the name of masonry,  
For the most honest craft of all.  
These lords' children thereto did fall,  
To learn of him the craft of geometry,  
The which he made full curiously;  
Through fathers' prayers and mothers'  
also,  
This honest craft he put them to.

He learned best, and was of honesty,  
And passed his fellows in curiosity,  
If in that craft he did him pass,  
He should have more worship than the  
lasse, (less)  
This great clerk's name was Euclid,  
His name it spread full wonder wide.  
Yet this great clerk ordained he  
To him that was higher in this degree,  
That he should teach the simplest of wit  
In that honest craft to be parfytte;  
(perfect)  
And so each one shall teach the other,  
And love together as sister and brother.

Furthermore yet that ordained he,  
Master called so should he be;  
So that he were most worshipped,  
Then should he be so called;  
But masons should never one another  
call,  
Within the craft amongst them all,  
Neither subject nor servant, my dear  
brother,  
Though he be not so perfect as is  
another;  
Each shall call other fellows by cuthe,  
(friendship)

Because they come of ladies' birth.  
On this manner, through good wit of  
geometry,  
Began first the craft of masonry;  
The clerk Euclid on this wise it found,  
This craft of geometry in Egypt land.

In Egypt he taught it full wide,  
In divers lands on every side;  
Many years afterwards, I understand,  
Ere that the craft came into this land.  
This craft came into England, as I you  
say,  
In time of good King Athelstane's day;  
He made then both hall and even bower,  
And high temples of great honour,  
To disport him in both day and night,  
And to worship his God with all his might.  
This good lord loved this craft full well,  
And purposed to strengthen it every del,  
(part)  
For divers faults that in the craft he  
found;  
He sent about into the land  
After all the masons of the craft,  
To come to him full even straghtfe,  
(straight)  
For to amend these defaults all  
By good counsel, if it might fall.  
An assembly then he could let make  
Of divers lords in their state,  
Dukes, earls, and barons also,  
Knights, squires and many mo, (more)  
And the great burgesses of that city,  
They were there all in their degree;  
There were there each one algate,  
(always)

To ordain for these masons' estate,  
There they sought by their wit,  
How they might govern it;

Fifteen articles they there sought,  
And fifteen points there they wrought,

Here begins the first article.

The first article of this geometry;-  
The master mason must be full securely  
Both steadfast, trusty and true,  
It shall him never then rue;  
And pay thy fellows after the cost,  
As victuals goeth then, well thou woste;  
(knowest)  
And pay them truly, upon thy fay, (faith)  
What they deserven may; (may  
deserve)  
And to their hire take no more,  
But what that they may serve for;  
And spare neither for love nor drede,  
(dread)  
Of neither parties to take no mede;  
(bribe)  
Of lord nor fellow, whoever he be,  
Of them thou take no manner of fee;  
And as a judge stand upright,  
And then thou dost to both good right;  
And truly do this wheresoever thou gost,  
(goest)  
Thy worship, thy profit, it shall be most.

Second article.

The second article of good masonry,  
As you must it here hear specially,

That every master, that is a mason,  
Must be at the general congregation,  
So that he it reasonably be told  
Where that the assembly shall be holde;  
(held)  
And to that assembly he must needs  
gon, (go)  
Unless he have a reasonable  
skwasacyon, (excuse)  
Or unless he be disobedient to that craft  
Or with falsehood is over-raft,  
(overtaken)  
Or else sickness hath him so strong,  
That he may not come them among;  
That is an excuse good and able,  
To that assembly without fable.

Third article.

The third article forsooth it is,  
That the master takes to no 'prentice,  
Unless he have good assurance to dwell  
Seven years with him, as I you tell,  
His craft to learn, that is profitable;  
Within less he may not be able  
To lords' profit, nor to his own  
As you may know by good reason.

Fourth article.

The fourth article this must be,  
That the master him well besee,  
That he no bondman 'prentice make,  
Nor for no covetousness do him take;  
For the lord that he is bound to,  
May fetch the 'prentice wheresoever he  
go.

