

SOME
PICTURES

from

The Shepherds' Kalendar

of the
fifteenth and sixteenth centuries



DEDDINGTON

1956

¶ My thanks are due to
Mr C.B. Oldman of the
British Museum
for identifying woodcuts
in my possession.



Preface

The earliest surviving copy of *Le Compost et Kalendrier des Bergiers* is in the B.N. at Paris and is dated 18 April 1493. There is another in the British Museum dated 18 July 1493. Editions were printed at Geneva in 1497, at Lyons and Troyes in 1510. From then onwards there seems to have been a steady flow of editions down to the beginning of the eighteenth century.

The English series started in 1503 with a translation made, apparently, by a Scot whose knowledge of French was inadequate and whose English did not satisfy Richard Pynson, printer and publisher, who issued the next English version at London in 1506. The earlier edition had been printed at Paris. Pynson's opinion of it is hardly flattering :

Here before tyme thys boke was prynted in parys in to corrupte englyshe and nat by no englyshe man wherfor these bokes that were brought into Inglonde no man coude vnderstonde

them perfetly and no maruayll for hit is vnlek-
ly for a man of that countrey for to make hyt
into perfyte englyſſhe as it ſhulde be.

¶ Newely nowe it is drawne out of frenſſhe into
englyſſhe at the inſtaunce & coſte and charge of
Rychard Pynſon.

The opening ſentence of the 1503 verſion may ex-
plain Pynſon's objections :

Oon ſhyppart kepat hys ſhypp in feyldys qwyche
was not clerk et had no wnderſtondyng of wryt-
tys bot oonly be hys natural wyt et wnderſtond-
yng ſayd How weeyl that leywyng et deyng to
the playſyr et wyl of ovr lord ſhoold man lyue
naturelly vn to iii ſcor et xii or mor.



The verſion of the Lord's Prayer is intereſting
for the rendering of the ſecond petition :

Thy kynryk we mot cum to.

The colophon at the end reads as follows :

**¶ Here endyth the kalendar of Shyppars
translapt of french i englyſh to the lowyng
of almyghty god & of hys gloryous mother
mary and of the holy cowrt of hywyn pren-
tpt i parps the.xxiii.day of iunyng oon thow-
ſand.ccccc.& iij.**

In modern ſpelling :

¶ Here endeth the Kalendar of Shepherds,
translated of French in English to the loving
of Almighty God & his glorious Mother
Mary, and of the holy Court of Heaven. Prin-
ted in Paris, the xxiii day of June, one thou-
sand ccccc & iij.

Although no name is mentioned it ſeems probable
that the printer was A. Verard.

The next English edition after Pynſon's was that
printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1508, and from
then to 1640 the *Short-Title Catalogue* records a fur-
ther fourteen editions, and the American *S.T.C.* has
one entered for 1656.

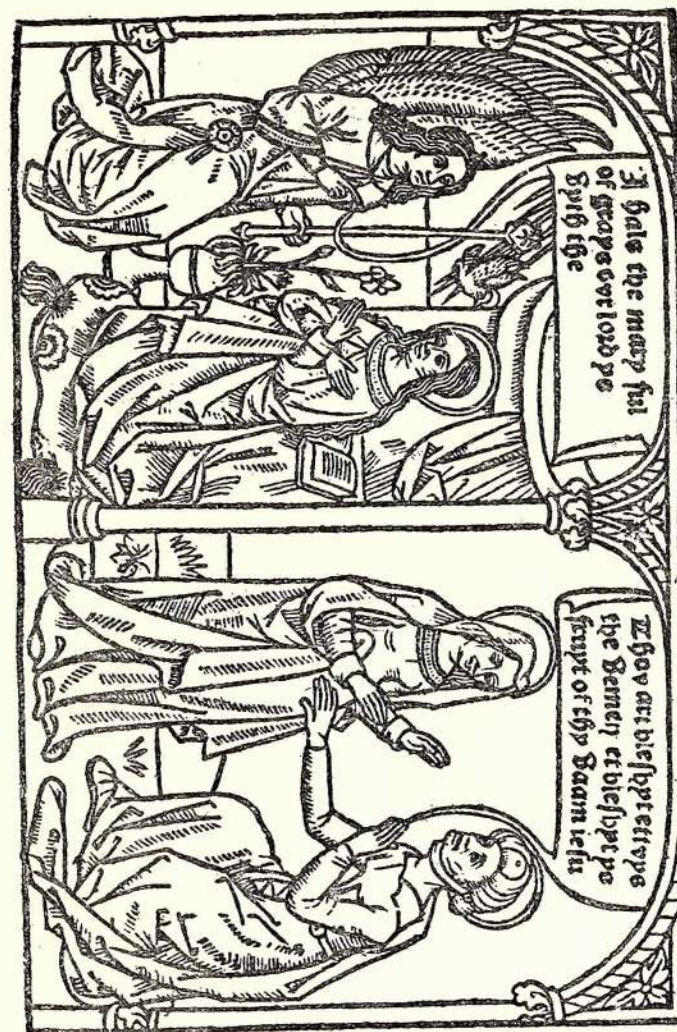
The *Kalendar* was evidently a very popular pub-
lication. It ſupplied inſtruction in religion, medicine,
aſtronomy, and aſtrology, in addition to the calen-

dar proper with all its rules & tables. Woodcuts abound, including two anatomical maps for the benefit of those wanting to practice letting of blood with due regard to the planets and signs of the zodiac.

