THE CANTERBURY TALES

THE PROLOGUE

Here bygynneth the Book of the tales of Caunterbury

Whan that Aprill with his shourès soote
The droghte of March hath percéd to the roote,
And bathéd every veyne in swich licóur
Of which vertú engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus eek with his sweté breeth
Inspiréd hath in every holt and heeth
The tendré croppés, and the yongé sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfé cours y-ronne,
And smalé fowelés maken melodye,
That slepen al the nyght with open eye,—
So priketh hem Nature in hir coráges,—
Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages,
And palmeres for to seken straunge strondes.
To ferné halwés, kowthe in sondry londes,
And specially, from every shirés ende
Of Engélon, to Caunturbury they wende,
The hooły blissful martir for to seke,
That hem hath holpen whan that they were seeke.
THE PROLOGUE

Bifil that in that seson on a day,
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay,
Redy to wenden on my pilgrmage
To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,
At nyght were come into that hostelrye
Wel nyne-and-twenty in a compaignye,
Of sondry folk, by áventure y-falle
In felaweshipe, and pilgrimes were they alle,
That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde.
The chambres and the stables weren wyde,
And wel we weren esèd atté beste.
And shortly, whan the sonné was to reste,
So hadde I spoken with hem everychon,
That I was of hir felaweshipe anon,
And madé forward erly for to ryse,
To take oure wey, ther as I yow devyse.

But nathèles, whil I have tyme and space,
Er that I fether in this talé pace,
Me thynketh it accordaunt to resoun
To tellé yow al the condicioun
Of ech of hem, so as it seméd me,
And whiche they weren and of what degree,
And eek in what array that they were inne;
And at a Knyght than wol I first bigynne.

A KNYGHT ther was and that a worthy man,
That fro the tymé that he first bigan
To riden out, he lovéd chivalrie,
Trouthe and honóur, fredom and curteisie.
Ful worthy was he in his lordés werre,
THE PROLOGUE

And therto hadde he riden, no man ferre,
As wel in cristendom as in hethénesse,
And ever honóuréd for his worthynesse.

At Alisaundre he was whan it was wonne;
Ful ofté tyme he hadde the bord bigonne
Aboven allé nacions in Pruce;
In Lettow hadde he reyséd and in Ruce,—
No cristen man so ofte of his degree.

In Gernade at the seege eek hadde he be
Of Algezir, and riden in Belmaryl.
At Lyeys was he, and at Satalye,
Whan they were wonne; and in the Greté See
At many a noble armee hadde he be.

At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,
And foughnten for oure feith at Tramyssene
In lystés thriés, and ay slayn his foo.
This ilké worthy knyght hadde been also
Somtymé with the lord of Palatyé
Agayn another hethen in Turkye.
And evermoore he hadde a sovereyn prys.
And though that he was worthy, he was wys,
And of his port as mecke as is a mayde.

He never yet no vileynye ne sayde,
In al his lyf, unto no maner wight.
He was a verray parfit, gentil knyght.

But for to tellen yow of his array,
His hors was goode, but he ne was nat gay;
Of fustian he weréd a gypon.
Al bismotered with his habergeon;
For he was late y-come from his viage,
And wentè for to doon his pilgrymage.
   With hym ther was his sone, a yong SQUIÉR,
A lovyere and a lusty bacheler, 80
With lokkès crulle as they were leyd in presse.
Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.
Of his statûre he was of evene lengthe,
And wonderly delyvere and greet of strengthe;
And he hadde been somtyme in chyvacchie, 85
In Flaundrés, in Artoys and Pycardie;
And born hym weel, as of so litel space,
In hope to stonden in his lady grace.
Embroided was he, as it were a meede
Al ful of fresshè flourès whyte and reede; 90
Syngynge he was, or flontyng, al the day;
He was as fressh as is the monthe of May.
Short was his gowne, with sleves longe and wyde;
Wel koude he sitte on hors and faire ryde;
He koudè songès make and wel endite, 95
Juste and eek daunce and weel purtreye and write.
So hoote he lovède that by nyghtertale
He sleep namoore than dooth a nyghtyngale.
Curteis he was, lowely and servysáble,
And carf biforn his fader at the table.

A YEMAN hadde he and servántz namo
At that tyme, for hym listé ridé soo;
And he was clad in cote and hood of grene.
A sheef of pecock 'arwès bright and kene,
Under his belt he bar ful thriftiny— 105
Wel koude he dresse his takel yemanly;
THE PROLOGUE

His arwès droupéd nought with fetherés lowe—
And in his hand he baar a myghty bowe.
A not-heed hade he, with a broun viságe.
Of woodécraft wel koude he al the uságe.
Upon his arm he baar a gay bracér,
And by his syde a swerd and a bokeler,
And on that oother syde a gay daggere,
Harneiséd wel and sharpe as point of spere;
A Cristophere on his brest of silver sheene.
An horn he bar, the bawdryk was of grene.
A forster was he, soothly, as I gesse.

Ther was also a Nonne, a Prioresse,
That of hir snylyng was ful symple and coy;
Hire gretteste ooth was but by seint Loy,
And she was clepéd madame Eglentyne.
Ful weel she soong the servicié dyvyne,
Entunéd in hir nose ful semély;
And Frenssh she spak ful faire and fetisly,
After the scole of Stratford-atté-Bowe,
For Frenssh of Parys was to hire unknowe.
At meté wel y-taught was she with-alle;
She leet no morsel from hir lippés falle,
Ne wette hir fyngrés in hir saucé depe.
Wel koude she carie a morsel and wel kepe,
Thát no drope ne fille upon hire breste;
In curteisie was set ful muchel hir lesté.
Hire over-lippé wypéd she so clene
That in hir coppe ther was no ferthyng sene
Of grecé, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte;
Fui semely after hir mete she raughte.
And sikerly she was of greet desport,
And ful plesaunt and amyable of port;
And peynéd hire to countrefeté cheere
Of court, and been estatlich of manere,
And to ben holden dignè of reverence.
But for to speken of hire conscience,
She was so charitable and so pitous
She woldé wepe, if that she saugh a mous
Kaught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde.
Of smalé houndés hadde she that she sedde
With rosted flesssh, or milk and wastel breed;
But sooré wepte she if oon of hem were deed,
Or if men smoot it with a yerdé smerte.
And al was conscience and tendré herte.

Ful semily hir wympul pynched was;
Hirc nose trety, her eyen greye as glas,
Hir mouth ful smal and ther-to softe and reed;
But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed;
It was almoost a spanné brood I trowe;
For, hardily, she was nat undergrew.
Ful fetys was hir cloke, as I was war;
Of smal coral aboute hire arm she bar
A peire of bedés, gauded al with grene,
And ther-on heng a brooch of gold ful sheene,
On which ther was first write a crownéd A,
And after Amor vincit omnia.

Another nonne with hire haddé she,
That was hire Chapelayne, and preestès thre.
A Monk ther was, a fair for the maistrie,
An outridere, that lovédé vénerie;
A manly man, to been an abbot able.
Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in stable;
And whan he rood men myghte his brydel heere
Gýnglen in a whistlynge wynd als cleere,
And eek as loude, as dooth the chapel belle,
Ther as this lord was kepere of the celle.
The reule of seint Maure or of seint Beneit,
By-cause that it was old and som-del streit,—
This ilké Monk leet oldé thyngès pace,
And heeld after the newé world the space.
He yaf nat of that text a pulléd hen
That seith that hunters beth nat hooly men,
Ne that a Monk whan he is cloysterles
Is likned til a fissh that is waterles;
This is to seyn, a Monk out of his cloystre.
But thilké text heeld he nat worth an oystre;
And I seyde his opiionioun was good.
What sholde he studie and make hymselfen wood,
Upon a book in cloystre alwey to poure,
Or swynken with his handés and labóure,
As Austyn bit? how shal the world be served?
Lat Austyn have his swynk to him reserved.
Therfore he was a prikasour aright;
Greghoundes he hadde, as swift as fowl in flight.
Of prikyng and of huntyng for the hare
Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.
I seigh his sleves y-purfiled at the hond
With gry, and that the fyneste of a lond;
And for to festne his hood under his chyn
He hadde of gold y-wroght a curious pyn;
A love-knotte in the gretter ende ther was.
His heed was balled that shoon as any glas,
And eek his face, as he hadde been enoynt.
He was a lord ful fat and in good poynyt;
His eyën stepe and rolynge in his heed,
That stemëd as a forneyes of a leed;
His bootës souple, his hors in greet estaat,
Now certeiny he was a fair prelaat.
He was nat pale, as a forpynd goost:
A fat swan loved he best of any roost.
His palfrey was as broun as is a berye.

A Frere ther was, a wantowne and a merye,
A lymytour, a ful solémpné man.
In allë the ordrês foure is noon that kan
So moche of daliaunce and fair langage.
He hadde maad ful many a mariæge
Of yongë wommen at his owene cost:
Unto his ordre he was a noble post.
Ful wel biloved and famulier was he
With frankeleyns over al in his contree,
And eek with worthy wommen of the toun;
For he hadde power of confessioun,
As sayde hym-self, moore than a curât,
For of his ordre he was licenciat.
Ful swetely herde he confessioun,
And plesaunt was his absolucioun.
He was an esy man to yeve penaunce
The prologue

There as he wiste to have a good pitaunce;
For unto a poure ordre for to yive
Is signé that a man is wel y-shryve;
For, if he yaf, he dorste make avaunt
He wisté that a man was répentaunt:
For many a man so harde is of his herte
He may nat wepe al-thogh hym sooré smerte.
Therfore in stede of wepynge and preyerés
Men moote yeve silver to the pouré freres.
His typet was ay farséd full of knyves
And pynnés, for to yeven faire wyves.
And certeinly he hadde a murye note;
Wei koude he synge and pleyen on a rote.
Of yeddynges he baar outrély the pris;
His nekké whit was as the flour-de-lys;
Ther-to he strong was as a champioun.
He knew the tavernes well in every toun,
And everich hostiler and tappestere
Bet than a lazar or a beggestere;
For unto swich a worthy man as he
Acordéd nat, as by his facultee,
To have with siké lazars aqeyntaunce;
It is nat honeste, it may nat avaunce,
Fór to deelen with no swich poraille;
But al with riche and selleres of vitaille.
And over al, ther as profit sholde arise,
Curteis he was and lowely of servyse:
Ther nas no man nowher so vertuous.
He was the besté beggere in his hous;
For thogh a wydwe haddé noght a sho,
So plesaunt was his *In principio*,
Yet wolde he have a ferthyng er he wente: 255
His purchas was wel bettre than his rente.
And rage he koude, as it were right a whelpe.
In lové-dayes ther koude he muchel helpe,
For there he was nat lyk a cloysterer
With a thredbare cope, as is a poure scolér, 260
But he was lyk a maister, or a pope;
Of double worstede was his semycopé,
That rounded as a belle out of the presse.
Somwhat he lipsèd for his wantownesse,
To make his English sweet upon his tongue, 265
And in his harpyng, whan that he hadde songe,
His eyén twynkled in his heed aryght
As doon the sterrés in the frosty nyght.
This worthy lymytour was cleped Huberd.

A Marchant was ther with a forkèd berd, 270
In mottéleye, and hye on horse he sat;
Upon his heed a Flaundryssh bevere hat;
His bootés claspéd faire and fetisly;
His resons he spak ful solémnpnely,
Sownynge alway thencees of his wynnyng. 275
He wolde the see were kept for any thing
Bitwixé Middelburgh and Oréwelle.
Wel koude he in eschaungé sheeldés selle.
This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette,
Ther wistè no wight that he was in dette, 280
So estatly was he of his gouvernaunce,
With his bargaynes and with his chevyssaunce.
THE PROLOGUE

For sothe he was a worthy man with-alle,
But, soothe to seyn, I nooth how men hym calle.