If in the lodge he were ty-take, (taken)  
Much dis-ease it might there make,  
And such case it might befall,  
That it might grieve some or all.  
For all the masons that be there  
Will stand together all y-fere. (together)  
If such one in that craft should dwell,  
Of divers dis-eases you might tell;  
For more ease then, and of honesty,  
Take a 'prentice of higher degree.  
By old time written I find  
That the 'prentice should be of gentle  
kind;  
And so sometime, great lords' blood  
Took this geometry that is full good.

Fifth article.

The fifth article is very good,  
So that the 'prentice be of lawful blood;  
The master shall not, for no advantage,  
Make no 'prentice that is outrage;  
(deformed)  
It is to mean, as you may hear  
That he have all his limbs whole all y-  
fere; (together)  
To the craft it were great shame,  
To make a halt man and a lame,  
For an imperfect man of such blood  
Should do the craft but little good.  
Thus you may know every one,  
The craft would have a mighty man;  
A maimed man he hath no might,  
You must it know long ere night.

Sixth article.

The sixth article you must not miss  
That the master do the lord no prejudice,  
To take the lord for his 'prentice,  
As much as his fellows do, in all wise.  
For in that craft they be full perfect,  
So is not he, you must see it.  
Also it were against good reason,  
To take his hire as his fellows don. (do)  
This same article in this case,  
Judgeth his prentice to take less  
Than his fellows, that be full perfect.  
In divers matters, know requite it,  
The master may his 'prentice so inform,  
That his hire may increase full soon,  
And ere his term come to an end,  
His hire may full well amend.

#### Seventh article.

The seventh article that is now here,  
Full well will tell you all y-fere (together)  
That no master for favour nor dread,  
Shall no thief neither clothe nor feed.  
Thieves he shall harbour never one,  
Nor him that hath killed a man,  
Nor the same that hath a feeble name,  
Lest it would turn the craft to shame.

#### Eighth article.

The eighth article sheweth you so,  
That the master may it well do.  
If that he have any man of craft,  
And he be not so perfect as he ought,  
He may him change soon anon,  
And take for him a more perfect man.

Such a man through rechalschepe,  
(recklessness)  
Might do the craft scant worship.

#### Ninth article.

The ninth article sheweth full well,  
That the master be both wise and felle;  
(strong)  
That he no work undertake,  
Unless he can both it end and make;  
And that it be to the lords' profit also,  
And to his craft, wheresoever he go;  
And that the ground be well y-take,  
(taken)  
That it neither flaw nor grake. (crack)

#### Tenth article.

The tenth article is for to know,  
Among the craft, to high and low,  
There shall no master supplant another,  
But be together as sister and brother,  
In this curious craft, all and some,  
That belongeth to a master mason.  
Nor shall he supplant no other man,  
That hath taken a work him upon,  
In pain thereof that is so strong,  
That weigheth no less than ten ponge,  
(pounds)  
but if that he be guilty found,  
That took first the work on hand;  
For no man in masonry  
Shall not supplant other securely,  
But if that it be so wrought,  
That in turn the work to nought;  
Then may a mason that work crave,

To the lords' profit for it to save  
In such a case if it do fall,  
There shall no mason meddle withal.  
Forsooth he that beginneth the ground,  
If he be a mason good and sound,  
He hath it securely in his mind  
To bring the work to full good end.

#### Eleventh article.

The eleventh article I tell thee,  
That he is both fair and free;  
For he teacheth, by his might,  
That no mason should work by night,  
But if be in practising of wit,  
If that I could amend it.

#### Twelfth article.

The twelfth article is of high honesty  
To every mason wheresoever he be,  
He shall not his fellows' work deprave,  
If that he will his honesty save;  
With honest words he it commend,  
By the wit God did thee send;  
But it amend by all that thou may,  
Between you both without nay. (doubt)

#### Thirteenth article.

The thirteenth article, so God me save,  
Is if that the master a 'prentice have,  
Entirely then that he him teach,  
And measurable points that he him  
reche, (tell)  
That he the craft ably may conne,  
(know)

Wheresoever he go under the sun.

Fourteenth article.