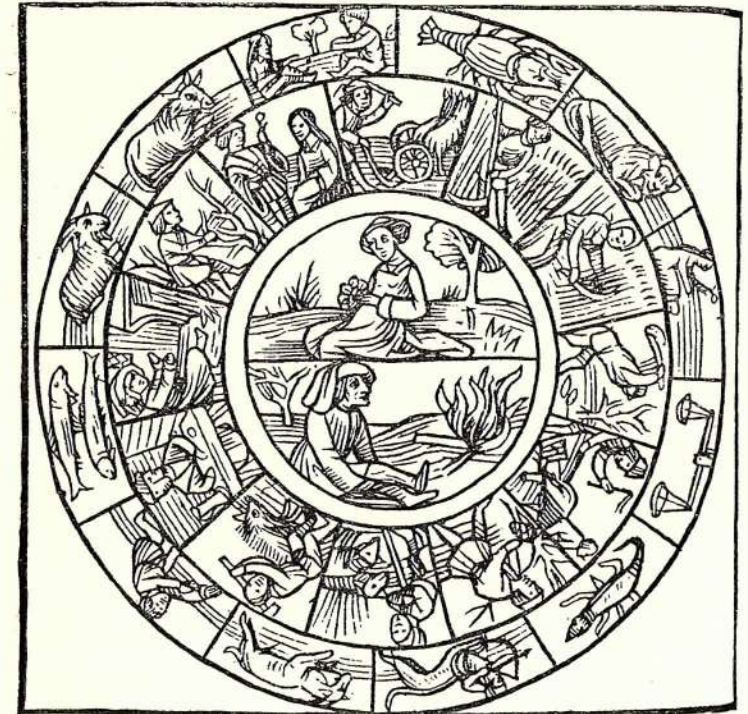
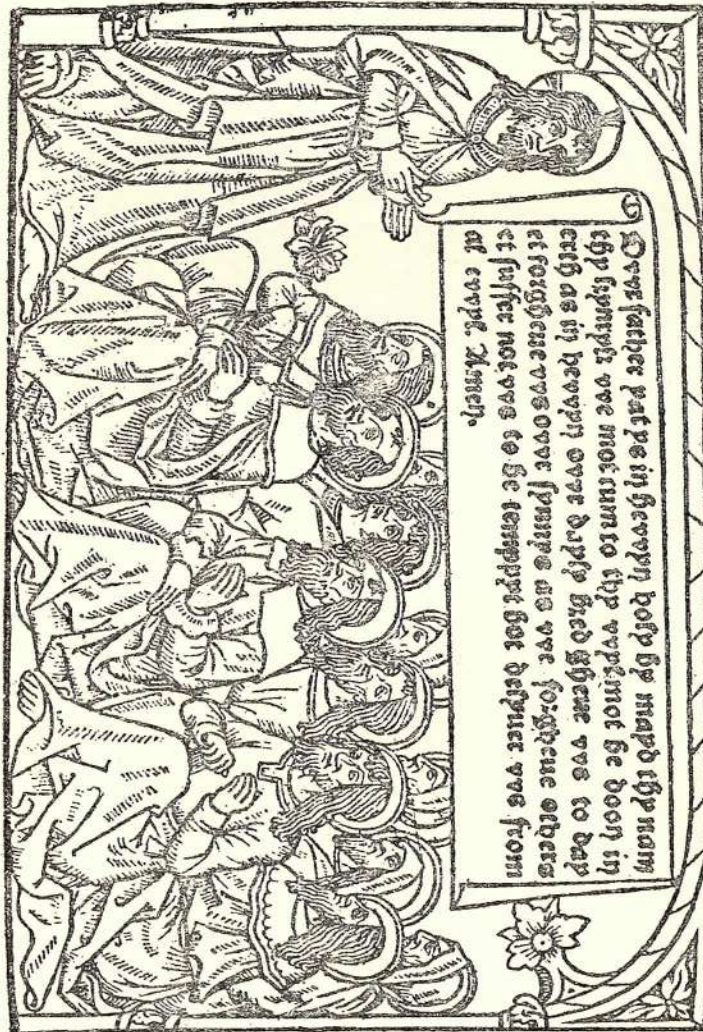
Since the *Stars* are nowadays exploited by the weekly press, I have printed instead at the end the simpler rules of health to be observed without profound astrological knowledge! They may be of practical interest to those living under the *regiment* of a Welfare State.

