|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  A good WIF was ther, OF biside BATHE, |
|  | But she was [somdel](http://www.librarius.com/gy.htm#somdel) [deef](http://www.librarius.com/gy.htm#deef), and that was [scathe](http://www.librarius.com/gy.htm#scathe). |
|  | Of clooth-makyng she hadde [swich](http://www.librarius.com/gy.htm#swich) an [haunt](http://www.librarius.com/gy.htm#haunt), |
|  | She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt. |
|  | In al the parisshe wif ne was ther noon |
|  | That to the offrynge bifore hire sholde goon; |
|  | And if ther dide, certeyn so [wrooth](http://www.librarius.com/gy.htm#wrooth) was she, |
|  | That she was out of alle charitee. |
|  | Hir [coverchiefs](http://www.librarius.com/gy.htm#coverchiefs) ful fyne weren of ground; |
|  | I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound |
|  | That on a Sonday weren upon hir [heed](http://www.librarius.com/gy.htm#heed). |
|  | Hir [hosen](http://www.librarius.com/gy.htm#hosen) weren of fyn scarlet [reed](http://www.librarius.com/gy.htm#reed), |
|  | Ful [streite yteyd](http://www.librarius.com/gy.htm#streite yteyd), and shoes ful moyste and newe. |
|  | Boold was hir face, and fair, and [reed of](http://www.librarius.com/gy.htm#reed) [hewe](http://www.librarius.com/gy.htm#hewe). |
|  | She was a worthy womman al hir lyve: |
|  | Housbondes at [chirche dore](http://www.librarius.com/gy.htm#chirche dore) she hadde fyve, |
|  | Withouthen oother compaignye in youthe, - |
|  | But therof nedeth nat to speke as nowthe. |
|  | And thries hadde she been at Jerusalem; |
|  | She hadde passed many a [straunge strem](http://www.librarius.com/gy.htm#straunge strem); |
|  | At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne, |
|  | In Galice at Seint-Jame, and at Coloigne. |
|  | She koude muchel of wandrynge by the weye. |
|  | [Gat-tothed](http://www.librarius.com/gy.htm#gat-tothed) was she, [soothly](http://www.librarius.com/gy.htm#soothly) for to seye. |
|  | Upon an [amblere](http://www.librarius.com/gy.htm#amblere) esily she sat, |
|  | Ywympled wel, and on hir [heed](http://www.librarius.com/gy.htm#heed) an hat |
|  | As brood as is a bokeler or a targe; |
|  | A foot-mantel aboute hir hipes large, |
|  | And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe. |
|  | In felaweshipe wel [koude](http://www.librarius.com/gy.htm#koude) she laughe and carpe. |
|  | Of remedies of love she knew per chaunce, |
|  | For she [koude](http://www.librarius.com/gy.htm#koude) of that art the olde daunce. |

 |

There was a woman from Bath,

A little deaf, which was a pity.

She had such a gift for weaving

That she was better than the weavers of Ypres and Ghent

In the whole parish there was no woman

Worthy to take precedence of her in the offertory procession;

And if anyone dared tto, she was so furious

That she lost all her charitable feelings.

Her head-coverings were of beautiful fine fabric;

I’d take a bet that they weighed ten pounds,

The ones she wore on a Sunday.

Her stockings were scarlet, pulled up straight,

And her shoes were shiny and new.

She had a bold, attractive face with a ruddy complexion.

She had been a worthy woman all her life:

She had been married five times,

Not to mention other ‘companions’ when she was young

(But let’s **not** menti0on it).

She had been to Jerusalem three times

And crossed many foreign rivers;

She’d been to Rome and Boulogne,

St James’ in Galicia and Cologne.

She knew a lot about travelling.

She had a gap between her front teeth, to tell the truth.

She sat comfortably on an ambling horse,

In a nice head-covering and with a hat

As wide as a small shield or a target;

A travelling skirt was wrapped round her large hips

And on her feet she had a pair of sharp spurs.

She liked laughing and joking in the company of others.

She may well have known about love potions,

For she understood the merry dance of love.