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The war with France which went on from 1337 helped to weaken the stability of feudal society. The war both prolonged and on a large scale required a vast army as well as large sums. Edward III employed the indenture system. He made a contract with his nobles or knights, who were the commanders in his armies, for the number and types of knights and soldiers, the period and place of service, and the rate of wages. He by indenture paid his army for his wars; a paid army performed military service.\(^1\) In an apology to Conscience for her shameless behaviour Lady Meed, the personification of bribery, pleads that

\[
\text{The kyng meedeth his men to maken pees in londe.}^{2}\]

Chaucer refers to a contract between the god of Love and his servants, not between the king and his liegemen. Palamon and Arcite hire themselves out to the god of Love as his servants.

\[
\ldots\text{hath hir lord, the god of love, ypayed}
\]

\[
\text{Hir wages and hir fees for hir servyse!}^{3}\]

---


3) I (A) 1802-1803.
The feudal levy was no longer available for Edward III's wars. Amount of knight service was limited at most to sixty days, usually to forty days.4) Already in the reign of Edward I most of knights had ceased to render to the king on their lords' behalf the knight service which knights owed in return for land tenure. Few knights rendered knight service in person even for short-term service; nor did they pay scutages, shield money, instead of service in person. They were also reluctant to perform their civil duties, for which they had been used as jury service increased rapidly.5)

Many of them [i.e. knights] spend more time upon the ornamentation of their clothing than upon exercises of arms, the business of wars and the endurance of labours.6)

Thus, Edward III, following Edward I in his distraint of knighthood, constrained to knightly duties the men who, whether knight or freeman, held on the whole land or rents of £20 a year or more. Chaucer's Franklin, a wealthy freeholder, who Shares in the King's government both central and local alike, refers to his own land worth £20:

... it [i.e. land of twenty pound worth] right now were fallen in myn hond.7)

He obviously ranks among knights, but perhaps below enfeoffed knights. The income level varied as need arose. In 1345 it was raised to £25.8) Such freemen were knighted along with the enfeoffed knights who remained simple freemen. They came increasingly to

---

7) *Squire-Franklin Link*, V (F) 684.
take the knight’s status as justice of the peace, as knight of the shire and as sheriff, as knights were ceasing to perform public service. For lack of knights the freemen thus knighted were used as officers of soldiers in the French campaigns, while many a knight stayed in his estate at his ease and was engaged in country business. A knight in *Piers the Plowman*, it appears, offers as an apology that he is a true knight and has never escaped his primary duty:

... on the teme [= a team of oxen] trewly taughte was I neuere.

In fact he seems to neglect his duty in reverse! The goddess in the House of Fame dismisses the claim of good folk who could fairly claim to have good fame, and confers ill fame on the claimants.

... ther come anoon
Another huge companye
Of goode folk, and gunne crie,
"Lady, graunte us now good fame,
And lat oure werkes han that name
Now in honour of gentilesse,
And also God your soule blesse!
For we han wel deserved hyt,
Therfore is ryght that we ben quyt."

"As thryve I," quod she, "ye shal faylle!
Good werkes shal yow noght availle
To have of me good fame as now.
But with ye what? Y graunte yow
That ye shal have a shrewed fame,
And wikkyd loos [=fame], and worse name,

9) A good example of this sort is Sir Robert Knolles, who rose from the lowest rank and made his fame in the king’s wars. K. H. Vickers, *England in the Later Middle Ages*, London, 1913, p. 224.
10) *Piers the Plowman*, B-Text, VI, 23.
Though ye good los have wel deserved."\textsuperscript{115}

Whether the claimants can be identified with knights or not is of grave doubt. In any case, however, Chaucer's Knight who is gentle and courteous in his demeanour is obviously of gentle birth and breeding. Though Chaucer makes no reference to his Knight's land tenure, the Knight is, it appears, an enfeoffed knight who holds land above the value of, at least, £50 a year. New assessment to arms of 1345 describes that:

\ldots he who has land of the value of £50 yearly shall have with him one other man-at-arms.\textsuperscript{12}

On his way to Canterbury the Knight is accompanied by two attendants, his son, a Squire and a Yeoman who serves presumably as a yeoman archer. But he seems to have some other servants, men-at-arms or soldiers, waiting upon him in the field. Chaucer avoids mentioning the number or type of them. He merely suggests:

A Yeman hadde he [i.e. the Knight] and servantz namo
At that tyme, for hym liste ride so.\textsuperscript{13}\textsuperscript{3}

The Knight, Manly argues, is created on the models of the Scrope family.\textsuperscript{14}\textsuperscript{4} Whether or not his possible models are the Scropes, Chaucer refers briefly to the Knight's service in his lord's campaigns, perhaps into France and Flanders, whereas he dwells upon the Knight's expeditions to Africa, Prussia and the Mediterranean Sea.