The woodcuts vary somewhat in number and in position in the different editions. For example, the English series has the cut for January alone of the twelve months.

¶ Those of the woodcuts here reproduced have had to be reduced in size, with the exception of the three single figures.



The Twelve Months & The Twelve Ages of Man



Below the pictures I have printed the shorter of two descriptions of the Twelve Ages of Man. That given is from Pynson's edition. The spelling has been modernised, but I have used a type-face contemporary with the pictures, dating from 1496.

Notes

For the most part the pictures speak for themselves. *January* was the month for good food and the building up of physical strength. In *February* the cold and hidden fevers had to be guarded against. *March* saw the coming of Lent and the awakening of spring; hence the fishing and gardening. In *April* the flowers are coming out in their beauty, and the youth has picked a nosegay for his lady-love. *May* sees the happy pair out hawking together. With *June* we return to more serious tasks:

For in my time
From sheep is shorn all fleece and wool
And had in merchandise by great ships full
Over the sea

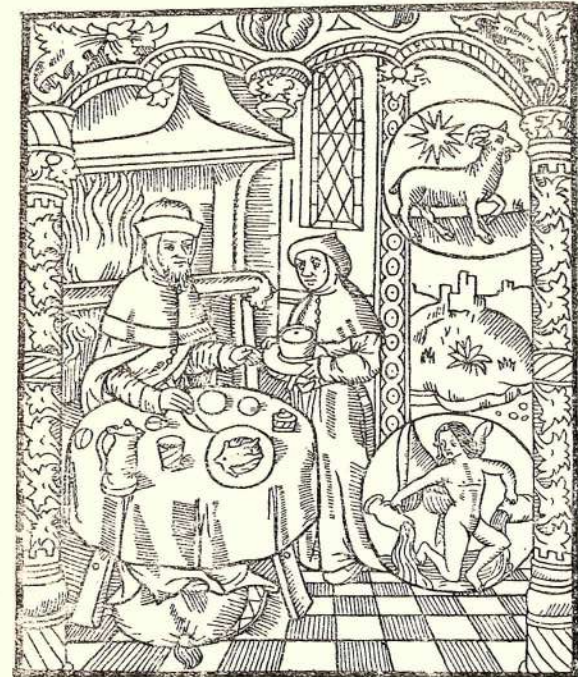
July is the time for hay-making :
Fruits of the earth to man and beast relief
Feeding horses / kine / mutton / and strong beef.

August and *September* are the harvest months :
In my time each man should have great lust
To labour in harvest with great busyness
To reap and sheaf eschewing idleness
And rise early with perfect diligence
Thanking our Lord of his great providence.

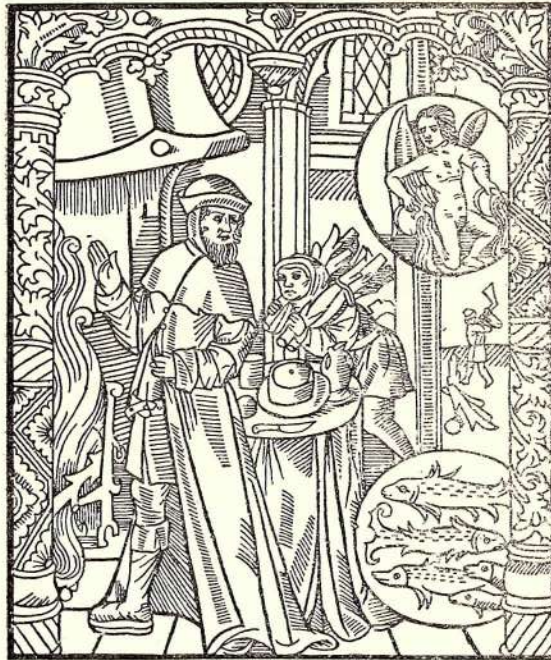
October sees threshing, ploughing (with a mixed team), harrowing, and sowing. *November* shews acorns being gathered and the pigs killed. Finally, in *December*, the fruits of the earth reach the kitchen.

