The loving history of
Peridore & Paravail

Hewlett Maurice Henry
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Author: Hewlett Maurice Henry

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THE LOVING HISTORY

OF

PERIDORE AND PARAVAIL
THE LOVING HISTORY
OF
PERIDORE & PARAVAIL

BY
MAURICE HEWLETT

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NOTE

A prose version of this fable was included in my New Canterbury Tales; but it had been projected as verse, and is now put forward as it was first intended to be. The temptation of Vigilas is borrowed from the life of Saint Guthlac of Croyland, as reported, I think, by Roger of Wendover; but the clew to the heart of the tale is a mediaeval belief that the soul enters the body in the mother’s milk, which I have read somewhere or other but cannot now put my hand to. As for time and place, I am not bound to answer. It was “once upon a time”; and if England is not fairyland, it is often very much like it. That is all it seems necessary to say here.

West Wittering,
April 1917.
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PERIDORE AND PARAVAIL

I. THE FOUNDLING

Broad under Heaven a great Plain is,
Which to the earth-bound, like the sea,
Shuts down the mind in silences
And blue horizons. There no tree
Dare stand alone, but seeks a lee
Against the wind in mates of his;
So like an island in one tether
Bound, they ride out the winter weather.
There, in a desolation vast,
Transient beneath the ringing dome,
The storm-beat shepherd’s lot is cast,
With shiftless beasts inur’d to roam—
With limping hare that has no home,
With plover, plaything of the blast,
That makes no nest, but on bare earth
Nurses her freckled eggs to birth.

Unwritten is that sky of brass
By kindlier bird, untenanted
That billowing vacancy of grass
By horn’d or man’d or antler’d head;
There only, swarming to be fed,
The sheep in murmuring legions pass,
Like a foam-patch which on the main
Accrues, disperses, and leaves no stain.