A CLERK ther was of Oxenford also,
That unto logyk hadde longe y-go.
As leene was his hors as is a rake,
And he nas nat right fat, I undertake,
But looked holwe, and ther-to sobrely;
Ful threbdare was his overeste courtepy;
For he hadde geten hym yet no benefice,
Ne was so worldly for to have office;
For hym was leverre have at his beddes heed
Twenti bookës, clad in blak or reed,
Of Aristotle and his philosophie,
Than robës riche, or fithele, or gay sautrie:
But al be that he was a philosophre,
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre;
But al that he myghte of his freendës hente
On bookës and his lernynge he it spente,
And bisily gan for the soulës preye
Of hem that yaf hym wher-with to scoleye.
Of studie took he moost cure and moost heede,
Noght o word spak he moore than was neede,
And that was seyd in forme and reverence,
And short and quyk and ful of hy sentence.
Sownynge in moral vertu was his speche
And gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche.

A SERGEANT OF THE LAWÉ, war and wys,
That often hadde been at the Parvys,
THE PROLOGUE

Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.
Discreet he was, and of greet reverence;
He seméd swich, his wordés weren so wise.
Justice he was ful often in assise,
By patente and by pleyn commissioun:
For his science and for his heigh renoun
Of fees and robés hadde he many oon;
So greet a purchasour was nowher noon.
Al was fec symple to hym in effect,
His purchasyng myghté nat been infect.
Nowher so bisy a man as he ther nas,
And yet he seméd bisier than he was;
In termés hadde he caas and doomés alle
That from the tyme of kyng William were falle;
Ther-to he coude endite and make a thynge,
Ther koudé no wight lynche at his wrytynge;
And every statut coude he pleyn by rote.
He rood but hoomly in a medlee cote,
Girt with a ceint of silk, with barrés smale;
Of his array telle I no lenger tale.

A FRANKÉLEYN was in his compaignye.
Whit was his berd as is a dayésye.
Of his complexioun he was sangwyn;
Wel loved he by the morwe a sope in wyn.
To lyven in delit was ever his woné,
For he was Epicurus owené sone,
That heeld opinioun that pleyn delit
Was verraily felicitee parfit.
An housholdere, and that a greet, was he:
THE PROLOGUE

Seint Julian was he in his contree;
His breed, his ale, was alwey after oon;
A bettre envynéd man was nowher noon.
Withouté baké mete was never his hous,
Of fissh and flessh, and that so plénteuous,
It newéd in his hous of mete and drynke,
Of allé deyntees that men koudé thynke.
After the sondry sesons of the yeer,
So chaungéd he his mete and his soper.
Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in muwe,
And many a breem and many a luce in stuwe.
Wo was his cook but if his saucé were
Poynaunt and sharpe, and redy al his geere.
His table dormant in his halle alway,
Stood redy covered al the longé day.
At sessiouns ther was he lord and sire;
Ful ofté tyme he was knyght of the shire.
An anlaas, and a gipser al of silk,
Heeng at his girdel, whit as morné milk.
A shirreve hadde he been, and a countour;
Was nowher such a worthy vavasour.

An Haberdasshere, and a Carpenter,
A Webbe, a Dvere, and a Tapycer,—
And they were clothed alle in o lyvere
Of a solémpne and greet fraternitee;
Ful fressh and newe hir geere apikéd was;
Hir knyvés were chapéd noght with bras,
But al with silver, wroght ful clene and weel,
Hire’ girdles and hir pouches everydeel.
Wel seméd ech of hem a fair burgeys
To sitten in a yeldehalle, on a deys.
Everich for the wisdom that he kan
Was shaply for to been an alderman,
For catel haddé they ynogh and rente.
And eek hir wyvés wolde it wel assente,
And ellés certeyn weré they to blame;
It is ful fair to been y-cleped *Madame*,
And goon to vigiliès al biforn,
And have a mantel roialliche y-bore.

A Cook they haddé with hem for the nones,
To boille the chiknés with the marybones,
And poudré-marchant tart and galyngale.
Wel koude he knowe a draughte of Londoun ale;
He koudé rooste and sethe and boille and frye,
Máken mortreux and wel bake a pye.
But greet harm was it, as it thoughté me,
That on his shyne a mormal haddé he.
For blankmanger, that made he with the beste.

A Shipman was ther, wonynge fer by weste;
For aught I woot he was of Dertémouthhe.
He rood upon a rounchy as he kouthe,
Ín a gowne of faldeyn to the knee.
A daggere hangynge on a laas hadde he
Aboute his nekke under his arm adoun.
The hooté somer hadde maad his hewe al broun:
And certeinly he was a good felawe.
Ful many a draughte of wyn hadde he y-drawe
Fro Burdeux-ward, whil that the chapman sleepe. 
Of nycé conscience took he no keepe. 
If that he fought, and hadde the hyer hond, 
By water he sente hem hoom to every lond. 
But of his craft to rekene wel his tydes, 
His streymes and his daungers hym bisides, 
His herberwe and his moone, his lode-menage, 
Ther nas noon swich from Hullé to Cartage. 
Hardy he was, and wys to undertake: 
With many a tempest hadde his herd been shake. 
He knew wel alle the havenes, as they were, 
From Gootlond to the Cape of Fynystere, 
And every cryke in Britaigne and in Spayne. 
His barge y-clepéd was the Maudélayne.

With us ther was a Doctour of Phisik; 
In all this world ne was ther noon hym lik, 
To speke of phisik and of surgerye; 
For he was grounded in astronomye. 
He kepte his pacient a ful greet deel 
In hourés, by his magyk natureel. 
Wel koude he fortunen the ascendent 
Of his ymages for his pacient. 
He knew the cause of everich maladye, 
Were it of hoot, or cold, or moyste, or drye, 
And where they engendred and of what humoure; 
He was a ferray parfit praktsour. 
The cause y-knowe and of his harm the roote, 
Anon he yaf the siké man his boote. 
Ful redy hadde he his apothecaries.
To sende him droggês and his letuaries,
For ech of hem made oother for to wynne;
Hir frendshipe nas nat newé to bigynne.
Wel knew he the oldé Esculapius
And Deýscorides, and eek Rufus,
Olde Ypocras, Haly and Galyen,
Serapion, Razis and Avycen,
Averrois, Damascien and Constantyn,
Bernard and Gatêsden and Gilbertyn.
Of his dietê mesurable was he,
For it was of no superfluitem,
But of greet norissying and digestible.
His studie was but litel on the Bible.
In sangwyn and in pers he clad was al,
Lynéd with taffata and with sendal.
And yet he was but esy of dispence;
He kepê that he wan in pestilence.
For gold in phisik is a cordial;
Therfore he lovêde gold in special.

A Good wif was ther of bisidé Bathe,
But she was som-del deef, and that was scathe.
Of clooth-makyng she haddê swich an haunt
She passéd hem of Yprés and of Gaunt.
In al the parisshe wif ne was ther noon
That to the offrynge bfore hire sholdê goon;
And if ther dide, certeyn so wrooth was she,
That she was out of allê charitee.
Hir coverchiefs ful fynê weren of ground,—
I dorstê swere they weyêden ten pound,—
That on a Sunday weren upon hir heed.  455
Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed,
Ful streite y-tyed, and shoes ful moyste and newe.
Boold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe.
She was a worthy womman al hir lyve,
Housbondes at chirché dore she hadde fyve,  460
Withouten oother compaignye in youthe,—
But ther-of nedeth nat to speke as nowthe,—
And thriés hadde she been at Jerusálem;
She hadde passéd many a straungé strem;
At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne,  465
In Galice at Seint Jame, and at Coloigne.
She koudé muchel of wandrynge by the weye.
Gat-tothéd was she, soothe for to seye.
Upon an amblere esily she sat,
Y-wympléd wel, and on hir heed an hat  470
As brood as is a bokeler or a targe;
A foot mantel aboute hir hipés large,
And on hire feet a paire of sporés sharpe.
In felaweshipe wel koude she laughe and carpe;
Of remedies of love she knew per chaunce,  475
For she koude of that art the oldé daunce.

A good man was ther of religioun,
And was a Pouré Persoun of a Toun;
But riche he was of hooly thoght and werk;
He was also a lernèd man, a clerk,  480
That Cristés Gospel trewèly wolde preche:
His parisshens devoutly wolde he teche.
Benygne he was, and wonder diligent,
And in adversitee ful pacient;
And swich he was y-prevêd ofté sithes.
Ful looth were hym to cursen for his tithes,
But rather wolde he yeven, out of doute,
Unto his pouré parisshens aboute,
Of his offrynge and eek of his substaunce:
He koude in litel thyng have suffisaunce.
Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer asonder,
But he ne lafté nat for reyn ne thonder,
In siknesse, nor in meschief, to visite
The ferreste in his parisshe, muche and lite,
Upon his feet, and in his hand a staf.
This noble ensample to his sheepe he yaf,
That firste he wroghte and afterward he taughte.
Out of the gospel he tho wordês caughte,
And this figure he added eek therto,
That if gold rusté what shal ired doo?
For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,
No wonder is a lewêd man to ruste;
And shame it is, if a prest takê keepe,
A shiten shepherde and a clenê sheepe.
Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive
By his clennesse how that his sheepe sholde lyve.
He setté nat his benefice to hyre
And leet his sheepe encombred in the myre,
And ran to Londoun, unto Seint Poules,
To seken hym a chaunterie for soules,
Or with a bretherhed to been withholde;
But dwelte at hoom and kepté wel his folde,
So that the wolf ne made it nat myscarie,—
THE PROLOGUE

He was a shepherde, and nought a mercenarie:
And though he hooly were and vertuous,
He was to synful man nat despitous;
Ne of his spechē daungorous ne digne,
But in his techyng discreet and benygne.
To drawen folk to hevene by fairnesse,
By good ensample, this was his bisynesse:
But it were any persone obstinat,
What so he were, of heigh or lough estat,
Hym wolde he snybben sharply for the nonys.
A bettré preest I trowe that nowher noon ys;
He waited after no pompe ne reverence,
Ne maked him a spicéd conscience,
But Cristés loore, and his Apostles twelve,
He taughte, and first he folwed it hym selve.

With hym ther was a PLOWMAN, was his brother,
That hadde y-lad of dong ful many a fother,—
A trewé swynkere and a good was he,
Lyvynge in pees and parfit charitee.
God loved he best, with al his hoolé herte,
At allé tymés, thogh him gamed or smerte,
And thanne his neighébore right as hymselve.
He woldé thresshe, and thereto dyke and delve,
For Cristés sake, for every pouré wight,
Withouten hire, if it lay in his myght.
His tithés payêde he ful faire and wel,
Bothe of his propére swynk and his catel.
In a tabard he rood upon a mere.
Ther was also a Reve and a Milleré,
A Somnour and a Pardoner also,
A Maunciple and myself,—ther were namo.

The Milleré was a stout carl for the nones, 545
Ful byg he was of brawn and eek of bones;
That provéd wel, for over-al, ther he cam,
At wrastlynge he wolde have alwey the ram.
He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikké knarre,
Ther nas no dore that he nolde heve of harre, 552
Or breke it at a rennyng with his heed.
His berd, as any sowe or fox, was reed,
And thereto brood, as though it were a spade.
Upon the cope right of his nose he hade
A werte, and theron stood a toft of herys, 555
Reed as the brustles of a sowês erys;
His noséthirlés blaké were and wyde;
A swerd and a bokeler bar he by his syde;
His mouth as wyde was as a greet forneys,
He was a janglere and a goliardeys, 562
And that was moost of synne and harlotriês.
Wel koude he stelen corn and tollen thriês,
And yet he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee.
A whit cote and a blew hood weréd he.
A baggépipe wel koude he blowe and sowne, 565
And therwithal he broghte us out of towne.