[Quotations from Wynkyn de Worde's edition, 1508]

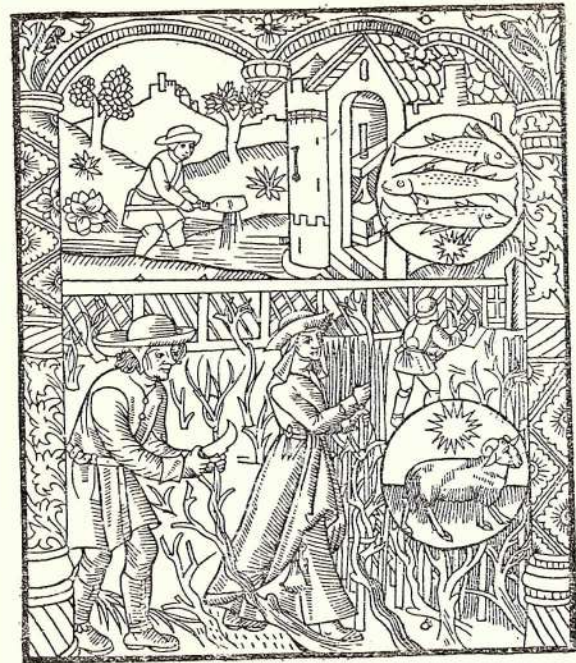
January



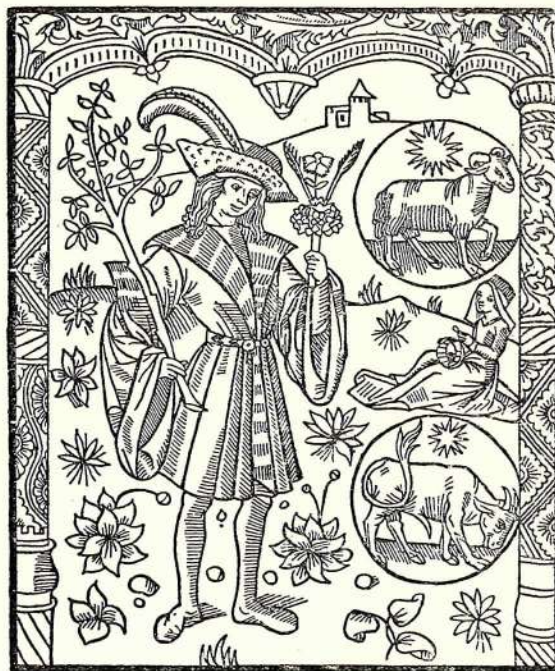
¶ The first moneth of January / the child is without might / till he be vi. year old / he can not help himself.



The other vi. year that is the first time of the springing of all flowers & so the child till xij. year springeth in knowledge & learning & to do as he is taught.



March is the boding time & in that vi. year of March the child wareth big and apt to do service and learning signs from xii. to xvii. such as is shewed him.

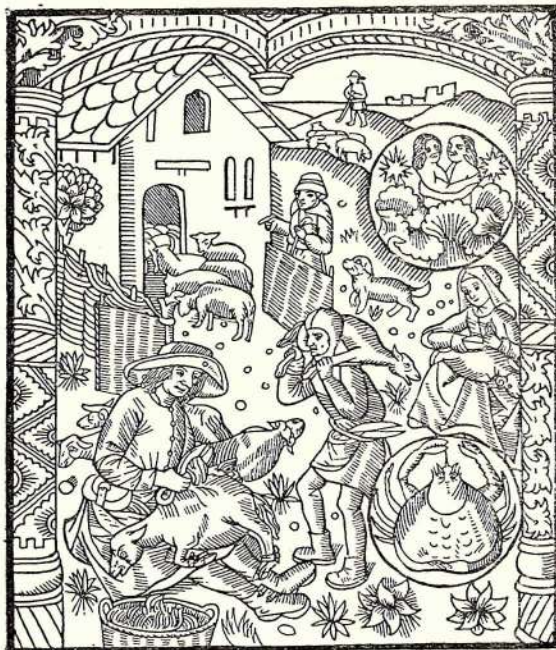


April is the springtime of flowers
and in that .vi. year a goeth to mans
state in height & largeness & wareth wise
and bold but then be ware in that age /
of sensuality for he is then .xxiii.



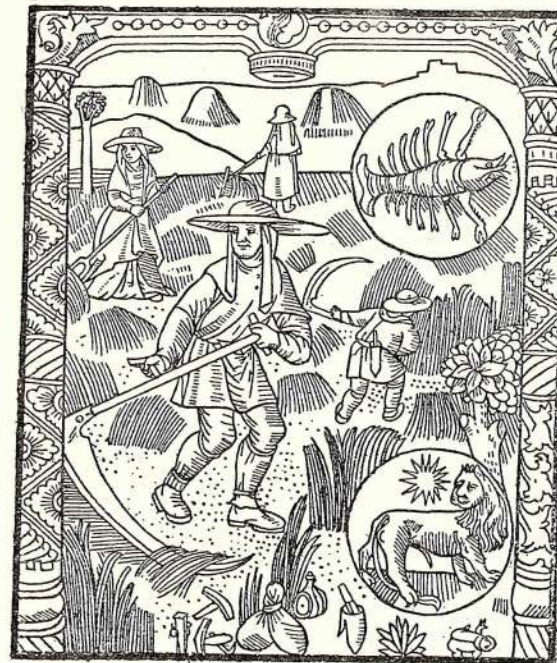
May is the season that all flowers
is spread & and be then in their most vir-
tue with good sweet savour / in these .vi.
year he is in his most lusty and Jolity /
but then let him gather the flowers of
good manners by time for and he tarry
past that age it is happy & ever he take
them for then he is xxx. year.