Ful worthy [=brave] was he in his lordes werre.\textsuperscript{15}\textsuperscript{5}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{11}) HF, 1606-1621.
\textsuperscript{12}) B. Wilkinson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 228.
\textsuperscript{13}) I (A) 101-102.
\textsuperscript{15}) I (A) 47.
\end{flushleft}
Reference is not made to the Knight's wages in the description of his military career. For his lord's campaigns, nevertheless, the Knight must be paid, at least, 4s a day. During the French war the knights who in lack of knights were used as knights banneret were paid, generally at the rate of 4s and the men-at-arms, the squires and freemen, 2s.\textsuperscript{16} The indenture system was gradually to form a close relationship between lord and retainer, by which the magnates' abuse of royal power was caused in the later years of Edward III's reign and the earlier years of Richard II's. Langland disapproves of a paid army for reasons of feudal class duties. Says Lady Meed:

\begin{quote}
Seruauns for heore seruise (you seon [=see] wel the sothe),
Taketh meede [=wages] of heore maystres · as thei mowen
a-corde.\textsuperscript{17}
\end{quote}

He again regards as a social evil the military service of civilians, townsmen or peasants.

\begin{quote}
Alle that bereth baslarde [=sword] · brode swerde or launce,
Axe other hachet · or eny wepne ellis,
Shal be demed to the deth · but if he do it smythye
In-to sikul or to sithe [=scythe] · to scharne [=ploughshare] or
to kulter [=colter].\textsuperscript{18}
\end{quote}

Langland convinces himself of the class duties ordained by God:\textsuperscript{19}


\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Piers the Plowman}, A-Text, III, 210-211.

\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Piers the Plowman}, B-Text, III, 303-306.
knights ought to defend the Church and protect peasants from their enemies so that the Church can establish the kingdom of God on the earth, and that peasants can provide food for priests and knights; the Church ought to set the minds of people at ease to turn to God; and peasants for their part ought to sow and plough, to sweat and toil. Piers the plowman begs of a knight to do his primary duty:

Ich shal swynke and swete · and sowe for us bothe,
And laboure for the while thou lyuest · al thy lyf-tyme,
In couenaunt that thou kepe · holy kirke and my-selue
Fro wastours and wycked¢ men · that this worlde struen [=ruin].

This having been said, it could not be denied that the indenture helped the king to be well supplied with soldiers. Besides the knights Edward III set every able-bodied man to equip himself with the proper weapons for his wars; he paid him with daily wages. A hobelar, a lightly-armed yeoman, was paid, generally at the rate of 6d a day; a mounted archer 6d; a foot archer 3d or 2d; and a footman 2d.

He [i.e. the king] caused also to be enquired from everybody, and expressly from those who were between sixteen and sixty years of age, that they should be ready for the defence of the kingdom.... Afterwards, the king permitted that those charged with archers, hobelars, and men-at-arms, should pay fines in ready money.

Edward III could not rely only on military service of the feudal host. The English knights were distressingly small in number. At the battle of Crécy the French men-at-arms attained, at the lowest

20) Piers the Plowman, B-Text, VI, 24-27.
21) See M. McKisack, loc. cit.
possible figure, to 12,000. The English knights on the other hand numbered less than 2,400.\(^{23}\) By the soldiers thus armed, therefore, the king could make up for the inferiority in the numbers of his knights. At Crécy the soldiers of various types approached about two-thirds of the whole number, 6,900 out of about 11,000 men. Edward III's army comprised 2,100 men-at-arms, 2,000 Welsh spearmen, 5,200 archers and about 1,700 footmen.\(^{24}\) Furthermore, soldiers had done much towards making the English secure success. The yeomen archers and hobelars especially took a distinguished part in military tactics. Even Froissart who was deeply imbued with chivalric ideas can not fail to see the successful tactics of the yeomanry.