A gentil Maunciple was ther of a temple,
Of which achátours myghté take exemple
For to be wise in byynge of vitaille;
For, wheither that he payde or took by taille, 570
THE PROLOGUE

Algate he wayted so in his achaat
That he was ay biforn and in good staat.
Now is nat that of God a ful fair grace,
That swich a lewèd mannès wit shal pace
The wisdom of an heepe of lerned men?
Of maistrès hadde he mo than thriès ten,
That weren of lawe expert and curious,
Of whiche ther weren a duszeyne in that hous
Worthy to been stywardes of rente and lond
Of any lord that is in Engélond,
To maken hym lyvè by his propré good,
In honour dettelees, but if he were wood,
Or lyve as scarsly as hym list desire;
And able for to helpen al a shire
In any caas that myghté falle or happe;
And yet this Manciple sette hir aller cappe.

The Révè was a sclendré colerik man,
His berd was shave as ny as ever he kan;
His heer was by his erys ful round y-shorn,
His tope was dokéd lyk a preest biforn;
Ful longé were his legges and ful lene,
Y-lyk a staf, there was no calf y-sene.
Wel koude he kepe a gerner and a bynne;
Ther was noon auditour koude on him wynne.
Wel wiste he, by the droghte and by the reyn,
The yeldynge of his seed and of his greyn.
His lordés sheepe, his neet, his dayérye,
His swyn, his hors, his stoor, and his pultrye,
Was hoolly in this revés governyng,
And by his covenant yaf the rekenyng
Syn that his lord was twenty yeer of age;
There koude no man brynge hym in arrerage.
There nas baillif, ne hierde, nor oother hyne,
That he ne knew his sleighte and his covyne;
They were adrad of hym as of the deeth.
His wonyng was ful faire upon an heeth,
With grené trees y-shadwéd was his place.
He koudé bettré than his lord purchace.
Ful riche he was a-storéd pryvely;
His lord wel koude he plesen subtilly
To yeve and lene hym of his owene good
And have a thank, and yet a gowne and hood.
In youthe he lernéd hadde a good myster;
He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter.
This Revè sat upon a ful good stot,
That was al pomely grey, and hightè Scot;
A long surcote of pers upon he hade,
And by his syde he baar a rusty blade.
Of Northfolk was this Reve of which I telle,
Biside a toun men clepen Baldéswelle.
Tukkèd he was as is a frere, aboute,
And ever he rood the hyndreste of oure route.

A Somonour was ther with us in that place,
That hadde a fyr-reed cherubynnés face,
For sawcèfleem he was, with eyen narwe.
As hoot he was, and lecherous, as a sparwe,
With scaled browés blake and pilèd berd,—
Of his visagè children were aferd.
THE PROLOGUE

Ther nas quyk-silver, lytarge, ne brymstoon,
Boras, ceruce, ne oille of tartre noon,
Ne oynément that woldé clense and byte,
That hym myghte helpen of his whelkés white,
Nor of the knobbés sittyng on his chekes.
Wel loved he garleek, oynons, and eek lekes,
And for to drynken strong wyn, reed as blood; 635
Thanne wolde he speke, and crie as he were wood.
And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn,
Than wolde he speké no word but Latyn.
A fewé termés hadde he, two or thre,
That he had lernéd out of som decree,— 640
No wonder is, he herde it al the day;
And eek ye knowen wel how that a jay
Kan clepen Watte as wel as kan the pope.
But whoso koude in oother thyng hym grope,
Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophie;
Ay Questio quid juris wolde he crie.
He was a gentil harlot and a kynde;
A bettre felawe sholdé men noght fynde.
He woldé suffre, for a quart of wyn,
A good felawe to have his concubyn
A twelf monthe, and excuse hym atté fulle;
And prívely a synch eek koude he pulle;
And if he foond owher a good felawe,
He woldé techen him to have noon awe
In swich caas, of the Ercédekenes curs, 655
But-if a mannés soule were in his purs;
For in his purs he sholde y-punysshed be:
'Purs is the Ercédekenes helle,' seyde he.
But wel I woot he lyèd right in dede,
Of cursyng oghte ech gilty man him drede,
For curs wol slee,—right as assoillyng savith;
And also war him of a *Significavit*.
In daunger hadde he at his owène gise
The yongë girlës of the diocese,
And knew hir conseil, and was al hir reed.
A gerland hadde he set upon his heed,
As greet as it were for an alë-stake;
A bokeleer hadde he maad him of a cake.

With hym ther rood a gentil *PARDONER*
Of Rouncivale, his freend and his compeer,
That streight was comen fro the court of Romë.
Ful loude he soong *Com hider, love, to me!*
This Somonour bar to hym a stif burdoun,
Was never trompe of half so greet a soun.
This Pardoner hadde heer as yelow as wax,
But smothe it heeng as dooth a strike of flex;
By ounces henge his lokkës that he hadde,
And therwith he his shuldres overspradde;
But thynne it lay, by colpons, oon and oon;
But hood, for jolitee, ne wered he noon,
For it was trussëd up in his walët.
Hym thoughte he rood al of the newë jet;
Dischevelee, save his cappe, he rood al bare.
Swiche glarynge eyen hadde he as an hare.
A vernycle hadde he sowed upon his cappe;
His walet lay biforn hym in his lappe
*Bret-ful of pardon*, comen from Rome al hoot.
THE PROLOGUE

A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot;
No berd hadde he, ne never sholdé have,
As smothe it was as it were late y-shave;

But of his craft, fro Berwyk unto Ware,
Ne was ther swich another pardoner;
For in his male he hadde a pilwé-beer,
Which that, he seydé, was oure lady veyl;
He seydé he hadde a go pct of the seyl
That Seint Peter hadde, whan that he wente
Upon the see, til Jhesu Crist hym hente.
He hadde a croys of latoun, ful of stones,
And in a glas he hadde pigges bones.
But with thise relikés, whan that he fond
A pouré person dwellynge upon lond,
Upon a day he gat hym moore moneye
Than that the person gat in monthës tweye;
And thus with feynéd flaterye and japes
He made the person and the peple his apes.
But, trewely to tellen atte laste,
He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste;
Wel koude he rede a lessoun or a storie,
But alderbest he song an offertorie;
For wel he wisté, whan that song was songe,
He mosté preche, and wel affile his tonge
To wynnë silver, as he ful wel koude;
Therefore he song the murierly and loude.

Now have I toold you shortly, in a clause,
The staat, tharray, the nombre, and eek the cause
Why that assembled was this compaignye
In Southwerk, at this gentil hostelrye,
That highte the Tabard, fasté by the Belle.
But now is tymé to yow for to telle
How that we baren us that ilké nyght,
Whan we were in that hostelrie alyght;
And after wol I telle of our viage
And al the remenaunt of oure pilgrimage.

But first, I pray yow of youre curteisye,
That ye narette it nat my vilenye,
Thogh that I pleynly speke in this mateere
To tellé yow hir wordés and hir cheere,
Ne thogh I speke hir wordés properly;
For this ye knowen al-so wel as I,
Whoso shal telle a tale after a man,
He moote reherce, as ny as ever he kan,
Everich a word, if it be in his charge,
Al speke he never so rudéliche or large;
Or ellis he moot telle his tale untrewé,
Or feyné thyng, or fyndé wordés newe.
He may nat spare, althogh he were his brother;
He moot as wel seye o word as another.
Crist spak hymself ful brode in hooly writ,
And wel ye woot no vilenye is it.

Eek Plato seith, whoso that kan hym rede,
‘The wordés moote be cosmos to the dede.’

Also I prey yow to foryeve it me,
Al have I nat set folk in hir degree
Heere in this tale, as that they sholdé stonde;
My wit is short, ye may wel understonde.

Greet chieré made oure hoost us everichon,
And to the soper sette he us anon,
And servéd us with vitaille at the beste:
Strong was the wyn and wel to dryne us leste. 750

A semely man Oure Hoosté was with-alle
For to han been a marchal in an halle.
A largè man he was, with eyen stepe,
A fairer burgeys is ther noon in Chepe;
Boold of his speche, and wys and well y-taught, 755
And of manhod hym lakkédé right naught.
Eck therto he was right a myrie man,
And after soper pleyen he bigan,
And spak of myrthe amongès othere thynges,
Whan that we haddé maad our rekenynges: 760
And seydé thus: 'Now, lordynes, trewély,
Ye been to me right welcome, hertély;
For by my trouthe, if that I shal nat lye,
I ne saugh this yeer so myrle a compaignye
At onés in this herberwe as is now.

Fayn wolde I doon yow myrthé, wiste I how;
And of a myrthe I am right now bythoght,
To doon yow ese, and it shal costé noght.

'Ye goon to Canterbury—God yow speedee,
The blisful martir quité yow youre meede! 770
And, wel I woot, as ye goon by the weye,
Ye shapen yow to talen and to pleye;
For trewély confort ne myrthe is noon
To ridé by the weye doumb as a stoon;
And thersore wol I maken yow disport,
As I seyde erst, and doon yow som confort.
And if ye liketh alle, by oon assent,
Now for to stonden at my jugement,
And for to werken as I shal yow seye,
To-morwe, whan ye riden by the weye,
Now, by my fader soulé, that is deed,
But ye be myrie, smyteth of myn heed!
Hoold up youre hond, withouten mooré speche.¹

Oure conseil was nat longé for to seche;
Us thoughte it was noght worth to make it wys, 785
And graunted hym withouten moore avys,
And bad him seye his verdit, as hym lesté.

‘Lordynges,’ quod he, ‘now herkneth for the beste;
But taak it nought, I prey yow, in desdeyn;
This is the poynt, to speken short and pleyn,
That ech of yow, to shorté with your weye,
In this viage shal tellé talés tweye,—
To Caunterburyward, I mean it so,
And homward he shal tellen othere two,—
Of aventúres that whilom han bifalle. 795
And which of yow that bereth hym beste of alle,
That is to seyn, that telleth in this caas
Talés of best senténce and moost solaas,
Shal have a soper at oure aller cost,
Heere in this placé, sittynge by this post,
When that we come agayn fro Caunterbury.
And, for to maké yow the mooré mury,
I wol myselfen gladly with yow ryde,
Right at myn owene cost, and be youre gyde;
And whoso wole my jugément withseye 805
Shal paye al that we spenden by the weye.
And if ye vouché-sauf that it be so
THE PROLOGUE

Tel me anon, withouten wordes mo,
And I wol erly shapè me therfore.
This thyng was graunted, and oure othes swore
With ful glad herte, and preyden hym also
That he would vouchè-sauf for to do so,
And that he woldè been oure governour,
And of our talès juge and réportour,
And sette a soper at a certeyn pris,
And we wol reulèd been at his devys
In heigh and lough; and thus, by oon assent,
We been acorded to his joggèment.
And therupon the wyn was fet anon;
We dronken, and to restè wente echon,
Withouten any lenger tarynge.
Amorwè, whan that day gan for to spryngge,
Up roos oure Hoost and was oure aller cok,
And gadrede us togidre alle in a flok,
And forth we riden, a litel moore than paas,
Unto the wateryng of Scint Thomas;
And there oure Hoost bigan his hors areste
And seydè, 'Lordynges, herkneth, if yow reste:
Ye woot youre forward and I it yow recorde.
If even-song and morwè-song accordè,
Lat se now who shal telle the firstè tale.
As ever mote I drynkè wyn or ale,
Whoso be rebel to my joggèment
Shal paye for all that by the wey is spent!
Now draweth cut, er that we ferrer twynne.
He which that hath the shorteste shal bigynne.
Sire Knyght,' quod he, 'my mayster and my lord,
Now draweth cut, for that is myn accord.
Cometh near,' quod he, 'my lady Prioresse,
And ye sire Clerk, lat be your shamefastnesse, Ne studieth noght; ley hond to, every man.'