June



In June he begins to close his mind
and wax stable and then he beginneth
to wax ripe for then he is rrrvj.

July



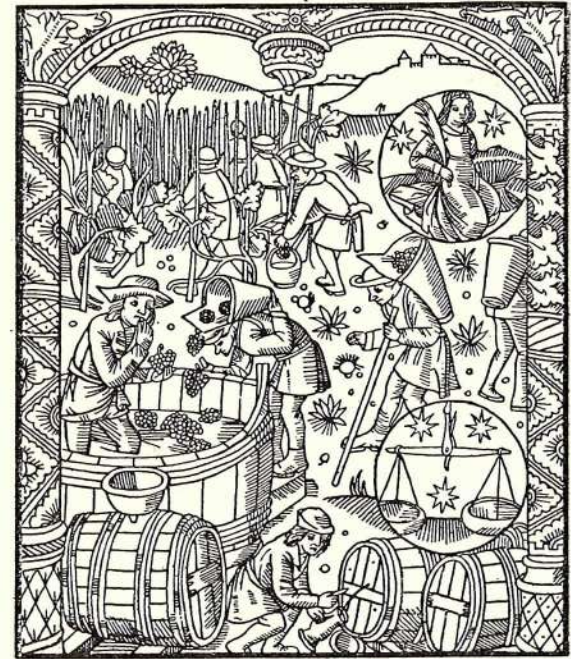
At July. he is xlii. and he beginneth
a little to decline and feeleth not so prosp-
erous as he was.

August

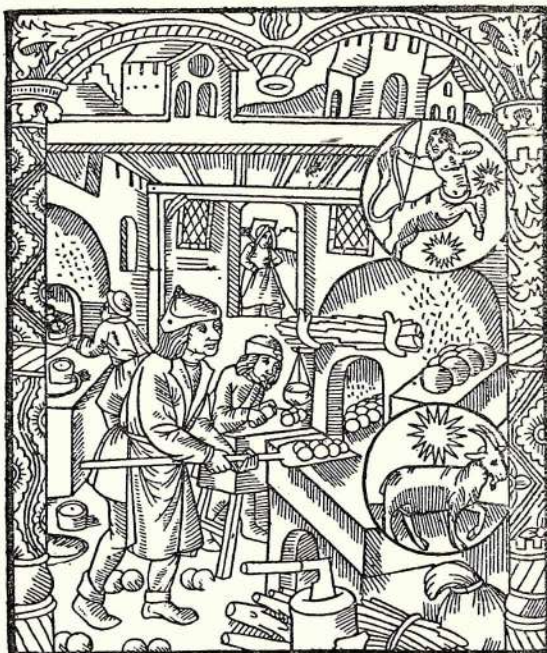


In August / he is by that vij. year
xlvij year and then he goeth not so lusti-
ly as he did but studieth how to gather
to find him in his old age.

September



In September he is liii. year. he
then purvepeth against the winter to che-
rish himself withal / & keepeth nigh the
good together that he got in his youth.



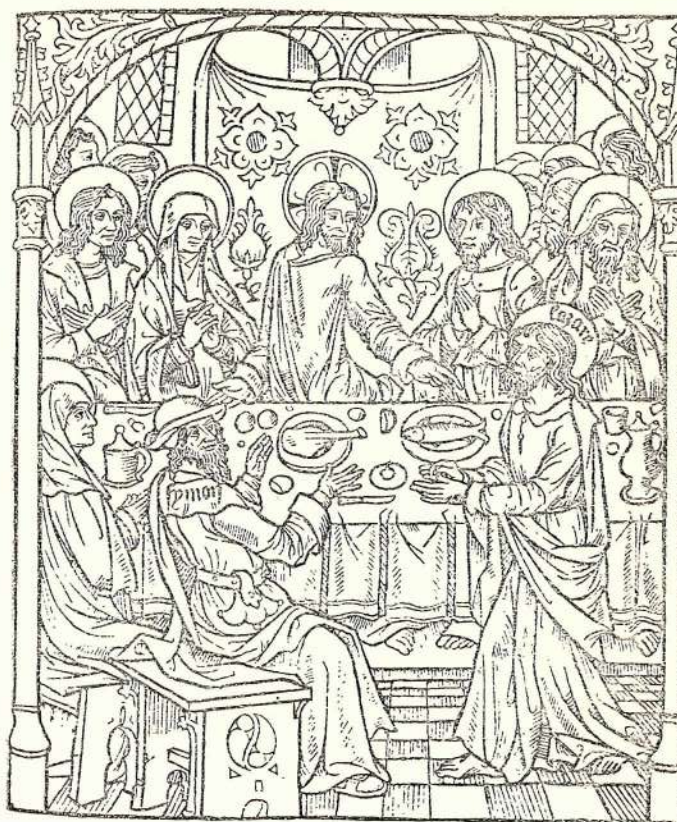
Then is man lx & xij years. Then
had he lever have a warm fire than a
fair lady / and after this age he goeth in
to decrepitude to war a child again & can
not wield himself and then young folk be
weary of their company / and without
they have much good / they be full little
take heed of God wot. and the more pity
for age should be worshipped in the hon-
our of the Father of heaven / & for his
sake cherished.