Says Froissart:

Then the battle [i.e. that of Poitiers] began on all parts, and the battles of the marshals of France approached, and they set forth that were appointed to break the array of the archers. They entered a-horseback into the way where the great hedges were on both sides set full of archers. As soon as the men of arms entered, the archers began to shoot on both sides and did slay and hurt horses and knights, so that the horses when they felt the sharp arrows they would in no wise go forward, but drew aback and flang and took on so fiercely, that many of them fell on their masters, so that for press they could not rise again; insomuch that the marshals' battle could never come at the prince [i.e. the Black Prince].... The battle of the marshals began to disorder by reason of the shot of the archers with the aid of the men of arms, who came in among them [i.e. army corps] and

\(^{23}\) See K. H. Vickers, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 177.

slew of them and did what they list...  

Indeed, the yeomen had a share in the chivalric honour won by Edward III or his son Edward, the Black Prince, at the battle of Crécy (1346) or Poitiers (1356). Chaucer of course can hardly have failed to know the yeomen. After Edward's wars had been over Chaucer made mention of archery, employed by a knight as one of knightly accomplishments. Of Sir Thopas Chaucer says that.

...he was a good archer.

The reference to Sir Thopas' employment of the unchivalric weapon is admittedly Chaucer's pretended mistake. And yet he pretends ignorance of his mistake. For he has praised Sir Thopas for his knightly quality, prowess. He

Al of a knyght was fair and gent  
In bataille and in tourneyment.

It can not be denied, however, that the circumstances tended to show that such a degenerate knight as Sir Thopas was increasing in number. Another example of the knights of this sort is a band of men in the Flower and the Leaf, who are good enough to be the knights of the Order of the Garter. These knights may be referred to as those of this sort.

...tho that bere boughês [=bows] in their hond  
Of the precious laurer so notable,  
Be such as were, I wol ye understond,  
Noble knightês of the Round[ë] Table.

---

25) The Chronicles of Froissart, p. 44.  
26) VII (B²) 739.  
27) VII (B²) 715–716.
As for Chaucer, he probably paying due regard to the traditional ideas of chivalry seems to omit explicit allusion to the degradation of the chivalry of his time.

Edward III and the Black Prince saw many a fighting; they for their part fought for chivalric glory. They distinguished themselves by knightly deeds in battle. Laurence Minot, a patriotic poet, who wrote the political poems in favour of Edward III, praises Edward’s military triumph over the French at Flamengerie in 1339.

When sir Philip of France herd tell
That king Edward in feld walld dwell [=await battle],
Than gayned him no gle [=this availed him no sport];
He traisted [=expected] of no better bote [=remedy],
Bot both on hors and on fote
He hasted him to fie.29)

Likewise, Edward III and the Black Prince were praised for the courteous treatment of noble captives. Froissart rather gives high praise to them in this respect. They carried chivalric ideas out in actual practice. Edward III encouraged the knights or their young sons who held knights’ fees and were not yet knighted to take up the knightly rank. The ceremony of mass knighting was performed; its pageantry was stressed. In 1349 he, taking example by the legendary king Arthur’s knights of the Round Table, founded his Order of the Garter at Windsor, which he had vowed to found in 1344.

...there be knightês...of Garter,
That in hir tyme did right [=justice] worthily;

And the honour they did to the laurer
Is, for by [it] they have their laud [=honour] hooly,
Their triumph eek, and martial glory;
Which unto hem is more parfyt richesse
Than any wight imagine can or gesse.\textsuperscript{30)}

Despite a fifteenth-century anonymous poetess' praise of the knights
of the Order of the Garter, in fact, chivalry at this time came
gradually to be reduced and sophisticated. The ceremony of knighting
became more elaborate; a banquet more magnificent; and heraldry
more colourful. Edward III, at the same time, encouraged the
yeomanry to practice archery and forbade on pain of death every
idle game except archery.