Anon to drawen every wight bigan,
And, shortly for to tellen as it was,
Were it by aventure, or sort, or cas,
The sothe is this, the cut fil to the knyght, Of which ful blithe and glad was every wyght:
And telle he moste his tale, as was resoun,
By forward and by composicioun,
As ye han herd; what nedeth wordés mo?
And whan this goode man saugh that it was so, As he that wys was and obedient
To kepe his forward by his free assent,
He seyde, 'Syn I shal bigynne the game,
What, welcome be the cut, a Goddes name!
Now lat us ryde, and herkneth what I seye.' And with that word we ryden forth ourre weye;
And he bigan with right a myrie cheere His tale anon, and seyde in this manere.
NOTES.

1. *Aprill with his shoures swote:* In eleven impressions I followed my early teachers in reading 'Aprille,' marking the e to be sounded. The Chaucer Society texts read *Apri le,* the italicized e presumably representing a stroke across the *U* in the Ellesmere MS., probably only decorative. The form 'Aprille' is bad, and, as Prof. Manly notes, is not used elsewhere by Chaucer. 'His' here and in l. 5 may be either masc. or neuter.

2. *to the roote:* not *radicitus,* 'hath thoroughly pierced,' but *usque ad radicem,* 'to the root of each plant or tree.'

4. *Of which vertu:* Chaucer might have written 'in swich licour of which,' or 'in swich licour that of his vertu,' but he uses 'of which vertu' not strictly after 'in swich licour,' but loosely in relation to the sentence—'in such moisture, that from this vitalizing power the flower is begotten.' The 'virtue' of a thing is its special property, what it is efficacious for. In l. 307 'vertu' has our modern pronunciation; here it must be accented 'vertû.'

7. *croppes:* not wheat and barley, but the tops of trees.

*the yonge sonne,* the astrological year began with the entrance of the sun into the sign of Aries or the Ram on March 12 (old style); in April, therefore, the sun was still 'young.'


*his halfe cours:* The course of the sun in Aries or the Ram began in Chaucer's time on March 12th and ended on April 11th. The first half course was run in March. From l. 5 of the talk which begins the story-telling of the second day we learn that it was then

"the eightetethe day
Of April that is messager to May."

If the second day of the pilgrimage was April 18th, the pilgrimage began April 17th and the company assembled April 16th. Thus, as a matter of fact, the story begins five days after the completion of the
sun's April half course in the Ram; but in the present passage, save
that the opening lines point to April showers having had time to do
their work, there is nothing to show to which 'half course' Chaucer
alludes.

12. Thanne, then; answering to 'whan' in l. 1.

13. Palmeres, originally pilgrims to the Holy Land who brought
thence a palm branch as a token of their journey. The name was
afterwards given only to such pilgrims as wore a distinctive dress,
gentle from one holy place to another, and begged on their way, in-
stead of, like Chaucer's pilgrims, making a holiday excursion to a
single shrine at their own expense.

[It is usual either to print this line as a parenthesis or to put only
a comma after strondes so as to make To ferne halwes follow to
goon. The punctuation here adopted was proposed by Professor
Liddell and seems an improvement, despite the fact that it makes
us want wende at the end of l. 14 rather than 16.]

15 sqq. See Introduction, p. xxxix.

18. That hem hath holpen, who has cured them. It was
common for sick persons to invoke the prayers of a saint on their behalf
and to vow that they would make a pilgrimage to the saint's shrine
should they recover. For the rhyme see, seeke, seeke, see Intro. p. lxvi.

20. In Southwark at the Tabard: see Introduction, p. xli sq.

22. corage, disposition. We are not tempted to misunderstand
corages in l. 11, but here 'courage' would give a seemingly possible,
though wrong, meaning. The real pitfalls in reading Chaucer are
the words we still use, but in a different sense. Cp. note to l. 43.

24. Wel nyne and twenty. The number of pilgrims mentioned
in the Prologue is 31; but see note to l. 164 and Introduction, p. xliiv.

30. was to reste. To here has the force of the modern at. The
use survives in the Americanism 'to home' for 'at home.'

33. erly for to ryse, cp. l. 822. They must have started early
indeed, for the Tales of the Knight and the Miller are supposed to
have been told, and Deptford to be in sight, by 'half-way pryme,' i.e.
by about 7.30 a.m. Cp. A 3985.

40. whiche, of what kind.

THE KNIGHT.

The career of Chaucer's Knight is made difficult to follow by
Chaucer's mentioning the scenes of his exploits as they came to his
mind. If we put his battles and sieges in their chronological order
it will be seen that not only do they fall into groups, but that these
groups allow for the knight taking his fair share of fighting 'in his
lordes werre,' although Chaucer has only specified campaigns against
the infidel. [By Edward III.'s time the Moors in Spain had been
confined to the province of Granada, but here fighting was plentiful.
In the north-east of Europe the Teutonic knights had completed their
conquest of Prussia and were engaged in a long struggle with the Lithuanians. In the south-east the pressure of the infidel was continually more severe, and the chief centres of resistance were the islands of Rhodes and Cyprus and the attenuated kingdom of Armenia in the angle of Asia Minor. It thus became we may almost say

*fashionable* for young knights to make a kind of military 'grand tour,' passing from one of the Christian outposts to another. Thus Henry, Duke of Lancaster, had begun his campaigning with the Teutonic knights in Prussia, and went thence to Rhodes and Cyprus, and finally to Granada. To quit England on such a tour it was necessary to obtain the king's leave and this would only be granted, as a rule, in time of peace. Now in January.
1343 Edward III. concluded a truce with France for three years, and we must imagine that Chaucer's knight started off at once to fight the Moors, possibly accompanying the aforesaid Henry, Duke of Lancaster, at that time Earl of Derby, who in the spring of the year was sent on a mission to Alphonso XI. of Castile, and took the opportunity of doing a little fighting at the siege of Algeciras (Algezir) in Granada. Henry, however, had to return to England, whereas our knight was at the capture of the town in 1344, and about the same time must have taken part in raids in 'Belmarye' and 'Tramysene,' the two provinces in Africa immediately opposite Spain, from which the Moors poured over to Granada to help their kinsmen, passing back again when the tide of war went against them. In May, 1345, the truce with France was declared broken, and we may hope that our knight got back again in time to fight the next year at Crecy. For the next fourteen years there was small chance of his obtaining leave to go crusading. But in May, 1350, the treaty of Bretigny (ratified the following October) would set him free again, and he must have hastened at once to the aid of Pierre de Lusignan, King of Cyprus, who the following year made a sudden expedition against Attalia (Satalia), a town on the coast of Asia Minor, a little to the west of Cyprus, which he captured August 24th, 1361. King Peter, on the ground of this success, started at once on a round of visits to the courts of Europe whence aid might be expected, coming to England, where Chaucer must have seen a great deal of him, in November, 1363. In England he only stayed some six weeks, but he was in no hurry to return to Cyprus, and it was probably during his absence that our knight went 'with the lord of Palaty Agayn another hethen in Turkye.' At last, in 1365, King Peter was at work again, and the knight was among the numerous Englishmen who took part in the capture of Alexandria. Most of the Englishmen seem to have hastened home with their booty, but the knight must have remained with the king, since he was present at the capture of Lyeys (Lyas, Ayas) in Armenia, in October, 1367. Peter then went to Rome in quest of further aid, and on his return was assassinated on January, 16th, 1369, a tragedy which Chaucer's Monk is made to bewail (Canterbury Tales, B 3581-88). It was then, we may suppose, that the knight transferred his services to the Teutonic Order in Prussia, and raided in Lithuania and Russia, for the high honour of oftentimes 'beginning the bord' would hardly have been granted to anyone but a veteran. If we choose, we may imagine that these Lithuanian and Russian raids, which no Christian man of his degree made so often, filled up his time until 1386, the year in which the Lithuanians, much, it is said, to the chagrin of the Teutonic knights, turned Christian, and thus made the war against them no longer attractive on religious grounds. If this were so, our knight must certainly have been 'late y-come from his viage' when Chaucer met him, for it is about this year that the Prologue must have been written. Of course this reconstruction of the knight's career is quite hypothetical.
but it has the merit of a good hypothesis in that it takes account of all the facts, and the haphazard way in which Chaucer strings together his exploits really suggests that he was writing down from memory the adventures of an actual knight, which had been told him, without his quite following out their sequence. As it is, the dates of the four sieges he mentions come in the strange order, 1365 (Alissaundre, l. 51), 1344 (Algezir, l. 57), 1367 (Lyeys, l. 58), 1361 (Satalye, same line).}

43. worthy, notable: here and in ll. 47 and 68 used especially of bravery. So in l. 46 freedom means not 'liberty' but 'generosity' in its fullest sense, as the opposite of meanness.

43. 44. That... he, frequently used by Chaucer for who.

45. To ridden out, to go campaigning, not simply to travel.

47. his lorde werre, i.e. the war of his feudal superior, ultimately or immediately, Edward III. Some of the old commentators took 'his lord' to refer to Christ, probably from misunderstanding 'thero,' which means 'moreover,' in the next line, as if it stood for 'thither.'

51. At Alissaundre he was whan it was wonne. Alexandria was captured by Pierre de Lusignan, King of Cyprus, 10th October, 1365.

52. hadde the bord bigonne, taken the head of the table as the most honoured person in the company. [In the Festial, a volume of English sermons of the fifteenth century, Christ is said to have told the servants at the marriage at Cana 'that they sholde bere' the newly made wine 'to hym that began the table,' i.e. 'the ruler of the feast.' Appolinus in Gower's Confessio Amantis, vili. 720, 'was mad beginne a middel bord' as a mark of honour (a reference usually attributed to Warton but in which Morell had forestalled him).]

53. In Pruce, i.e. among the Teutonic knights, who fought against the heathen of Lithuania (Lettowe) and Russia (Ruce).

54. reysed, gone on expeditions. [Dr. Flügel (in an article on Gower’s Mirour de l’Ome and Chaucer’s Prolog in Anglia, Bd. 24, to which we shall often have to refer) notes (p. 444) that both in Middle-English and in Old French 'reyse' or 'rez' was the technical term for the-e Prussian expeditions. O.N. Reisa (cp. German Reise, 'a journey').]

56. In Gernade at the seige sek hadde he be. Of Algezir, Algeçivas, near Gibraltar. Both places were captured from the Moors in 1344.

57. Belmarys, Benmarin, a Moorish kingdom in North Africa. [According to Leo Africanus "the Benmarini, a generation of Zeneti are said to have reigned for the space of 170 years," and the limits of their kingdom would vary with the fortunes of their perpetual wars. At the beginning of Book xvi. of the Historia de rebus
Hispanicis of Mariana we read that Albohacenus, the ninth king of Morocco, of the family of the 'Merini,' was only kept from attacking Spain by a hereditary war with Botexesinius, king of Tremesene, and at the end of Chap. 4 of the same book the defeat of Botexesinius is recorded under the year 1335, whereupon Albohacenus began to attack Spain.]

58. Lyes, Layas, or Lajazzo, the modern Ayas, in Armenia, attacked by Pierre de Lusignan in October, 1367. The town was 'won' easily enough, but the citadel resisted all the efforts of Pierre's small force, and after burning the town he retired.

Satalye, Attalia, a stronghold on the coast of Asia Minor to the north-west of Cyprus. Captured by Pierre de Lusignan, August, 1361.

59. the Grete Sea, the eastern portion of the Mediterranean, of which Mandeville writes (Chapter XVI., Macmillan's English Classics, p. 97), 'the sea Mediterranean, the which sea dureth in length from Morocco, upon the sea of Spain, unto the Great Sea.'

60. At many a noble armee. 'Armee,' the reading of the Ellesmere and Hengwrt manuscripts, is a translation of the Latin armata or armata navium commonly found in the chronicles of the time. It can be used indifferently for an expedition (or the force which goes on it) whether by sea or land. [The New Eng. Dict. follows this instance by one from Caxton's Faytes of Armes, 'They that by the see wol goo, be it in armee or to som other ado.' The Harley ms. 7334 and Cambridge Gg. read 'ariue' (aryve), explained as meaning an arrival or disembarkation of troops, but of which no other instance has been found. The two words would easily be confused by scribes, as Professor Skeat (who says that 'armee gives no good sense') has pointed out. But even if it could be proved that 'ariue' has any existence, the epithet 'noble' seems more suited to 'armee,' and we may note that Pierre de Lusignan's expeditions against Attalia and Alexandria were exactly what was understood by an 'armata.']