The fourteenth article by good reason,  
Sheweth the master how he shall don;  
(do)  
He shall no 'prentice to him take,  
Unless diver cares he have to make,  
That he may within his term,  
Of him divers points may learn.

Fifteenth article.

The fifteenth article maketh an end,  
For to the master he is a friend;  
To teach him so, that for no man,  
No false maintenance he take him upon,  
Nor maintain his fellows in their sin,  
For no good that he might win;  
Nor no false oath suffer him to make,  
For dread of their souls' sake,  
Lest it would turn the craft to shame,  
And himself to very much blame.

Plural constitutions.

At this assembly were points ordained  
mo, (more)  
Of great lords and masters also.  
That who will know this craft and come  
to estate,  
He must love well God and holy church  
algate, (always)  
And his master also that he is with,  
Wheresoever he go in field or frythe,  
(enclosed wood)

And thy fellows thou love also,  
For that thy craft will that thou do.

Second Point.

The second point as I you say,  
That the mason work upon the work day,  
As truly as he can or may,  
To deserve his hire for the holy-day,  
And truly to labour on his deed,  
Well deserve to have his mede. (reward)

Third point.

The third point must be severele,  
(severely)  
With the 'prentice know it well,  
His master's counsel he keep and close,  
And his fellows by his good purpose;  
The privities of the chamber tell he no  
man,  
Nor in the lodge whatsoever they don;  
(do)  
Whatsoever thou hearest or seest them  
do,  
Tell it no man wheresoever you go;  
The counsel of hall, and even of bower,  
Keep it well to great honour,  
Lest it would turn thyself to blame,  
And bring the craft into great shame.

Fourth point.

The fourth point teacheth us also, (also)  
That no man to his craft be false;  
Error he shall maintain none  
Against the craft, but let it gone; (go)

Nor no prejudice he shall not do  
To his master, nor his fellow also;  
And though the 'prentice be under awe,  
Yet he would have the same law.

Fifth point.

The fifth point is without nay, (doubt)  
That when the mason taketh his pay  
Of the master, ordained to him,  
Full meekly taken so must it byn; (be)  
Yet must the master by good reason,  
Warn him lawfully before noon,  
If he will not occupy him no more,  
As he hath done there before;  
Against this order he may not strive,  
If he think well for to thrive.

Sixth point.

The sixth point is full given to know,  
Both to high and even to low,  
For such case it might befall;  
Among the masons some or all,  
Through envy or deadly hate,  
Oft ariseth full great debate.  
Then ought the mason if that he may,  
Put them both under a day;  
But loveday yet shall they make none,  
Till that the work-day be clean gone  
Upon the holy-day you must well take  
Leisure enough loveday to make,  
Lest that it would the work-day  
Hinder their work for such a fray;  
To such end then that you them draw.  
That they stand well in God's law.

Seventh point.

The seventh point he may well mean,  
Of well long life that God us lene, (lend)  
As it descrieth well openly,  
Thou shalt not by thy master's wife lie,  
Nor by thy fellows', in no manner wise,  
Lest the craft would thee despise;  
Nor by thy fellows' concubine,  
No more thou wouldst he did by thine.  
The pain thereof let it be sure,  
That he be 'prentice full seven year,  
If he forfeit in any of them  
So chastised then must he ben; (be)  
Full much care might there begin,  
For such a foul deadly sin.

Eighth point.

The eighth point, he may be sure,  
If thou hast taken any cure,  
Under thy master thou be true,  
For that point thou shalt never rue;  
A true mediator thou must needs be  
To thy master, and thy fellows free;  
Do truly all that thou might,  
To both parties, and that is good right.

Ninth point.