...it was advised and decreed that, throughout the realms of
England, no man should use any play or pastime save only the
longbow and arrows, on pain of death, and that every bowyer and
fletcher should be made quit of all his debts.\textsuperscript{31)}

Archery became a national game. Chaucer's Yeoman, who carries
a mighty bow and a sheaf of arrows, does not seem, curiously
enough, to have waged war overseas.

A sheef of pecok arwes, bright and kene,
Under his belt he bar ful thritily [=properly],
(Wel koude he dresse [=set in order] his takel
[=instrument] yemanly:
His arwes drooped noght with fetheres lowe)
And in his hand he baar a myghty bowe.\textsuperscript{32)}

\textsuperscript{30} The Flower and the Leaf, 519-525.
\textsuperscript{31} G. G. Coulton, Social Life in Britain from the Conquest to the Reformation, London, 1918, p. 397.
\textsuperscript{32} I (A) 104-108.
Chaucer does not mention whether this mighty bow is the longbow or not. Nor does he make mention of the Yeoman’s military service though the Yeoman is an attendant of the warlike Knight who has come back from overseas campaign. Chaucer simply says that the Yeoman is a forester, with an image of St. Christopher and a green baldrick. This is probably that archery was not counted on as a knightly accomplishment. The tactics of the archer specifically proved of advantage to the cavalry charges but the cavalry combats were still the generally accepted feudal tactics. The knights had generally been desired to fight on horseback with lance and shield, and fight on foot with sword or ax when a melee ensued. In accordance with the chivalric conception of war Chaucer seems to place the description of the Knight’s single combats at Tlemcen on the list of his military career, but does not describe in detail his single combats. It is probable that the Knight has fought with the infidel for the glory to God and of chivalry, as heroes of his Tale make a single combats in the lists for love, not for faith.

In goon the speres ful sadly [=firmly] in arrest [=spear rest];
In gooth the sharpe spore [=spur] into the syde.
Ther seen men who kan juste and who kan ryde;
Ther shyveren shaftes upon sheeldes thikke;
He feeleth thurgh the herte-spoon [=breastbone] the prikke.
Up spryngen speres twenty foot on highte;
Out goon the swerdes as the silver brighte.34)

In actuality, however, Edward III’s wars saw a gradual change in military tactics as well as in arms and armour. The longbow caused horsemen to dismount and fight on foot. After having shot down the greater part of the advanced corps of French cavalry before

34) I (A) 2602-2608.
they reached the English lines of lances the archers delivered up the survivours to the dismounted men-at-arms. The knights and hobelars who had prepared to fall to with a shortened spear, sword, dagger or ax defeated their opponents with terrible slaughter.\textsuperscript{35} The shortened spear came to be used instead of lance. This weapon was of much avail in fighting at close quarters with the cavalrymen who were mowed down or thrown from their horses. So was also truly a coat of mail. Armour was no longer of much avail in a melee; it was bulky. A coat of mail, on the other hand, could be lighter to be on the move.\textsuperscript{36} Chaucer’s Knight consequently seems to have worn a coat of mail over his fustian tunic instead of bulky armour, and engaged in battle. Chaucer says:

\begin{quote}
Of fustian he wered a gypon \textsuperscript{[=tunic]}
Al bismotered with his habergeon \textsuperscript{[=stained with the rust of his coat of mail]}.\textsuperscript{37}
\end{quote}

A cannon was another missile weapon of this sort, but was as yet of scant use. The longbow was considered, none the less, to be the more effective arm in Edward’s wars. It would appear, of course, that the efficiency of cannon was recognized. The superiority of cannon depended on the ability of a stone ball to deal heavier blow at the cavalry than an arrow, yet it was decidedly wanting in its mobility and rapidity.\textsuperscript{38} Though Chaucer avoids referring to, presumably the longbow employed as a weapon, he refers to cannon in the account of the sea battle of Actium in the Legend of Cleopatra.

