New Books or Old?

“New books or old?” I must confess
Old books bring greatest happiness.
I hate your modern poet’s lay
That finds no brightness in the day,
But only darkness and distress.

A fig for their conceitedness,
Their songs in Penseroso dress!
But yet again I hear you say,
“New books or old?”

Come, give me Chaucer’s pilgrims gay,
My Spenser fair and fresh as May,
Kit Marlowe’s buxom shepherdess,
And Shakspere for all blessedness—
Now need you ask for which I pray,
“New books or old?”

—James Ernest Baker

Binder named Till, of Dover, was recently
a rat, and died from hydrophobia of character.