62. Tramyssene, Tremezen, a Moorish kingdom on the north coast of Africa, next to that of Benmarin, under whose domination it passed in 1335. See note to l. 57.

63. In lystes thriis, and ay alayn his foo: Challenges to single combat were a frequent incident in medieval warfare; thus Edward III. challenged the king of France, and the eagerness of Richard Coeur de Lion to encounter Saladin is well known.

65. with the lord of Palaty. 'I'latye' is said to be 'Palathia,' and this again to be one of the Christian lordships in Anatolia (Asia Minor) which survived the general Turkish supremacy, sometimes by paying tribute. It may possibly be the 'Palice' mentioned by Froissart as a district adjoining Satalie, and if so may well have been the scene of fighting in 1361 or thereabouts.
68. though that he was worthy, e Hng., Cam. read ‘were’ instead of ‘was,’ but the indicative seems more suitable, as there is no doubt implied.

70. no vileynye ne sayde, ‘villainy’ was any language, whether foul or of unmannerly abuse, which was unworthy of a gentleman.

73. But for to tellen yow of his array, etc. ‘The countenance of our Knight (i.e. in the coloured pictures in the Ellesmere manuscript, here reproduced in black and white) expresses great sedateness and dignity. His folded headcovering is of a dark colour. His gipon is also dark, but his under-coat red, which is discernible through the sleeves at his wrists; his legs in armour, with gilt spurs; his dagger in a red sheath, by his side; and little points or aiglets of red tipped with gold near his neck and shoulder’ (Todd’s Illustrations of Gower and Chaucer, 1810, p. 229).

74. His hors was goode, e has ‘weren’ for ‘was,’ a quite possible reading, since ‘hors’ is plural as well as singular, and the plural might refer to those of the Squire and Yeoman who rode with the Knight. But as these have not yet been mentioned the singular seems slightly preferable.

76. Scan: Al | bismot | er’d with | his hab | ergeon. The last syllable of habergeon is pronounced ‘joun,’ not ‘geon.’

78. And wente for to doon his pilgrymage. Just as sick people would vow to go on pilgrimage should they recover, so travellers and soldiers would make similar vows as a thank-offering for their safe return. Chaucer’s language here takes it for granted that a pilgrimage would be the natural end of the knight’s campaigning. It may be noted that ‘viage’ in the previous line may be influenced by the use of the Latin viāgium for a military expedition.

The Squire.

An interesting account of the training and duties of squires will be found in Saunders’ Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales (Dent, 1889). After serving from his seventh to his fourteenth year as a page in some noble family a youth received his sword and girdle from the priest’s hands at the altar. He might then have assigned to him various duties in the household, or be made personal attendant on his lady, until he was strong enough to follow his lord to the wars. As ‘squire of the body’ to a knight, he would have to hold his stirrup for him when he mounted, to carry his helmet for him, to lead his war-horse when he preferred to ride on a palfrey, to arm him for battle, and to attend him in the fight. In his lord’s house a squire would not only act as carver, but help to entertain his guests, and wait personally on those of high rank. For the military experience which Chaucer’s Squire may have had, see note to l. 86.

80. a lusty bachelor. ‘Bachelor’ in Chaucer’s time meant not merely an unmarried man, but distinctively a probationer for the
honour of knighthood, or young knight. So Cambuscan in the
Squire's Tale is said to have been:

"Yong, fressh and strong, in armes desirous
As any bacheler of al his hous."

In like manner a Bachelor at the university was a probationer for
the full degree of Master.

83. of evame lengthe. 'Even' here is explained in New Eng.
Dict. as 'a just mean between extremes, of proper magnitude or
degree.'

The Squire.

86. In Flaundres, in Artoys and Pycardia. There was probably
always in Chaucer's time some fighting to be had on the borderland
of France and Flanders, where the Free Companies were troublesome
even in times of peace. But it looks as if Chaucer's Squire had
followed in his father's footsteps and taken part in what was pro-
claimed as a 'Crusade,' the iniquitous expedition captained in 1382
by Henry Le Despencer, the fighting Bishop of Norwich, who, with
the sanction of Pope Urban, led an English army into the districts
here named, to plunder anyone who they could pretend was an
adherent of the anti-Pope Clement, the French candidate. The 
expedition was at first successful, and much booty was sent home to 
England. Eventually it failed miserably.

88. in his lady grace. For ‘lady’ as a genitive see Introduction, 
p. lvi., also note to l. 695.

89. Embroosed was he, etc. In the picture of the Squire in the 
Ellesmere manuscript, he wears a short coat (l. 93), whose long 
sleeves are blown behind him by the wind. The coat itself is green 
lined with red, and embroidered with small white patches. He 
wears white breeches, with tufts of ermine on the thighs, and his 
pointed shoes droop far below the stirrups. His curly hair is 
crowned by a high blue cap embroidered in the front. To prove his 
excellence as a rider (l. 94) his horse is rearing most alarmingly.

100. And cart biforn his fader. ‘Froissart particularly mentions 
that the young Count de Foix, like Chaucer’s Squire, carved before 
his father’ (Saunders, op. cit.). So Barbour (Bruce ii. 91 sq.) writes 
of ‘James off Douglas that ay quhar All ways before the byshop 
schar,’ for which cause the Bishop ‘gert him were his knyyys.’

The Yeoman.

Chaucer describes his Yeoman as carrying not only a bow, sword 
and buckler, which he would do on military service, but also a 
hunting horn, and guesses that he was a Forester. He had, there-
fore, plainly not been abroad with the Knight, and we may imagine, 
in trying to picture how Chaucer thought of things as happening, 
that the Squire and Yeoman had ridden from some country place to 
meet the Knight and attend him on the pilgrimage which he was 
making before returning home. His handsome dagger and silver 
brooch show that the Yeoman was a man of substance, and while 
serving the Knight as a forester he would probably hold a farm as 
well. Modern commentators are agreed that the Tale of Gamelyn 
(the same story of the greenwood as that which Shakespeare used in 
his As You Like It) find in some manuscripts of the Canterbury 
Tales, was intended by Chaucer, when re-written, to be assigned to 
the Yeoman. As it is, he tells no story, so there is no picture of him 
in the Ellesmere manuscript.

101. A Yeman hadde he. ‘He’ refers back to the Knight.

104. pooock arwes: cp. Lydgate’s Hors Goose and Sheep, l. 21 

“Through al the lond of Brute’s Albion 
For fetherid arwes (as I reherse can) 
Goos is the best (as in comparisoun) 
Except fetheris of Pekok or of Swan.”

But some writers on archery considered peacocks’ feathers as good 
only for show, and much inferior to those of the goose.
107. His arwes drouped noght with fetheres lowe: 'low' feathers seem to be those in which the pinnules lie so close to the rib that when fastened to the arrow they do not jut out enough to support it in the air, so that the arrow 'droops' in its flight and falls short.

110. usage, practice.

111. a gay bracer: a 'bracer' (O. Fr. brasseure, ultimately from Lat. brachium) was a guard used by archers to save the arm from being struck by the string when the arrow was loosed.

114. Harnessed wel, i.e. the metal on the leather sheath was handsome and well polished.

115. A Christophere: a silver brooch in the form of a figure of S. Christopher, who, 'as the patron of field sports, and as presiding also over the state of the weather, was of course pre-eminently the forester's guardian saint' (Saunders). But images of S. Christopher were supposed to bring good luck to anybody.

116. the bawdryk was of grene: a baldric (deriv. uncertain) is defined in New English Dictionary as 'a belt or girdle usually of leather and richly ornamented, worn pendent from one shoulder across the breast and under the opposite arm, and used to support the wearer's sword, bugle, etc.' At an earlier date than this knights had worn their baldrics horizontally across the hips. As the yeoman's baldric was green and had only to support a horn, it may very well have been made of cord.

The Prioress.

'This delicate, precise, and sentimental lady is drawn in the manuscript with a wimple neatly pinched, and a 'fetyse' or handsome cloak, which is black over a tunic of white in conformity to the dress of the Benedictine nuns. On her left hand are the beads, and her right hand is uplifted, as if she was desirous of calling the particular attention of her hearers to what she was reciting' (Todd, op. cit. p. 233). Chaucer, of course, is not bound by the Ellesmere illustrator, but the dress here shown is Augustinian (see note to l. 186), not Benedictine. Abbots rank with bishops, and an abbess would have been too great a personage to ride in the company that started from the Tabard. Chaucer's Prioress was the head of one of the smaller houses, and as such would have to entertain its guests. For this reason and because girls of well-to-do families often received part of their education in nunneries (see note on l. 124), to be able to 'counterfeit the cheer of court' and have stately manners were thought essential qualifications in the head of a nunnery. Many prioresses were ladies of rank, their rank helping to gain them their position. This was apparently not the case with Chaucer's, or we should have been told of it, so she would be all the more careful of her dignity. Just as Chaucer hints that his lawyer pretended to be busier than he was, so he suggests that there was some little affectation both in his Prioress's religion and in her fine manners. But his satire is very gentle.
120. Hire gretteste ooth was but by seint Loy. "There has been much discussion," writes Professor Hales (Folia Litteraria, p. 102), "why the good lady should swear by St. Loy of all the saints in the calendar, inasmuch as St. Loy, or Eloy—for Loy appears to be a clipped and more familiar form of the name Eloy, which is the French form of Eligius—is commonly known as the patron of 'goldsmiths, blacksmiths, and all workers in metals, also

of farriers and horses.' It is natural then that the carter in the Friar's Tale should invoke God and St. Loy when his horse is struggling to pull his cart out of the slough, but what is his saintship to the Prioress or she to his saintship?" The answer which Professor Hales suggests is that the Prioress swore by St. Loy because, according to a story told of him by his friend St. Ouen, he had refused to take an oath even when pressed to do so by King Dagobert. To swear by a saint who objected to swearing would thus be swearing of a very apologetic kind, and Professor Hales even thinks that Chaucer meant that the Prioress never swore at all.

Saint: for the pronunciation of this word see Introduction, p. lvii., note.

121. And she was cleped madame Eglentyne. The title 'madame' was given to all Nuns. [According to the Lincoln Order for consecrating Nuns (Lands. ms. 388, written about 1480) the Bishop after the Benediction offered a few words of advice to those whom he had consecrated, beginning: 'Dowghters and virgyns, now
that ye are maried and despowed to hym that is above Kyng and Kayson, unto Iesu Criste, mete it is and so must you from hensforth in tokyn of the same be callyd Madame and Ladye’ (Maskell, *Monumenta Ritualia*, iii. 357 n.).]  

122. *Ful weel she soong the service dyvyne*; *i.e.* the canonical hours (*Matins*, *Lauds*, *Prime*, *Tierce*, *Sext*, *Nones*, *Vespers*, *Compline*) of the Breviary. On high festivals a priest would usually be present at *Lauds* and *Vespers*; at other times the nuns might conduct the whole service themselves.

123. *Entuned in hir nose ful semely.* Church singing, except that of trained musicians, is usually nasal, and Chaucer is here simply stating a fact, not in itself ludicrous. He gives it, however, a ludicrous turn by mischievously adding ‘ful semely.’