\begin{quote}
With grisely \textsuperscript{[=horrible]} soun out goth \textsuperscript{[=goes off]}
the grete gonne \textsuperscript{[=cannon]},
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{35} See above, pp. 27–28; also C. W. C. Oman, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 126f.
\textsuperscript{37} I (A) 75–76.
\textsuperscript{38} See Mann, ‘Arms and Armour,’ p. 328.
And heterly [=fiercely] they [i.e. Antony and Cleopatra] hurtelen [=dash together] al atones,
And from the top doun come the grete stones.
In goth [=in there go] the grapenel, so ful of crokes;
Among the ropes reme the sherynge-hokes [=shearing-hooks].
In with the polax [=battle-axe] preseth he and he;
Byhynde the mast begynneth he [i.e. Antony] to ŠŽ to fle,
And out ageyn, and dryveth hym overbord;
He styngeth hym upon his speres ord [=point];
He rent [=tears] the seyl with hokes lyke a sithe.39)

Chaucer deliberately substitutes the description of his contemporary battle with that of ancient one, but it is known that his description of the sea battle can be paralleled in part in Froissart’s description of the battles of Sluys in 1340, Espagnols-sur-Meror in 1350 and La Rochelle in 1372.40)

Similarly, Chaucer changes the affair of the degenerate courtly love of his time for Criseyde’s heretical love for Diomede. Chaucer failed to learn the love tidings which he was to hear in the House of Fame. He, instead, tells how Criseyde, widow of Calchas, after having had illicit sexual relations with Diomede, one of the Greek chieftains, has made up her mind to desert Troilus, her lover, a Trojan prince, and to be true to her new lover, while her former lover serves her loyalty. It may, therefore, be said that Chaucer, who had made the Eagle praise Geoffrey for his service of love in the House of Fame, came to be a renegade lover as he grew older. As Queen Alceste defends Chaucer from the charge of the god of Love in the Prologue to the Legend of Good Women.

Whil he was yong, he kepte youre [i.e. of the god of Love] estat;

39) LGW, 637–646.
I not wher he be now a renegat.41)

It may easily be supposed, otherwise, that by this time he had had little interest in love. At the same time, he can not have a lofty disregard for the ideas of feudal and courtly chivalry; he rather tends to distinguish between its ideas and practices. Despite his caricature of a knight like Sir Thopas Chaucer represents a knight as being desired to, or having to be. Cambinskan in the Squire's Tale is represented with the chivalric qualities of honour, prowess, courtesy and generosity; Cambinskan, king of Tatary, owes what he is to his prowess and sagacity, yet he treats his people courteously and generously. Of course, there was such a knight in Chaucer's time. Much is said by Froissart in praise of Edward III or the Black Price. Praise belongs to him for his courteous treatment of his opponents in his wars.42) Froissart prefers chivalric deeds over others in the French war. In this respect Chaucer shares Froissart's taste for chivalry. In actuality, however, most knights did not behave kindly towards their foes. Nor did they fight for glory. In 1346 Edward III devastated the country and town, burnt ships, and plundered as he marched towards the Seine. In 1370 the Black Prince, also, who was said to regard himself as the flower of chivalry, ordered to massacre an inhabitant of Limoges. His army continued to plunder and destroy the northern France.43) Chaucer again represents Cambinskan as a young aspirant to knighthood. Like the Squire Cambinskan has behaved himself gallantly to win his lady's favours in his wars. In the French war, however, few knights did fight for the sake of the favours of their ladies whom they were compelled to serve. Nor did they behave courteously towards captured women,

41) LGW, (G) 400-401.
42) See S. Painter, op. cit., p. 43.
noble and common alike. They seem to have raped them; even the
noblemen are said to have committed the sin of rape.\textsuperscript{44} It seems
probable that marriage of Theseus to Hippolyta in the \textit{Knight's Tale}
suggests that such brutality was common in time of war. Theseus,
duke of Athens, takes Hippolyta, ruler of Amazons, to wife when
he has conquered her realm.

He conquered the regne of Femenye [=land of women],
That whilom was ycleped Scithia,
And weddede the queene Ypolita,
And broghte hire hoom with hym in his contree
With muchel glorie and greet solempnytee,
And eek hir yonge suster Emelye.\textsuperscript{45}

Apart from such brutal behaviour towards captured women on
the part of knights, it seems true that the ideas of courtly love
were less current among court circles. These ideas gradually reduced
their effects of setting the knight serve his lady as a courtly lover.
A company of men who take it for granted that they are worthy
of good fame begs of the goddess in the House of Fame to grant
them a favour:

\textsc{"Mercy, lady dere!}

To tellen certeyn as hyt is,
We han don neither that ne this,
But ydel al oure lyf ybe.

