

Ballade de la belle Heaulmiere aux filles de joie (The Will)

15TH CENTURY

[The old prostitute who is now a procuress gives her instructions to the young ones.]

Or y pensez, belle Gantiere
Qui escoliere souliez estre,
Et vous, Blanche la Savetiere,
Or est il temps de vous cognoistre :
Prenez a destre et a senestre,
N'espargniez homme, je vous prie,
Car vieilles n'ont ne cours ne estre
Ne que monnoye qu'on descrye.

Et vous, la gente Saulcissiere,
Qui de dancer estes adestre,
Guillemete la Tappiciere,
Ne mesprenez vers vostre maistre :
Tost vous fauldra clore fenestre ;
Quant deviendrez, vielle, fleterye,
Plus ne servirez q'un viel prestre
Ne que monnoye c'on descrye.

Jehanneton la Chapperonniere,
Gardez qu'amy ne vous empestre ;
Et Katherine la Bourciere,
N'envoyez plus les hommes paistre,
Car qui belle n'est ne perpestre
Leur male grace mais leur rie,
Laide viellesse amour n'impestre
Ne que monnoye c'on descrye.

Filles, vueilliez vous entremectre
D'escouter pourquoi pleure et crye :
Pource que je ne me puis mectre
Ne que monnoye c'on descrye.

Think about it now, pretty glover girl
You have been a novice until now;
And you, Blanche, the cobbler girl,
The time has come for knowing yourself.
Grab to your right and at your left;
Do not spare one man, I beg you,
For old women have no value nor status,
No more than do devalued coins.

And you, the noble sausage girl,
Who are a so agile dancer,
Guillemette, the tapestry girl,
Don't despise your master:
Soon you will have to shut up shop.
When you will become old, withered,
You will have no more use than an old priest,
No more than do devalued coins.

Jeanneton, the bonnet girl,
Beware that your friend does not deprive you;
And Katherine, the purse girl,
Don't send men away;
For the unattractive one should not provoke
Their bad grace, but smile to them.
Ugly old age does not arouse love,
No more than do devalued coins.

Girls, will you pay attention
And listen to why I weep and cry:
Because I have no place for myself,
No more than do devalued coins.