The ninth point we shall him call,  
That he be steward of our hall,  
If that you be in chamber y-fere,  
(together)  
Each one serve other with mild cheer;  
Gentle fellows, you must it know,  
For to be stewards all o-rowe, (in turn)

Week after week without doubt,  
Stewards to be so all in turn about,  
Amiably to serve each one other,  
As though they were sister and brother;  
There shall never one another costage  
(cost)  
Free himself to no advantage,  
But every man shall be equally free  
In that cost, so must it be;  
Look that thou pay well every man  
algate, (always)  
That thou hast bought any victuals ate,  
(eaten)  
That no craving be made to thee,  
Nor to thy fellows in no degree,  
To man or to woman, whoever he be,  
Pay them well and truly, for that will we;  
Thereof on thy fellow true record thou  
take,  
For that good pay as thou dost make,  
Lest it would thy fellow shame,  
And bring thyself into great blame.  
Yet good accounts he must make  
Of such goods as he hath y-take (taken)  
Of thy fellows' goods that thou hast  
spende, (spent)  
Where and how and to what end;  
Such accounts thou must come to,  
When thy fellows wish that thou do.

Tenth point.

The tenth point presenteth well good life,  
To live without care and strife;  
For if the mason live amiss,  
And in his work be false y-wisse, (I  
know)

And through such a false skewesasyon  
(excuse)  
May slander his fellows without reason,  
Through false slander of such fame.  
May make the craft acquire blame.  
If he do the craft such villainy,  
Do him no favour then securely,  
Nor maintain not him in wicked life,  
Lest it would turn to care and strife;  
But yet him you shall not delayme,  
(delay)  
Unless that you shall him constrain,  
For to appear wheresoever you will,  
Where that you will, loud, or still;  
To the next assembly you shall him call,  
To appear before his fellows all,  
And unless he will before them appear,  
The craft he must need forswear;  
He shall then be punished after the law  
That was founded by old dawe. (day)

Eleventh point.

The eleventh point is of good discretion,  
As you must know by good reason;  
A mason, if he this craft well con, (know,  
That seeth his fellow hew on a stone,  
And is in point to spoil that stone,  
Amend it soon if that thou can,  
And teach him then it to amend,  
That the lords' work be not y-schende,  
(spoiled)  
And teach him easily it to amend,  
With fair words, that God thee hath  
lende; (lent)  
For his sake that sit above,  
With sweet words nourish his love.

Twelfth point.

The twelfth point is of great royalty,  
There as the assembly held shall be,  
There shall be masters and fellows also,  
And other great lords many mo; (more)  
There shall be the sheriff of that country,  
And also the mayor of that city,  
Knights and squires there shall be,  
And also aldermen, as you shall see;  
Such ordinance as they make there,  
They shall maintain it all y-fere  
(together)  
Against that man, whatsoever he be,  
That belongeth to the craft both fair and  
free.  
If he any strife against them make,  
Into their custody he shall be take.  
(taken)

Thirteenth point.

The thirteenth point is to us full lief,  
He shall swear never to be no thief,  
Nor succour him in his false craft,  
For no good that he hath byraft; (bereft)  
And thou must it know or sin,  
Neither for his good, nor for his kin.

Fourteenth point.

The fourteenth point is full good law  
To him that would be under awe;  
A good true oath he must there swear  
To his master and his fellows that be  
there;

He must be steadfast and also true  
To all this ordinance, wheresoever he  
go,  
And to his liege lord the king,  
To be true to him over all thing.  
And all these points here before  
To them thou must need be y-swore,  
(sworn)  
And all shall swear the same oath  
Of the masons, be they lief be they loath.  
To all these points here before,  
That hath been ordained by full good  
lore.  
And they shall enquire every man  
Of his party, as well as he can,  
If any man may be found guilty  
In any of these points specially;  
And who he be, let him be sought,  
And to the assembly let him be brought.

Fifteen point.

The fifteenth point is of full good lore,  
For them that shall be there y-swore,  
(sworn)  
Such ordinance at the assembly was  
laid  
Of great lords and masters before said;  
For the same that be disobedient, y-  
wisse, (I know)  
Against the ordinance that there is,  
Of these articles that were moved there,  
Of great lords and masons all y-fere,  
(together)  
And if they be proved openly  
Before that assembly, by and by,  
And for their guilt's no amends will make,

Then must they need the craft forsake;  
And no masons craft they shall refuse,  
And swear it never more to use.  
But if that they will amends make,  
Again to the craft they shall never take;  
And if that they will not do so,  
The sheriff shall come them soon to,  
And put their bodies in deep prison,  
For the trespass that they have done,  
And take their goods and their cattle  
Into the king's hand, every delle, (part)  
And let them dwell there full still,  
Till it be our liege king's will.