\textsuperscript{44} See S. Painter, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 146. Similar brutality is likely to have
commonly been displayed towards women. Despite the love-poet's praise
of a lady men did not behave courteously towards women; they scolded
ladies in public gatherings. Most husbands smote their wives with their
fists; and many fathers bound with chains their daughters who hoped to
marry against their wishes, thrashed them and struck with their foot.
pp. 189f.

\textsuperscript{45} I (A) 866–871.
But, natheles, yet preye we
That we mowe han as good a fame,
And gret renoun and knowen name,
As they that han doon noble gestes,
And acheived alle her lestes [=desires],
As wel of love as other thyng.\textsuperscript{46)}

The indenture decreased the knight's value as a courtly lover as well as a feudal servant. An old, rich knight in the \textit{Merchant's Tale} who appears to have been of humble birth takes pains to be knightly. His interest is in a lordly housing, a luxury clothing and such courtly garden as is described in the \textit{Romaunt of the Rose}. Especially in a senile love for his young wife whom he has married barely two months ago. But his love is nothing but senile lust. Before marriage he has sought for a lady's love in courtly style, but he satisfies his physical desires for marriage intercourse. For he thanks God for accepting as legitimate conjugal love.

\begin{quote}
I hope to God, herafter shul ye knowe
That ther nys no so greet felicitee
In mariage, ne nevere mo shal bee,
That yow shal lette of youre savacion,
So that ye use, as skile [=reason] is and reson,
The lustes [=pleasures] of youre wyf attemprely
[=moderately],
And that ye plese hire nat to amorously,
And that ye kepe yow eek from oother synne.\textsuperscript{47)}
\end{quote}

A knight like him, being of humble birth and breeding, is not qualified as a courtly lover. Possession of the chivalric virtues of prowess and fidelity was a requisite of love. The god of Love

\textsuperscript{46)} HF, 1730-1739.
\textsuperscript{47)} IV (E) 1674-1681.
... Whoso is vertuous,
    And in his port nought outrageous,
Whanne sich oon thou [i.e. the poet] seest thee bifOrn,
Though he be not gentill born,
Thou maist well seyn, this is in soth,
That he is gentil by cause he doth
As longeth to a gentilman;
Of hem noon other deme I can.\textsuperscript{48}

Courtly love cannot be understood by such a knight, just as the duck's conception of love is made fun of by the tercelet in the \textit{Parliament of Fowls}.\textsuperscript{49}

"Wel bourded [=joked]," quod the doke, "by myn hat! That men shulde loven alwey causeles,
Who can a resoun fynde or wit in that?
Daunseth [=dances] he murye that is myrtheles?
Who shulde recche [=care] of that is recheles?
Ye quek [=quack]!" yit seyde the doke, ful wel and fayre,
"There been mo sterres [=stars], God wot, than a payre [=pair]!"
"Now fy, cherl!" quod the gentil tercelet,
"Out of the donghil [=dunghill] cam that word ful right! Thow canst nat seen which thyng is wel beset [=in good condition]!
Thow farst [=behave] by love as oules [=owls] don by lyght:
The day hem blent [=blinds], ful wel they se by nyght.
Thy kynde is of so low a wretchednesse
That what love is, thow canst nat seen ne gesse."\textsuperscript{50}

\textsuperscript{48} RR, 2191–2198.
\textsuperscript{49} See \textit{Oxford Chaucer}, I, p. 517.
\textsuperscript{50} \textit{PF}, 589–602.
His love is one of the kind that in case a lover was deserted by his beloved one he could fully be compensated for his disappointed love by his new love for another woman. The goose in the *Parliament of Fowls* argues:

"Pes! now tak kep every man,
And herkeneth which a resoun I shal forth brynge!
My wit is sharp, I love no taryinge;
I seye I rede [=advise] hym, though he were my brother,
But [=Unless] she wol love hym, lat hym love another!"\(^{51}\)

His love accordingly does not lead the knight to serve his lady as much as his lord, and to fight to win her favours:

... at youre [i.e. of the god of Love] biddyng,
I [i.e. the poet] wole me yelde in alle thyng.
To youre servyse I wol me take;
For God defende that I shulde make
Ageyn youre biddyng resistence;
I wole not don so gret offence;
For if I dide, it were no skile [=reason].
Ye may do with me what ye wile,
Save or spille, and also sloo.
Fro you in no wise may I goo.
My lyf, my deth is in youre hond;
I may not laste out of youre bond.\(^{52}\)

To a low-born knight love is merely intercourse of the sexes. A lady could be no longer an object of her lover's worship, provided she were deprived of her good qualities which raised herself to a sovereign princess and made her an object of his devotion. Chaucer's Manciple's words prove that such one's conception of love is based

\(^{51}\) *PF*, 563-567.

\(^{52}\) *RR*, 1945-1956.
merely on one's grosser appetites.

Ther nys no difference, trewely,
Bitwixe a wyf that is of heigh degree,
If of hir body dishonest she bee,
And a povre wenche...53)

Of course, courtly love also permits its servant to be rewarded with kisses, embraces, caresses, and higher favours for his service so far as it implies adultery. In the *Romaunt of the Rose* the god of Love counsells the lover:

... wite thou wel, withoute were [=doubt],
That thee shal seme, somtyme that nyght,
That thou hast hir, that is so bright,
Naked bitwene thyne armes there,
All sothfastnesse [=truth] as thogh it were.
Thou shalt make castels thanne in Spayne,
[=Thou shalt imagine delightful visions,]
And dreme of joye...54)

But the tenets of feudal chivalry dominated over a matter of love; they demanded that a vassal should perform deeds of fidelity and prowess for his lord to win his lady's favours. The gradual change of the feudal relations between lord and vassal came to deprive the knight of his functions as lover and vassal. As is shown in the *Parliament of Fowls*, most of the newly knighted men may have had no idea of what courtly love was like. Or else they must have been less familiar with the cultural tradition of court circles. Chaucer’s Franklin apologizes for having not been educated in poesy.

I lerned nevere rethorik, certeyn;

53) IX (H) 212-215.
54) *RR*, 2568-2574.
Thyng that I speke, it moot be bare and pleyn.
I sleep [slept] nevere on the Mount of Pernaso
[=Parnassus],
Ne lerned Marcus Tullius Scithero [=Cicero].
Colours [=rhetorical figures] ne knowe I none,
withouten drede [=doubt],
But swiche colours as growen in the mede,
Or elles swiche as men dye or peynte.
Colours of rethoryk been to me queynte [=unfamiliar];
My spirit feeleth noght of swich mateere.553

He tells the courtly type of a tale told of the virtues of integrity
and toleration, but he is preoccupied with the conjugal virtue of
mutual respect,563 with which the ideas of courtly love cannot be
reconciled.577 He attaches much value to family life and money.
Practical way of life is his chief concern. He is very calculating;
he figures out the size of Aurelius' debt to the magician.

These are the scattered examples of the degenerate courtly love
of the age. The degradation of courtly love may have prevented
Chaucer from writing about the love tidings in the House of Fame.
He changed a matter of love tidings with that of fame. But he
did not solve the matter too. It was probably because those who
deserved good fame shared it among their social inferiors; because
those who did not deserve good fame came to receive it. As for
the kind of men who did not deserve (to be rewarded with) good
fame Chaucer's goddess in the House of Fame seems to grant them
their request:

55) V (F) 719–727.
56) See G. L. Kittredge, Chaucer and his Poetry, Cambridge Mass., 1915,
pp. 207f.
New York, 1959, p. 185.
Tho come the thridde companye,
And gunne up to the dees to hye [=haste],
And donn on knes they fille anon,
And seyde, “We ben everychon
Folk that han ful trewely
Deserved fame ryghtfully,
And praye yow, hit mote be knowe,
Ryght as hit is, and forth yblowe [=rumoured].”
“I graunte,” quod she, “for me list
That now your goode werkes be wist,
And yet ye shul han better loos,
Right in dispit of alle your foos,
Than worthy is, and that anoon.”58)

In actuality, they were rewarded with good fame for their assiduous service to the king. Land or money brought them to good fame. As unchivalric, thus, Chaucer may have remained the matter unsolved.

58) HF, 1657-1669.