124. *And Frensch he spak ful faire and feticely, After the scole of Stratford-atte-Bowe, For Frensch of Parys was to hire unknowe.* It seems reasonable to take these lines in connexion with Chaucer's subsequent remark that the Prioress 'peyned hire to countrefete cheere of court and been estatlich of manere.' Although the battle of the two languages had resulted in the final defeat of Anglo-Norman French by English, the fact that Chaucer's contemporary, John Gower, wrote one of his three long poems, besides numerous 'balades,' in French, suffices to prove that it was still in use, while all its associations would be aristocratic. There was a Benedictine nunnery, some three centuries old in Chaucer's time at Bromley near Stratford-le-Bow (now called 'Bow' simply), and we are intended to imagine that the Prioress had been educated at the convent school there, and trained in the pronunciation of the Anglo-Norman French, which in her young days was certainly spoken at Court. If Chaucer was laughing at the Prioress at all, he was thus certainly not laughing uproariously, as if he had suggested that she was speaking 'Frensh of the further end of Norfolk,' which was no French at all. But he was seldom quite matter-of-fact in these allusions, and probably intended a hint that the Prioress was rather behind the times, just as when he tells us that Absalom in the *Miller's Tale* could 'trip and dance after the scole of Oxenford th'o,' we may guess that our court-poet had it in his mind that the dancing of the Oxford clerks was probably more vigorous than graceful.

127. *At mesto wel y-taught was she with-alle, etc.* ["The following circumstances of behaviour at table are copied from *Roman de la Rose*, 14178-99:

'Et bien se garde qu'elle ne moelie
Ses doys au brouet jusqu' es jointes, etc.,
Si sageant port sa bouchée
Que sur son pied goutte n'en chée
De souppe, ne de saulse noire.
Et doit si bien sa bouche terdre
Tant qu'el n'y laisse gresse aherdre
Au moins en la leve desseure.'"] (Tyrwhitt's note.)
142. conscience: Chaucer seems to use this word much as people in the eighteenth century, and Miss Austen, used 'sensibility,' for refinement of feeling in matters of affection, tenderness of heart (cp. l. 150) erected into a principle.

159. A pair of bedes: the name bead (bede) was transferred from 'prayer' to the small globular bodies used for 'telling beads,' i.e. counting prayers said. A series of these small balls, in Chaucer's time called a pair of beads, is now known as a Rosary. The beads were of two sizes, the larger being for the Lord's Prayer (Pater noster), the smaller, of which there were ten times as many, for the 'Hail Mary' (Ave). The large and more ornamental beads were called Gauds or Gawds, probably, according to New Eng. Dict., from the Latin gaudia (joys), from the fact that the first five of the fifteen mysteries to be meditated on in reciting the fifteen sets of prayers were 'Joysful Mysteries.'

gauded al with grene: having the Gaudies green. [Tyrwhitt compares Gower, Conf. Amant. f. 190 [Bk. viii. ll. 2904-7].

"A pair of bedes blacke as sable
She toke and hynde my necke about,
Upon the gauedes all without
Was wryte of gold, pur repose.""

Prol. Hales has drawn my attention to several bequests of beads in the vol. of Bury Wills and Inventories and that of Wills from Doctors' Commons published by the Camden Society. See, e.g., p. 36 of the Bury vol., A.D. 1463: I yeve & beqwethe to the seid Dame Margarete a payre of bedys with pater firs of gold & on eche syde of the paterfis a bede of coral & the Ave Maryes of colour after marbl with a knowpe, othir wysce called a tuft, of blak silke.' Ib.: 'To Richard Fest of Bury my beadys of jeete with ii paterfis of crystal. Ib. p. 82: 'A payre bedys of jeete gaudied w't corall, paternosters sylue & gilt.

Doctors' Commons Wills, p. 6: 'A litell pair of bedes of white amber gaudied with viij stones of golde.' And ib. 'a pair of bedes of lxj rounde stones of golde gaudied with sex square stones of golde enameled,' etc.

162. Amor vinctit omnia: 'Love conquereth all things.' [To this device and poesy there is some resemblance, as Mr. Ritson has also observed, in The Squire of Lowde Degrée, ver. 211, etc.

"In the myydes of your sheld ther shal be set
A ladyes head with many a fret;
Above the head wrytten shall be
A reason for the love of me;
Both O and R shall be therein
With A and M it shal begynne."

Todd, op. cit. p. 235.]
THE PRIORESS’S CHAPLAIN, OR SECOND NUN.

'This Nun relates the history which is called in the Canterbury Tales the Second Nonnes Tale. There is accordingly in the manuscript a very neat miniature of her in a dark habit with open sleeves; her wimple is nicely plaited; her hood or cowl is up, not hiding, however, her face; and her waist is girded' (Todd, op. cit. p. 235).

As regards the statement that she was the Prioress’s Chaplain the New Eng. Dict. explains 'chaplain' here as 'a nun who recites the inferior services in the chapel of a nunnery,' but the explanation seems of doubtful correctness and not to the point. Chaucer does not say that the nun was the chaplain of the Priory, but that she was the chaplain of the Prioress, and the duty of the chaplain of a Benedictine Prioress or Abbess is now, and pre-
sumably was then, to wait upon her Superior both in and out of chapel, just as the duty of a Bishop's chaplain is to attend on the Bishop. Such attendance would, of course, be more especially needed when the Prioress was travelling. Thus Bishop Alcock in his *Abbeys of the Holy Ghost* says that Charity was made an Abbess and to her Mercy and Truth were to be as Chaplains going about with her wherever she went. In the *Customary of St. Augustine's Canterbury* (edited by Sir E. M. Thompson for the Henry Bradshaw Society, 1902) there is an amusing section on the duties of an Abbot's two chaplains. Among these duties were to foster goodwill between the abbot and the monks, to accompany the abbot out of doors, to save him from small matters of business with which they could deal, to see to his housekeeping and especially to the supply of wine, to keep his jewels and see that he had always at least ten pounds in ready money, to distribute his alms and look after his guests. The same sort of duties would have to be performed in a nunnery, and obviously formed the business of the Prioress's Chaplain. In her *Woman under Monasticism* Miss Lina Eckenstein notes (pp. 376 sq.) that 'In consequence of an Episcopal visitation (1478) of the Benedictine convent of Easebourne injunctions were sent to the prioress, one of which directs that 'every week, beginning with the eldest she shall select for herself in due course and in turns one of her nuns as chaplain (capellanissam) for divine service and to wait upon herself' (Blaauw, *Episcopal Visitations of the Benedictine Nunnery at Easebourne*, Sussex Arch. Collections, vol. i. p. 15). 'In Redingfeld at the visitation of 1514, the complaint is made against the prioress that she does not change her chaplain' (Jessopp, *Visitations of the Diocese of Norwich, 1492-1532*, p. 138). The object of the weekly rota of chaplains was, no doubt, to prevent favouritism and jealousy.

**The Nun's Priest.**

In the talks on the road, after the Monk's flow of tragedies had been stopped,'

``Thanne spakoure Hoost with rude speche and bold,
And sayde unto the Nonnes Preest anon
'Come ner, thou preest, com hyder thou "Sir John."
Telle us swich thyng as may oure hertes glade.
Be blithe, though thou ryde upon a jade—
What thoght thyn hors be bothe foule and lene?
If he wol serve thee, rekke nat a bene,"'" etc.

(B 2998-4004.)

This mention of 'the Nonnes Priest' and the fact that the whole number of pilgrims is raised from twenty-nine (cp. l. 24) to thirty-one, if there were three as here stated, suggests that Chaucer wrote
THE PROLOGUE

the Nun's Priest.

this couplet in forgetfulness of his general scheme and omitted to reconcile them. It is the Priest who tells the story of the 'Fox and the Cock,' an excellent example of Chaucer's final style.

THE MONK.

The best proof that Chaucer's sketch of the hunting monk is not exaggerated is the fact that all the chief points he mentions are to be found in the articles of the 'Visitaton of Selborne Priory' held by William of Wykeham, as Bishop of Winchester, in 1387, i.e. within a year, or two at the most, of the date when Chaucer must have written his Prologue. (The articles are printed in full in an Appendix to Gilbert White's Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne, and summarised in his text, from which we may be content to quote. Thus for the whole character of the Monk, cp. White's "In Item eleventh the good bishop is very wroth with some of the Canons, whom he finds to be professed hunters and sportsmen, keeping hounds, and publicly attending hunting-matches. These pursuits, he says, occasion much dissipation, danger to the soul and body, and frequent expense; he, therefore, wishing to extirpate this vice wholly
from the convent, 'radicibus extirpare,' does absolutely enjoin the canons never intentionally to be present at any public noisy tumultuous hunttings; or to keep any hounds, by themselves or by others, openly or by stealth, within the convent or without." The penalty for each offence was to be two days fasting on bread and beer. The sixth article "mentions that several of the canons are found to be very ignorant and illiterate, and enjoins the prior to see that they be better instructed by a proper master," and the thirty-

fourth bids them to sit in the cloister and read the Scriptures (cp. ii. 104 sq.). In the eighty-sixth article the canons are accused of refusing to accept of their statutable clothing year by year and of demanding a certain specified sum of money, presumably in order to buy with it what clothes they pleased. In the twenty-ninth the result of this system is seen in the prohibition of "foppish ornaments and the affectation of appearing like beaux with garments edged with costly furs (cp. i. 193 sq.), with fringed gloves, and silken girdles trimmed with gold (cp. our Monk's gold pin) and silver." In the twenty-sixth the canons are severely reprimanded for appearing publicly in fancy boots, "contra consuetudinem antiquam ordinis supradicti in
perniciosum exemplum et scandalum plurimum," so that the care which the monk bestowed on his 'bootes souple' (l. 203) was probably misapplied. Lastly we find the case of outriders, such as he was (l. 166), dealt with in the ninth article, which complains that "some of the canons are given to wander out of the precincts of the convent without leave; and that others ride to their manors and farms under pretence of inspecting the concerns of the society, when they please, and stay as long as they please. But they are enjoined never to stir either about their own private concerns or the business of the convent without leave from the prior: and no canon is to go alone, but to have a grave brother to accompany him."

165. for the maistrie, above all others. [Flügel (452) compares Hoccleve, Govern. 23:

"When I was yonge I was ful recheles
Proude, nice and ryotous for the maystrye."]

166. An outridere. See above, and cp. Shipman's Tale (b 1252-56):

'This noble monk, of which I yow devyse
Hath of his abbot, as hym list, licence,—
By cause he was a man of heigh prudence,
And eek an officer,—out for to ryde
To seek his graunges and hise bernes wyde."

'Outrider' appears to have been an official designation title for the monk who had to look after the convent estates.

that lovevde venerie. If the satirists and reformers of Chaucer's time can be trusted, the love of hunting and horses had infected not merely the monks, but the clergy of every rank. [Wyclif complained that "curatis hav fatte hors with gaye sadlis and bridelis" and that "the more that a curat hath of pore mennys goodis the more comunly he wastith in costy sedynge of houndis and haukis," while of prelates he says that they 'ride with foure score hors, with harneis of siluer & gold.' (For references and other quotations see Flügel, p. 455 sq.)]

170. Gynglen, i.e. from the bells on the harness, which a hunting monk would think made a much pleasanter noise than the 'chapel belle' of the next line.

172. Ther as this lord was kepere of the cell: a 'cell' was a minor religious house dependent on a greater one, and was sometimes used as a kind of convalescent home. [Thus the great Abbey of S. Albans had a cell at Redburn, four and a half miles off, of which Dr. Horstmann writes (Introduction to Nova Legenda Anglie, p. xi.), 'it served as a place of recess for sick monks to receive the benefit of ease and fresh air. Abbot Richard Wallingford (1326-55) ordained that three monks should always be here on duty for one month and then be relieved by three others.' But in many cells
there was no such time-limit and life at a cell was so much easier than at a well-governed great monastery that stories are told of monks who had contrived to stay on at a cell for several years asking, when they came back, whether the monastery were not under an altogether different 'rule.'

173. The rule of saint Maure or of saint Beneit: St. Benedict founded the first monastery of his order at Monte Cassino (halfway between Naples and Rome) about A.D. 530. S. Maurus was one of his earliest disciples and introduced the Benedictine rule into France.