Another ordinance of the art of geometry.

They ordained there an assembly to be  
y-holde, (hold)  
Every year, wheresoever they would,  
To amend the defaults, if any were  
found  
Among the craft within the land;  
Each year or third year it should be  
holde, (held)  
In every place wheresoever they would;  
Time and place must be ordained also,  
In what place they should assemble to,  
All the men of craft there they must be,  
And other great lords, as you must see,  
To mend the faults that he there spoken,  
If that any of them be then broken.  
There they shall be all y-swore, (sworn)  
That belongeth to this craft's lore,  
To keep their statutes every one  
That were ordained by King Athelstane;  
These statutes that I have here found  
I ordain they be held through my land,

For the worship of my royalty,  
That I have by my dignity.  
Also at every assembly that you hold,  
That you come to your liege king bold,  
Beseeching him of his high grace,  
To stand with you in every place,  
To confirm the statutes of King  
Athelstane,  
That he ordained to this craft by good  
reason.

The art of the four crowned ones.

Pray we now to God almighty, (almighty)  
And to his mother Mary bright,  
That we may keep these articles here,  
And these points well all y-fere,  
(together)  
As did these holy martyrs four,  
That in this craft were of great honour;  
They were as good masons as on earth  
shall go,  
Gravers and image-makers they were  
also.  
For they were workmen of the best,  
The emperor had to them great luste;  
(liking)  
He willed of them an image to make  
That might be worshipped for his sake;  
Such monuments he had in his dawe,  
(day)  
To turn the people from Christ's law.

But they were steadfast in Christ's lay,  
(law)  
And to their craft without nay; (doubt)  
They loved well God and all his lore,

And were in his service ever more.  
True men they were in that dawe, (day)  
And lived well in God's law;  
They thought no monuments for to  
make,  
For no good that they might take,  
To believe on that monument for their  
God,  
They would not do so, though he were  
wod; (furious)  
For they would not forsake their true fay,  
(faith)  
And believe on his false lay, (law)  
The emperor let take them soon anon,  
And put them in a deep prison;  
The more sorely he punished them in  
that place,  
The more joy was to them of Christ's  
grace,  
Then when he saw no other one,  
To death he let them then gon; (go)  
Whose will of their life yet more know  
By the book he might it show  
In the legend of sanctorum (holy ones)  
The names of the quatuor coronatorum.  
Their feast will be without nay, (doubt)  
After Hallow-e'en the eighth day.

You may hear as I do read,  
That many years after, for great dread  
That Noah's flood was all run,  
The tower of Babylon was begun,  
As plain work of lime and stone,  
As any man should look upon;  
So long and broad it was begun,  
Seven miles the height shadoweth the  
sun.

King Nebuchadnezzar let it make  
To great strength for man's sake,  
Though such a flood again should come,  
Over the work it should not nome; (take)  
For they had so high pride, with strong  
boast  
All that work therefore was lost;  
An angel smote them so with divers  
speech,  
That never one knew what the other  
should tell.  
Many years after, the good clerk Euclid  
Taught the craft of geometry full wonder  
wide,  
So he did that other time also,  
Of divers crafts many mo. (more)  
Through high grace of Christ in heaven,  
He commenced in the sciences seven;

Grammar is the first science I know,  
Dialect the second, so I have I bliss,  
Rhetoric the third without nay, (doubt)  
Music is the fourth, as I you say,  
Astronomy is the fifth, by my snout,  
Arithmetic the sixth, without doubt,  
Geometry the seventh maketh an end,  
For he is both meek and hende,  
(courteous)  
Grammar forsooth is the root,  
Whoever will learn on the book;  
But art passeth in his degree,  
As the fruit doth the root of the tree;  
Rhetoric measureth with ornate speech  
among,  
And music it is a sweet song;  
Astronomy numbereth, my dear brother,

Arithmetic sheweth one thing that is another,  
Geometry the seventh science it is,  
That can separate falsehood from truth,  
I know.