The Punishments of

The Seven Deadly Sins

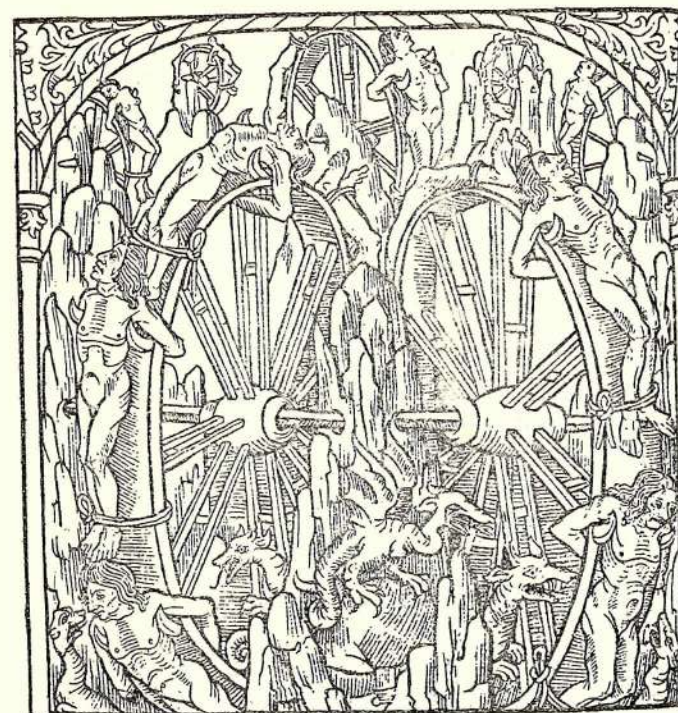
¶ The author of *Le Compost* seems to have been the first to record the legend that Lazarus brought back a description of hell (T. Wright, *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, 1844, pp.164ff.). Elsewhere in the book these Seven Deadly Sins are expounded as a tree with innumerable branches and twigs. Those like Miss Dorothy L. Sayers' enquirer, who thought there was only one such sin, will find a very full account of them all in Chaucer's *Parson's Tale*.





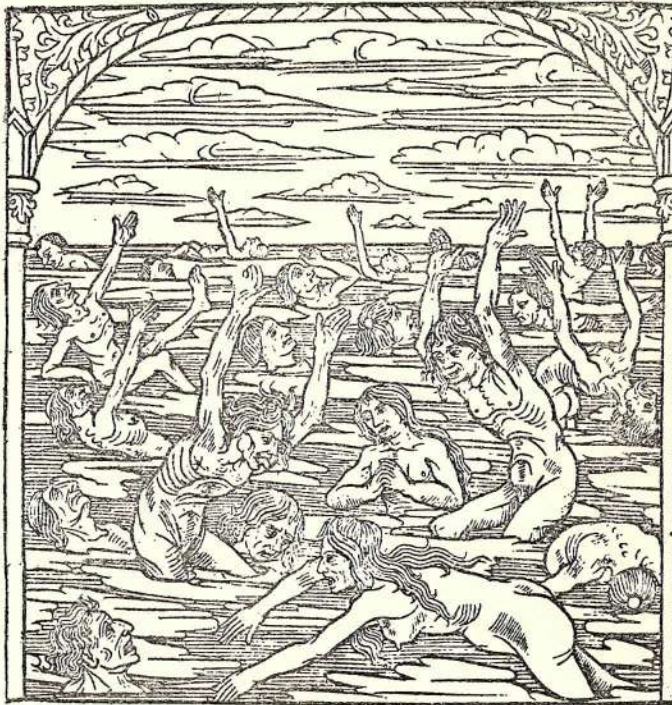
¶ Here followeth the pains of hell and the punishments for sins as Lazarus shewed after he was raised / even as he had seen in hell / As it appeareth by figures following in order one after another.

(Pride)



¶ First said Lazarus I saw in hell wheels right high set on a hill & was in manner like mills evermore turning about with great noise roaring & violence as it had been thunder / & the wheels were full of hooks & cramps of iron on them were hanged and tormented proud men and women.