175. This like Monk lest olde thynges pace. Instead of telling us that the Monk left these particular old things to go their own way, Chaucer tells us that it was the Monk’s practice to disregard old things, and we see that these went with the rest. [Dr. J. Réigel quotes a close parallel from Gower’s Vox Clamantris, IV. c. 7:

"Nil modo Bernardi sancti vel regula Mauri
Confert, commonachis displicet immo novis."]

176. And heeld after the newe world the space: Professor Skeat takes ‘space’ as meaning ‘course’ (Lat. spatium) and translates ‘held his course in conformity with the new order of things.’ It seems at least possible that Chaucer uses ‘the space’ adverbially for ‘in the meantime’ (cp. ‘and born hym weel, as of so litel space,’ l. 87) and ‘heeld’ absolutely, in the sense of ‘kept on his way.’

177. He yaf nat of that text a pulled hen: the text ‘that seith that hunters beth nat hooly men,’ for which the monk did not care the value or a hen that had lost its feathers, has not been found. [A reviewer in the Athenaenum refers to Jerome super Psalm xc:

‘Esau venator erat, quoniam peccator erat. Et penitus non invenimus in scripturis sanctum aliquem venatorem, piscatores invenimus sanctos,’ quoted in the Decretals, Pars I. Dist. 86. c. 11.]

179. whan he is cloysterles: ‘Cloysterles’ is the reading of the Harleian Ms., as against the ‘recceheles’ of the six texts. Professor Liddell says that ‘recceheles’ seems to have a peculiar meaning here, ‘careless of regulations’ (it has been proposed to read ‘reuleles’), so that Chaucer has to explain what he means in vv. 181, 182,” and that in view of this explanation no emendation is needed. Dr. Skeat, on the other hand, points out that “a careless monk is not necessarily a monk out of his cloister,” and that the Harleian reading “solves the difficulty.” [If there were not good reason to believe that the Harleian Ms. records some of Chaucer’s second thoughts, we should have to stand by ‘recceheles,’ as no scribe would have been likely to have altered ‘cloysterles’ if he had found it in his text. But it seems quite possible that Chaucer himself substituted for ‘recceheles,’ the coined word ‘cloysterles,’ which he had not at first thought of, and which comes much nearer to a translation of the proverb, leaving l. 181, because
'cloisterless' is rather too strong, since it might mean a monk who has got no cloister, not merely one who strays from it.

180. Is likened till a flasch that is waterles. 'This passage is attributed by Gratian to a Pope Eugenius: Sicut piscis sine aqua caret vita, ita sine monasterio monachus' (Tyrwhitt). The exact reference is to Decreta, Pars II. Causa 16, Quest. 1, c. 8. Both Wyclif and Gower quote it. [It is noteworthy, perhaps, that while in the Vox Clamantis Gower writes: 'Non foris a claustris monachus, neque aqua fore piscis,' which makes wholly for 'cloysterles' in l. 179; in his Mirour he writes (20846 sqq.):

   "tou ensi comme le piscoun
   En l'eaue vit tant soulemment,
   Tout autrecy Religiou,
   Prendra sa conversacioun
   Solonc la reule du covent
   El cloistre tout obedient :
   Car s'il vit seculiere
   Lors change la condicioun
   Del ordre qu'il primerement
   Resceut, dont pert au finement
   Loer [the reward] de sa professioum."

where the important 'in the cloister' of the sixth line is so wrapped round with the general idea of obedience to rule as to offer some parallel to 'reccheelz.'

185. Upon a book in cloyster alwey to poure. Few monasteries in Chaucer’s days posses-ed specially built libraries in which the monks could read. Such libraries were addd both to monasteries and colleges in the fifteenth century. In Chaucer’s time the monks still read their books in the cloister, where each of them had his ‘carrill,’ or reading-desk, three or four in an arch. See The Care of Books, by J. W. Clark, Chap. II.

186. Or swynken with his handes and laboure, As Austyn bit? The peculiar idea of activity attached to the Augustinian rule is altogether a matter of tradition. [The famous Rule itself is but part of a letter written by S. Augustine, when Bishop of Hippo, to a convent of nuns in his diocese, in which he gives them advice as to the manner and spirit in which they should conduct themselves 'as persons settled in a monastery.' This very vagueness, however, as contrasted with the detailed code of S. Benedict, caused the so-called Rule of S. Augustine to be adopted by numerous new religious orders, and traditions sprang up around it of which the stress laid on the union of the religious life and active work was the chief. See ‘The Rule of S. Augustine,’ by E. Speakman in Historical Essays, by Members of the Owens College, Manchester, 1902.]

190. Grehoundes he hadde. Cp. note on 'The Monk,' the Bishop's 11th Article. The Ellesmere picture shows two of these greyhounds, but unluckily there is not room for them on this page.

196. of gold...a curious pyn. Of course a monk had no right to wear gold ornaments, and the 'love knot' in the pin was an additional crime.

206. A fat swan—the great medieval delicacy.

The Friar.

As noted in l. 210 there were at this time four orders of Friars in England:

(i.) Franciscans. Founded by S. Francis of Assisi in 1208, these came to England in 1224, and thirty-two years afterwards already possessed forty-nine convents in this country.

(ii.) Dominicans. Founded by S. Dominic at Toulouse in 1215, as a preaching order to combat the heresy then prevalent in the south of France. They came to England in 1220.

(iii.) Carmelites. Originally a monastic order on Mount Carmel. When driven out by the Mahommedans they spread over Europe, and in 1247, when they had an Englishman as their General, were changed into a mendicant order.

(iv.) Augustinians. An order of uncertain origin on which the 'Rule of S. Augustine' (see note to l. 187) was imposed by Innocent IV. (d. 1254).

The movement started by S. Francis of Assisi remained throughout the thirteenth century a great religious force, attracting to itself all that was most earnest and unselfish in the religious life of the time. The Friars were not, like the monks, to
flee from the world, but to mix with it and convert it. They were essentially missionaries, both for home and abroad, and their vow of poverty was intended to bind them collectively as well as individually. By Chaucer’s time their churches and houses were as splendid as those of the monks, and were supported by the shameless begging of which the poet gives a picture in the Summoner’s Tale. [Here a friar first excites the people in church:

“to yeve for Goddes sake
Wherwith men mighte holy houses make,”

and then

“Whan folk in chirche had yeve him what hem lest
He went his wey, no lenger wokle he reste.
With scrippe and tipped staf, y-tukked hye,
In every hous he gan to poure and prye,
And beggeth mele, and chese, or elles corn.
His felawe hade a stafe tipped with horn,
A peyre of tables al of yyvory,
And a poynet pollysshed fetisly,
And wrote the names alwey as he stood
Of alle folk that yaf hym any good,
Ascaunces that he wolde for hem prey.
‘Yif us a busshele whete, malt or reye,
A Goddes kechyl, or a trype of chese,
Or elles what yow lyst, we may nat cheese ;
A Goddes halfpeny, or a masse peny,
Or yif us of youre brawn, if ye have eny ;
A dagoun of youre blanket, leeve dame,
Oure suster deere,—lo heere I write youre name,
Bacoun, or beef, or swich thynge as ye fynde.’
A sturdy harlot wente ay hem bihynde,
That was hir hostes-man, and bar a sak,
And what men yaf hem leyd e it on his bak.
And whan that he was out at dore anon,
If he planed awey the names everichon
That he biforn had written in his tables.”]

The picture of the Friars which Chaucer gives in these lines and in the Prologue is in accordance with the allusions in many other writers of the time. On the other hand many individual friars may have still retained some of the merits as well as the defects of a low-class clergy, and Wyclif who, at the end of his life, assailed them bitterly, had at one time contrasted them favourably with the tithe-taking clergy. But about the time Chaucer wrote they must have been specially unpopular, as in 1385, in consequence of riots in which their houses were pulled down, a proclamation had to be issued for their protection.

208. wantowne, gay.

1 Ascaunces, as though. 2 Kechyl, cake. 3 Dagoun, fragment.
209. **A lymytour.** This word is explained by the couplet added in the Hengwrft ms. after l. 252 (see note), a limiter being a friar who paid his convent a certain sum (a ferme) for the exclusive right of begging on its behalf within the limits of a fixed district, presumably spending the surplus, if any, as he pleased. The friar whose proceedings are chronicled in the *Summoner’s Tale* was a limiter, and his erasing from his tables the names of donors as soon as they were out of sight shows how the system worked.

**A ful solémpne man.** ‘Solemn’ is one of the words still in use, the exact meaning of which in Chaucer’s verse is rather difficult to define. Etymologically it means ‘annual,’ its usual sense arising from a connection of ideas with religious festivals which come round once a year. Dr. Skeat in his *Chaucer Glossary* assigns it in different passages the meanings: festive, grand, cheerful (this passage), important, illustrious, superb, public! The underlying idea seems to be something official or fitted for a great occasion. Thus ‘solemn penance’ is the formal punishment of a sinner, a ‘solemn feast’ (E. 1125, F. 61) is one held on a state occasion, ‘a great solèmpne route’ is Chaucer’s description (B 387) of the escort accompanying a royal bride; a solemn fraternity (*Prologue*, 364) is one that held an important position in its town. Instead of ‘cheerful,’ therefore, it seems better here to take solemn as explained by l. 261 (‘he was lyk a maister, or a pope’) and explain it by stately,—a man of a good presence.

210. **the ordres four.** See above, note on ‘the Friar.’

211. **dallyance.** This word in Chaucer’s time was already getting the bad meaning of idle talk, trifling, flirtation. But even a hundred years later it could still be used of serious discussion [*New Eng. Dict.*, quotes from *Dives & Pauper*, ‘Redynge and dalyence of holy writ and of holy mennes lyues’], and it should perhaps be taken here as an unequivocal tribute to the Friar’s conversational powers. No one could talk better or use finer language.

212. **He hadde maad ful many a mariwget.** Dr. Flügel quotes passages illustrating how the Friars encroached on the parson’s monopoly of celebrating the marriages of his parishioners. But even if the Friar, to win popularity, charged no fees, this hardly explains ‘at his owene cost’ in the next line. The allusion appears to be to the Friars finding husbands, and perhaps dowries, for girls whom they had seduced.

218. **Hadd power of confessoun ... moore than a curât.** In the Roman Church certain sins are ‘reserved’ for the consideration of the bishop before absolution can be given. The Franciscans and other friars had privileges that enabled them to confess the parishioners of a parson without his leave, and to give absolution for weightier sins than he could deal with. A license from his convent did not give a Friar any special privileges as a confessor, but certified that he was a discreet man, of mature age, who could be trusted
to go abroad. [As a parallel to the whole passage Dr. Flügel appositely quotes Gower’s *Mirour de l’Omm*, ll. 21469 sqq.:

“Ove [avec] les Curetz du sainte eglise
   Le frere clayme en sa franchise
Confession et sepulture
Des riches gentz ; mais celle enprise
Deinz [dans] charité n’est pas comprise ;
Car de les poverez il ne cure [cp. *Prol.* 247],
Soit vif ou mort, car celle cure
Dont gaign ne vient, jammes procure.”]


227. *he dorne*, *i.e.* the Friar.

233. His *typet was ay farsed full of knyves*, etc. Jusserand (*English Wayfaring Life*) quotes from a poem against the friars in Wright’s *Political Songs*:

   “Thai wandren here and there,
   And dele with dyvers marcerye,
   Right as thai pedlers were
   Thai dele with purses, pynnes, and knyves,
   With gyrlles, gloves, for wenches and wyves.”

According to the best authorities a tippet should be a broad black scarf, capable of being wound round the head and neck as a hood. Apparently the Friar’s tippet had pockets in the ends in which he studied his knives, etc.

242. *Bet than a luar*, etc. Dr. Flügel compares *Romaunt of the Rose*, ll. 6491 sqq.:

   “I loue bettir the acqueyntaunce
Ten tyme of the Kyng of Fraunce
Than of a pore man ...
For whanne I see beggers quakyng
Naked on myxnes [dunghills] al stynkyng
For hunger crie and eke for care
I entremete [meddle] not of her fare.
They ben so pore and full of pyne
They myght not oonyz gave me a dyne.”