These be the sciences seven,  
Who useth them well he may have heaven.

Now dear children by your wit  
Pride and covetousness that you leave it,  
And taketh heed to good discretion,  
And to good nurture, wheresoever you come.

Now I pray you take good heed,  
For this you must know nede, (needs)  
But much more you must wyten, (know)  
Than you find here written.

If thee fail thereto wit,  
Pray to God to send thee it:  
For Christ himself, he teacheth ous (us)  
That holy church is God's house,  
That is made for nothing ellus (else)  
But for to pray in, as the book tellus;  
(tells us)

There the people shall gather in,  
To pray and weep for their sin.  
Look thou come not to church late,  
For to speak harlotry by the gate;  
Then to church when thou dost fare,  
Have in thy mind ever mare (more)  
To worship thy lord God both day and night,  
With all thy wits and even thy might.  
To the church door when thou dost come

Of that holy water there some thou nome, (take)  
For every drop thou feelest there  
Quencheth a venial sin, be thou ser. (sure)  
But first thou must do down thy hood,  
For his love that died on the rood.  
Into the church when thou dost gon, (go)  
Pull up thy heart to Christ, anon;  
Upon the rood thou look up then,  
And kneel down fair upon thy knen, (knees)  
Then pray to him so here to worche (work)  
After the law of holy church,  
For to keep the commandments ten,  
That God gave to all men;  
And pray to him with mild steven (voice)  
To keep thee from the sins seven,  
That thou here may, in this life,  
Keep thee well from care and strife;  
Furthermore he grant thee grace,  
In heaven's bliss to have a place.

In holy church leave trifling words  
Of lewd speech and foul bordes, (jests)  
And put away all vanity,  
And say thy pater noster and thine ave;  
Look also that thou make no bere, (noise)  
But always to be in thy prayer;  
If thou wilt not thyself pray,  
Hinder no other man by no way.  
In that place neither sit nor stand,  
But kneel fair down on the ground,  
And when the Gospel me read shall,  
Fairly thou stand up from the wall,

And bless the fare if that thou can,  
When gloria tibi is begun;  
And when the gospel is done,  
Again thou might kneel down,  
On both knees down thou fall,  
For his love that bought us all;  
And when thou hearest the bell ring  
To that holy sakerynge, (sacrament)  
Kneel you must both young and old,  
And both your hands fair uphold,  
And say then in this manner,  
Fair and soft without noise;  
"Jesu Lord welcome thou be,  
In form of bread as I thee see,  
Now Jesu for thine holy name,  
Shield me from sin and shame;  
Shrift and Eucharist thou grant me bo, (both)  
Ere that I shall hence go,  
And very contrition for my sin,  
That I never, Lord, die therein;  
And as thou were of maid y-bore (born)  
Suffer me never to be y-lore; (lost)  
But when I shall hence wend,  
Grant me the bliss without end;  
Amen! Amen! so mote it be!  
Now sweet lady pray for me."

Thus thou might say, or some other thing,  
When thou kneelest at the sakerynge. (sacrament)  
For covetousness after good, spare thou not  
To worship him that all hath wrought;  
For glad may a man that day be,  
That once in the day may him see;

It is so much worth, without nay, (doubt)  
The virtue thereof no man tell may;  
But so much good doth that sight,  
That Saint Austin telleth full right,  
That day thou seest God's body,  
Thou shalt have these full securely:-  
Meet and drink at thy need,  
None that day shalt thou gnede; (lack)  
Idle oaths and words bo, (both)  
God forgiveth thee also;  
Sudden death that same day  
Thee dare not dread by no way;  
Also that day, I thee plight,  
Thou shalt not lose thy eye sight;  
And each foot that thou goest then,  
That holy sight for to sen, (see)  
They shall be told to stand instead,  
When thou hast thereto great need;  
That messenger the angel Gabriel,  
Will keep them to thee full well.