(Envy)



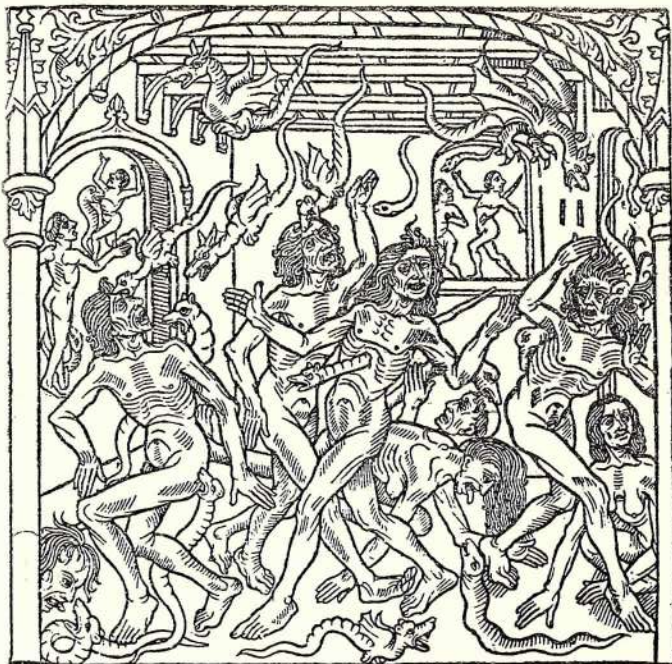
¶ Secondly said Lazarus I saw a flood of frozen ice in the which envious men & women were plunged unto the navel & suddenly came a cold wind right great that blew and did dip down all the envious men & women into the cold water that nothing was seen of them.

(Wrath)



¶ Thirdly said Lazarus I have seen in hell a cave foul and stinking where ireful men and women be smitten through with swords.

(Sloth)



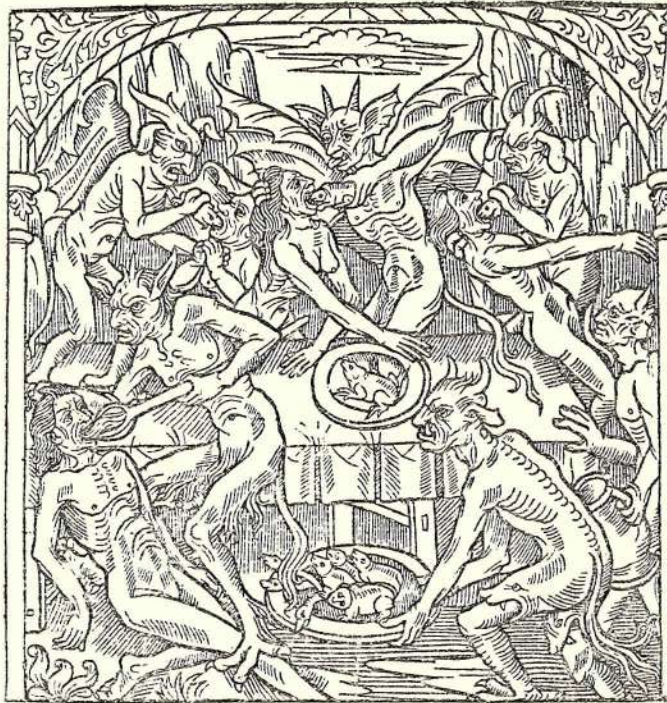
¶ The .iiii. said Lazarus I saw an horrible dark hole in hell where as serpents great and small did bite and sting and tormented sore the slothful men and women and gnawed bodies to the heart.

(Covetousness)



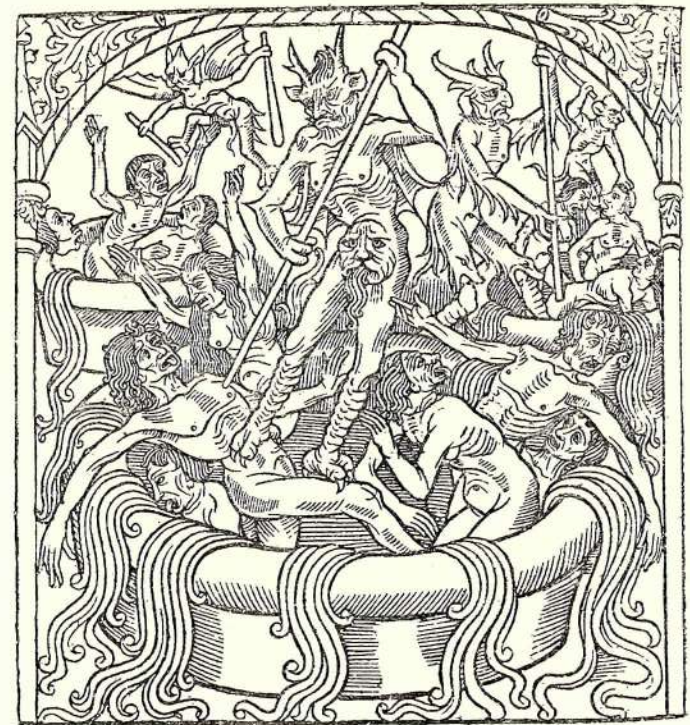
¶ The .v. manner said Lazarus I saw cauldrons full of lead and oil & other metals boiling in which was dipped covetous men and women.