244. *as by his facultee*: considering his profession.

246. *honeste*, honourable, respectable.

251. *so vertuous*, of such wonderful powers.

252. The Hengwrt ms. here gives the couplet:

   “And yaf a certeyn ferme for the graunt
     Noon of his bretheren cam ther in his haunt.”

*Cp.* note to l. 209.
NOTES

253. For thogh a wydwe hadde noght a sho, etc. Flügel compares Jack Upland's Reply:

"Thi tong likkith the chesefat
And the garner also,
And the pore wedowes porse
Though she have bot a penny."

[Also Gower's Miroir de l'Onne, 2137 sqq., where the Friar 'la maile prent s'il n'ait denier,' takes a halfpenny if he cannot get a penny.]

254. So pleasaunt was his In Principio: so pleasant was his reading of the opening verses of the Gospel of S. John, to which a magical value was attached. [As early as 1022 a council held at Seligstadt, near Mainz, forbade lay-folk in general and matrons especially from hearing the Gospel In Principio erat Verbum (John i. 1-14) daily, because of the superstitions connected with it. Gerald of Wales (d. 1222) mentions how the clergy of his day used to say additional Gospels at Low Mass for the sake of obtaining offerings from people who attached special value to some one of them; and he mentions the beginning of S. John as considered especially powerful for driving away ghosts. Unfortunately in the fourteenth century an Indulgence of a year and forty days (see note on the Pardoner) was granted to those who heard or recited this Gospel and at the same time kissed the earth. This is alluded to in a northern poem of the latter part of the fourteenth century called The Manner and Mode of the Masse:

"Vyt prei ur lai as I gow telle
That ye foryet not the godspelle
For thing [cp. l. 276] that may bi-falle.
Tak a good entent ther-to
Hit is the In Principio
In Latin that men calle.
A yere and forte dayes atte lest
For Verbum caro factum est
To pardoun haue ye schalle.
Mon or womon schal haue this
That kneels doun the eorthe to kis;
For-thi think on hit, alle."

In the fifteenth century the priest was directed to say this Gospel after Mass, but it is clear that in the meantime the friars had begun the practice of saying it, not only in church, but in private houses. In 1401 the author of Jack Upland tells the friars: "Ye win more by yere with In Principio than with all the rules that ever your patrones nade," and the custom continued, since Tindale in his Answer to Sir Thomas More (1530) alludes to "the limitours saying of In Principio from house to house." (See 'A Paper on the Usage of a Second Gospel at Mass,' by E. G. C. Atchley, Transactions of the St. Paul's Ecclesiological Society, Vol. IV., 1900.)]
256. His purchas was wel bettre than his rente. The proceeds of his begging were much greater than the rent or 'ferme' (see note to I. 252) he paid to his convent, i.e. he made a considerable profit for himself.

258. In love-dayes ther koude he muchel helpe. Lovedays were days appointed for the settlement of disputes by arbitration. [Dr. Skeat gives a reference to a good illustrative quotation, Paston Letters, 341: Friar Brackley to John Paston, 'Lord Skalys hathe made a lofeday with the prior and Heydon in alle materys except the matere of Snaryng &c. And the seyd pryor spake maysterly to the jurorys and told hem and [i.e. if] they had dred God and hutt of here sowlys, they wold haf some instruccyon of the one party as wele as of the other. But they were so bold they were not aferd,' etc. Dr. Flügel quotes from Wyclif censure of priests for meddling at lovedays and maintaining the wrong cause there, and of 'grete men' who 'meyntenen debatis at louedaiies and who so may be strengere wil haua his wille don.'] The Friar helped at lovedays either by bringing influence to bear on jurors, or by himself acting as umpire.

261. But he was lyk a maister, or a pope: the degree of Master or Doctor not only required a long course of study, but also a lavish expense in feasting and presents. This made those who could afford to take it rank as very dignified persons indeed.

263. That rounded as a belle out of the presse: Dr. Skeat explains 'presse' as 'the mould in which a bell is cast.' But a press and a mould are surely quite different things. The meaning seems to be that the cope was flat enough when it was in the clothes-press, but when taken out of press and put on the portly friar it immediately became as round as a bell.

The Merchant.

The Ellesmere picture of the Merchant shows him in his 'motteleye' dress of red, lined with blue, and embroidered with blue and white flowers,—perhaps rather a gayer dress, and with more fashionable boots than Chaucer intended. From the mention of Middelburgh (see quotation from Prof. Hales in note to I. 277) it is probable that he was a Merchant of the Staple, and engaged not merely in inland but in foreign trade. The Staple was a government organization, dating probably from the reign of Edward I., which fixed the town or towns in which the 'staple' products of England, such as wool, hides, and tin, might be sold to foreigners, so as to facilitate the collection of customs. When Chaucer was writing the foreign staple was at Middelburgh, and the Merchant would have to transport his goods thither, and desired that the sea should be well guarded that they might go in safety. Until the reign of Edward III. the most important merchants in England were foreigners, but in his reign there were many English merchants of great wealth.
Chaucer's would not have ranked with these. He was in debt, we are told, and he seems to have made his profits (see note to l. 278) by questionable means.

275. *Sownynge alway thencrees of his wynnyng.* 'Sownynge,' sounding, tending to. The Merchant gave his 'resons' of opinions, on English policy, and these were always affected by his idea as to what would be good for trade and so conduce to the increase of his own profits. 'His talk was thus the opposite of the Clerk's whose speech was 'sownynge in moral vertu' (l. 307).

![The Merchant](image)

276. *He wolde the see were kept for any thing.* He desired that no matter what might happen ('for anything') the sea should be guarded. This keeping of the sea was the king's duty, 'the old subsidy of tonnage and poundage,' as Tyrwhitt notes, being granted him for this purpose. But the royal ships did not always suffice, for in 1378 a 'scotch pirate did such harm to English commerce that one of the rich London merchants, John Philipot, hired ships at his own expense and cleared the sea.

277. *Bitwixe Middelburgh and Orewele.* Middleburgh is in the isle of Walcheren, nearly opposite the mouth of the Orwell on the English coast. Prof. J. W. Hales, in his *Folia Litteraria* (Seeley, 1893, p. 100) writes: 'We are told of the Merchant that he thought it of prime moment that the passage from Harwich to Middelburgh...
should be swept clear of pirates. Why Middelburgh? The answer to this query proves that the Prologue must have been written not before 1384 and not later than 1388. In 1384 the wool staple was removed from Calais and established at Middelburgh; in 1388 it was fixed once more at Calais (see Craik’s History of British Commerce, i. 123). The said wool staple led a somewhat nomad life in the fourteenth century: it was at different times established at Bruges and Antwerp, not to mention various towns in England, but its only sojourn at Middelburgh was that in the years 1384-8; and so only just at that time could the Merchant’s words have their full significance.”

278. Wel koude he in eschaunge sheeldes selle: Prof. Flügel notes that by selling at a profit the French crowns (called ‘sheeldes,’ from having a shield on one side of them) which he received for his goods the Merchant was breaking a statute of Edward III. which forbade anyone to make a profit on exchange, except the royal money changers (25 Edward III., Stat. 5. c. 12). Nowadays the rate of exchange between coins of different countries varies primarily with the balance of trade, but in Chaucer’s time there were other variations due to the constant tampering with the coinage, and these variations would offer increased chances of profit. The real insinuation, however, appears to be that under colour of ‘exchange’ the Merchant made bargains which involved usury. Flügel quotes from an Ordinance against Usurers of 38 Edward III. (Libror Albus, ed. Riley, p. 319): “certain persons who … maintain the false and abominable contract of usury, under cover and colour of good and lawful trading; which kind of contract, the more subtly to deceive the people, they call ‘exchange’ or ‘chevisance’” (cf. I. 282).

284. I nOOT how men hym calle. Chaucer’s parade of his ignorance of the Merchant’s name is supposed to suggest something of a courtier’s contempt for ‘city-people.’ We may find another reason for his not giving a name in the suspicions he casts on the Merchant’s dealings.

The Clerk.

The term Clerk was applied to any ecclesiastical student, and though Chaucer’s Clerk had long applied himself to Logic, the principal subject in the Arts course at all medieval universities, we may think of him as a young man, since twelve or thirteen was the usual age for boys to go to the university. He was still in need of his friends’ help to pursue his studies (I. 299), perhaps with a view to taking up the long course in Theology, but had probably taken his bachelor’s degree in Arts at Oxford, and perhaps been abroad, according to the peripatetic habits of the day, to learn from foreign teachers. If we were to take the prologue to his Tale of Grisilde literally we should have to say that he had been at Padua, where there was a famous university with many foreign students, since he
tells us that he had there met Petrarch. But this was more probably a piece of Chaucer’s own experience, and some writers have founded on it a theory that in the character of the Clerk he is really describing himself. For this there is very little to be said, for Chaucer, though he could appreciate the Clerk’s unworldliness, was certainly not a man of the same stamp, and would probably have preferred many books to those ‘of Aristotle and his philosophie,’ not to men-

The Clerk.

tion that he was not an ecclesiastic but a very busy servant of the Crown, the very thing he praises his Clerk for not being. The Ellesmere picture of the Clerk is one of the least successful. Justice is done to the leanness of the horse, but that is all. We may be sure that the Clerk would not have carried his precious books about with him in this promiscuous fashion, and the violet garment he is wearing can hardly be a ‘courtepy.’

285. Oxenford, “Oxford, as if ‘the ford of the oxen’ (A.S. Oxna-
ford); and it has not been proved that this etymology is wrong” (Skeat’s note).

291. For he hadde geten hym yet no benefice: Dr. Flügel suggests that the Clerk did not wish for a benefice, because the work
of a parson would have taken him from his studies; but Chaucer only says he had not yet got one. According to the picture Wyclif draws of the church patronage at this time, benefices did not easily fall in the way of students who had no money to give in presents and would not neglect their work to make themselves useful to the lord of the manor or agreeable to his lady.

292. Ne was so worldly for to have office: clerks monopolized so much of the educated ability of the country that not merely many legal offices, but all sorts of positions of trust in great houses were filled by them.

294. Twenty bookes, clad in blak or reed, black calf or red sheep-skin. Red morocco was not yet known in England. Twenty books would not have been a bad library for a poor scholar in Chaucer's days, even if he had copied some of them himself. In the Legend of Good Women we hear of 'sixty bookes olde and newe' in Chaucer's own possession, all with stories about women in them. But we must not take this too literally.

295. Of Aristotle and his philosophie. In the early days of the University of Paris only the Logic and Ethics of Aristotle were read, his Metaphysics and Natural Philosophy being interdicted. But the interdict was removed in 1255, and for some two and a half centuries from that date Aristotle reigned supreme in all the universities of Europe.

296. Than robes riche, or fithele, or gay sautrie: These would have been great temptations to Nicholas, the Oxford clerk, in the Miller's Tale, in whose bedroom 'ther lay a gay sautrie On which he made a-nyghtes melodie.'

297. al be that he was a philosophre: dabbler in alchemy, as well as students of logic and metaphysics, were called Philosophers (a name for them still preserved in 'the Philosophers' stone'). But their coffers were mostly emptier even than those of Clerks if we may judge from the Canon's Yeoman's Tale.

299. al that he myghte of his freendes hente: Dr. Flügel parallels from God Speede the Plough, 75: 'Than commeth clerkys of Oxford and make their mone: To her scole hire they most have money.'

307. Sownynge in moral vertu: cp. the Doctor's Tale of Virginia (l. 54): 'alle hire w-rides, moore and lesse, Sownynge in vertu and in gentillesse.' 'Sounding in' seems to mean something like 'eloquent with,' 'abounding in.'

The Sergeant at Law.

Sergeants-at-law were the king's servants (servientes) in legal matters, chosen from among barristers of sixteen years' standing, and on their appointment had to give a feast of almost royal magnificence, at which the king himself was sometimes present. From among