From this matter now I may pass,  
To tell more benefits of the mass:  
To church come yet, if thou may,  
And hear the mass each day;  
If thou may not come to church,  
Where that ever thou dost worche,  
(work)  
When thou hearest the mass knylle,  
(toll)  
Pray to God with heart still,  
To give they part of that service,  
That in church there done is.  
Furthermore yet, I will you preach  
To your fellows, it for to teach,  
When thou comest before a lord,  
In hall, in bower, or at the board,

Hood or cap that thou off do,  
Ere thou come him entirely to;  
Twice or thrice, without doubt,  
To that lord thou must lowte; (bow)  
With thy right knee let it be do, (done)  
Thine own worship thou save so.  
Hold off thy cap and hood also,  
Till thou have leave it on to do. (put)  
All the time thou speakest with him,  
Fair and amiably hold up thy chin;  
So after the nurture of the book,  
In his face kindly thou look.  
Foot and hand thou keep full still,  
For clawing and tripping, is skill;  
From spitting and sniffing keep thee  
also,  
By private expulsion let it go,  
And if that thou be wise and felle,  
(discrete)  
Thou has great need to govern thee well.

Into the hall when thou dost wend,  
Amongst the gentles, good and hende,  
(courteous)  
Presume not too high for nothing,  
For thine high blood, nor thy cunning,  
Neither to sit nor to lean,  
That is nurture good and clean.  
Let not thy countenance therefore abate,  
Forsooth good nurture will save thy  
state.  
Father and mother, whatsoever they be,  
Well is the child that well may thee,  
In hall, in chamber, where thou dost  
gon; (go)  
Good manners make a man.

To the next degree look wisely,  
To do them reverence by and by;  
Do them yet no reverence all o-rowe, (in  
turn)  
Unless that thou do them know.  
To the meat when thou art set,  
Fair and honestly thou eat it;  
First look that thine hands be clean,  
And that thy knife be sharp and keen,  
And cut thy bread all at thy meat,  
Right as it may be there y-ete. (eaten)  
If thou sit by a worthier man,  
Then thy self thou art one,  
Suffer him first to touch the meat,  
Ere thyself to it reach.  
To the fairest morsel thou might not  
strike,  
Though that thou do it well like;  
Keep thine hands fair and well,  
From foul smudging of thy towel;  
Thereon thou shalt not thy nose smite.  
(blow)  
Nor at the meat thy tooth thou pike;  
(pick)  
Too deep in cup thou might not sink,  
Though thou have good will to drink,  
Lest thine eyes would water thereby-  
Then were it no courtesy.

Look in thy mouth there be no meat,  
When thou beginnest to drink or speak.  
When thou seest any man drinking,  
That taketh heed to thy carpynge,  
(speech)  
Soon anon thou cease thy tale,  
Whether he drink wine or ale,  
Look also thou scorn no man,

In what degree thou seest him gone;  
Nor thou shalt no man deprave,  
If thou wilt thy worship save;  
For such word might there outburst.  
That might make thee sit in evil rest.  
Close thy hand in thy fist,  
And keep thee well from "had I known".

In chamber, among the ladies bright,  
Hold thy tongue and spend thy sight;  
Laugh thou not with no great cry,  
Nor make no lewd sport and ribaldry.  
Play thou not but with thy peers,  
Nor tell thou not all that thou hears;  
Discover thou not thine own deed,  
For no mirth, nor for no mede: (reward)  
With fair speech thou might have thy will,  
With it thou might thy self spylle. (spoil)

When thou meetest a worthy man,  
Cap and hood thou hold not on;  
In church, in market, or in the gate,  
Do him reverence after his state.  
If thou goest with a worthier man  
Then thyself thou art one,  
Let thy foremost shoulder follow his  
back,  
For that is nurture without lack;  
When he doth speak, hold thee still,  
When he hath done, say for thy will,  
In thy speech that thou be felle,  
(discreet)  
And what thou sayest consider thee  
well;  
But deprive thou not him his tale,  
Neither at the wine nor at the ale.  
Christ then of his high grace,

Save you both wit and space,  
Well this book to know and read,  
Heaven to have for your mede. (reward)  
Amen! Amen! so mote it be!  
So say we all for charity.\*