(Gluttony)



¶ The .vi. pain said Lazarus that he saw in a vale a flood foul and stinking and a table with towels right dishonest where men and women that were gluttons were served and filled with toads and other venomous worms & a brew of the water of the same flood.

(Lust)



¶ The .vii. pain said Lazarus I saw a field full of deep wells full of fire and brimstone of the which there came out a horrible smoke and stinking in the which were lecherous men & women sore tormented.

¶ *A division and regime of time which shepherds useth after that the season & time requireth.*



¶ To remedy sickness and infirmities that a man hath / and to keep him from that he doubteth to come / shepherds say that the time naturally changeth four times in the year / ... And in each of these quarters they govern them as the seasons requireth to their minds / & the better it is for them / ... / as that use in winter is not good in summer / and so of the other seasons.

¶ *The regiment for primetime March. April / & May.*

In prime time shepherds keep themselves meetly well clothed / not over cold nor over hot as with linsey woolsey / doublets of fustian / & gowns of meetly length furred with lamb most comely. In this time is good letting of blood to avoid evil humours that were gathered in the body the winter time ... Primetime is a temperate time to take medicines for them that be corporate and full of thick humours / to purge them. they ought for to eat light meats that refresheth as chickens / kids with verjuice / borage / beets / yolks of eggs / eggs in moonshine / roaches / perches / pickerel / & all scaled fish. Drink temperate beer / or ale so that they be not too strong nor over sweet. a man ought to sleep long in the morning and not in the day ... never for to eat without hunger. Also they say that all manner of flesh and fish is better roasted than sodden / & if they be sodden to broil them on a gridiron or on the coals / and they be the more wholesome.

¶ *A regiment for the time of summer. June. July / and August.*

The Shepherds in summer be clothed with light gowns and single / their shirts and sheets that they lie in be linen for of all cloths it is the coldest / they have doublets of silk / of sey / or of canvas. and they eat light meats / as chickens with verjuice / young hares / rabbits / lettuce / purslain / melons /

gourds / cucumbers / pears / plums / & such fish as are named afore. / And also they eat little and often / They break their fast or dine in the morning or ever the sun arise / and go to supper or it descend / and they eat often of the above said meats or sower for to give them an appetite. They eat but few salt meats / and refrain from scratching / they drink often fresh water sodden with sugar candy / & other refreshing waters / and they do it always when they be thirsty / save only at dinner and supper time / and then they drink feeble green wine / or single beer / or small ale. Also they keep them from over great travail and they bathe them often in cold water Always they have by them sugar candy or other sugar and dragees [*sweetmeats*] whereof they take little & often / & each day in the morning they force them by coughing and spitting to void phlegms / and void them above and below the best that they may / & wash their hands in fresh water / their mouth and their visages.

¶ *The regiment for harvest. September. October / and November.*

In harvest shepherds be clothed after the manner of prime time / save that their clothes be a little warmer. In this time they do diligence to purge and cleanse them / & letting them blood to temper the humours of their bodies. For it is the most contagious time of the year in the which perilous infirmities happeneth & cometh / and therefore they eat

wholesome meats / as capons and hens / young pigeons that begin to fly / & drinketh good wines / & other good drinks without making excess. In this time they keep them from eating fruits / for it is a dangerous season for aches. They say that he had never aches that never eat fruit. In this time they drink no water / and they put no part of them in cold water but their hand & their faces. They keep their heads from cold in the night and morning / & sleep not in the noon time / & keep them from over great travail / and endure not too much hunger nor thirst / but eat when it is time / & not when their maws be full.

¶ *The regiment for winter time. December. January. and February.*

The shepherds in winter time be clothed in thick gowns of rough cloth high shorn well furred with fox for it is the warmest furring that is / and cats / conies / hares / and divers other thick furs that be good and wholesome. In this time of winter shepherds do eat beef / pork & brawn / of harts / hinds / and all manner of venison / partridges pheasants / hares / fowls of the river & other meats that they love best / for this is the season of the year that nature suffereth most great plenty of victuals for the natural heat that is drawn within the body. In this time also they drink often strong wines after their complection / bastard wine / or osey.

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