them were chosen the judges of the Courts of King’s Bench and Common Pleas. The sergeants who were not judges could continue to plead in court, and win fees and robes from suitors. By means of the wealth they gained, fairly or unfairly, the great lawyers in Chaucer’s time were enabled to acquire much landed property, and this ‘purchasing’ (l. 320) was commonly brought as an accusation against them by the satirists of the day.

THE SERGEANT AT LAW.

310. That often hadde been at the Parvys: a Parvys (or Paradise) appears to have been the name given in medieval France and England to a covered place attached to a religious establishment where people could walk about for their pleasure under shelter. At Norwich children were taught to read and sing at the Parvys of S. Martin’s Church; at Oxford a Parvys was used for disputations in logic, and at London the portico or Parvys of S. Paul’s Cathedral was the great meeting places for lawyers after the courts had shut at mid-day, for consultations and interviews with their clients. [Post meridiem curiae non tenantur, sed placitantes hunc se divertunt ad pervisum et alibi consulentes cum servientibus ad Legem et aliis consiliariis suis. Fortescue, De laudibus legum Angliae, cap. 51.]

313. He named swich, etc. Chaucer implies that he would only answer for the Sergeant’s words, not for his character, as being ‘of great reverence.’

314. Justice he was ful often in assise, etc. Assizes are literally ‘sittings,’ hence the term came to be applied to all legal
proceedings before juries, and so to the sessions held periodically (according to the provisions of Magna Charta, modified by subsequent enactments) in each county of England "for the purpose of administering civil and criminal justice by judges acting under certain special commissions, chiefly and usually, but not exclusively, being ordinary judges of the superior courts." The last sentence in the quotation from the *New Eng. Dict.* explains the serjeant's position. He was not a permanent judge of the court of King's Bench or Common Pleas; had he been so he could not have continued to plead. But when there were not enough judges of the superior courts to go on circuit, he had often acted as an Assize judge by the king's letters patent (i.e. a document 'open' for any one to read, not closed like a letter to an individual) and commission.

315. *pleyn commission.* The word 'pleyn' may be emphatic here. The serjeant's commision was as full and unrestricted as if he were a judge of a superior court.

317. *Of fees and robes hadde he many oon.* The judges received robes three times a year from the king, but the allusion is not to this, but to the robes, which were given by client-, in addition to fees in money. [Dr. Flügel quotes appositorily from Wyclif 'Of Servants,' etc.: "and yit men of lawe that schulden distroie siche falsnesse bi her office and don eche man right and resoun meyntenen wrong for money and fees and robes, and forbaren pore men for her right, that it is betre to hem to pursueth not for her right, be it never so open, than to pursueth and lose more catel for disceites of delais and cauellacions and euele wilis that they usen."]

318. *So greet a purchasour was nowher noon.* The accepted explanation of 'purchasour' is 'conveyancer,' but quotations brought together by Dr. Flügel from Robert of Brunne, Gower, and Wyclif prove that it has its ordinary sense of 'buyer,' or perhaps rather that of a 'buyer up,' with an idea of haste and unscrupulousness which would agree with its derivation from O.Fr. *purchaser* (to pursue eagerly, acquire, get), and account for its being so constantly used in an invidious sense of the dealings of lawyers in land. [The best of Dr. Flügel's parallels is from Wyclif's *Thee Thynge,* where, after accusing lawyers of knavery, he goes on 'and hereby thei geten hem gold and purchasen rentis and londis of lordis and distroien verrey heieris, and this distroieoth mocheoure land. For hou schulde right be among suche men, that this day han but here penye, and anoon purchasen rentis and londis to be peris with knyttis or barons. ']

319. *Al was fee symple.* etc. 'Fee simple' is the legal term for unrestricted possession. The suggestion seems to be that the lawyer bought some rights over a property and converted it by chicanery into 'fee simple,' his skill enabling him to defeat any attempt to annul the purchase on the ground of fraud (l. 320).

322. And yet he seeming bisier than he was, i.e. to make clients think more of him. [It has been suggested that Fielding had this
NOTES

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<td>63</td>
<td><em>couplet in his mind in his character of Dowling, the lawyer in Tom</em></td>
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<td><em>Joves, who is always in a hurry.</em></td>
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<td>323</td>
<td><em>In termes hadde he caas and doomes alle, etc.</em> English common law</td>
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<td>has been built up on legal decisions, and the Sergeant</td>
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<td>could quote all the cases and judgments from the time of the</td>
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<td>Conqueror; 'In termes' is explained as 'exactly, precisely.' [I</td>
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<td>have sometimes thought that it might refer to something like the</td>
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<td>'Year-Books,' or annual reports of decided cases, which were</td>
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<td>already in existence in the reign of Edward III. This would</td>
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<td>suggest the meaning: 'He had all the legal judgments from the</td>
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<td>time of the Conqueror arranged under the terms when they were</td>
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<td>delivered.' But the other interpretation is more probably the</td>
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<td>right one.*</td>
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<td>325</td>
<td><em>make a thynge</em> : draw up a deed.</td>
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<td>328</td>
<td><em>He rood but hoomly in a medlee cote, etc.</em> In the Ellesmere</td>
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<td></td>
<td>picture the Sergeant has a scarlet robe, with open sleeves,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>faced with blue (this combination of colours is apparently what</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Chaucer meant by 'a medlee cote' and Fortescue by <em>stragulata</em></td>
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<td><em>vestris</em> and ornamented with stripes or 'harres smale.' On his</td>
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<td>shoulders is a white furred hood, and on his head the Sergeant's</td>
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<td></td>
<td>coif, or head-dress of white.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>THE FRANKLIN.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Franklin was a free tenant of the Crown, holding his lands</td>
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<td></td>
<td>without the obligation of military service or rent. The wealth</td>
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<td></td>
<td>and importance of this one are shown not only by his keeping open</td>
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<td></td>
<td>house for all the country side (l. 340), and the mews and fish-</td>
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<td>ponds attached to his estate which enabled him to do so, but also</td>
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<td></td>
<td>by his having acted as chairman of the sessions, representative</td>
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<td></td>
<td>of the shire in Parliament (ll. 355 sq.), sheriff of his county,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>and an accountant or auditor of the local expenditure. *The</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ellesmere picture does full justice to the whiteness of his beard</td>
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<td></td>
<td>and shows him in a red surcoat lined with blue, with stripes of</td>
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<td></td>
<td>fringe across it. At his waist hangs a 'bottle, probably suggested</td>
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<td></td>
<td>by l. 334.*</td>
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<td>333</td>
<td><em>Of his complexioun he was sangwyn.</em> If we take this line in</td>
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<td></td>
<td>conjunction with its predecessor we shall be tempted to think that</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Chaucer meant only that the Franklin had a white beard and a</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ruddy face. But in Chaucer's days a ruddy face was only an</td>
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<td></td>
<td>incident of a sanguine complexion. The latter word means '</td>
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<td></td>
<td>combination,' and was a technical term in medieval medicine for</td>
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<td></td>
<td>the combination in different proportions of the four 'humours'</td>
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<td></td>
<td>mentioned in l. 420. The sanguine complexion (as opposed to its</td>
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<td>three rivals, the melancholy, choleric, and phlegmatic) was a</td>
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<td></td>
<td>combination of the hot and moist humours, and produced a large</td>
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<td>desire and capacity for all kind of self-indulgence.</td>
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<td>336</td>
<td>*he was Epicurus owene sone: Epicurus was a Greek philosopher who</td>
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<td></td>
<td>taught at Athens from 367 B.C. to his death in 270.*</td>
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Although Epicurus laid down the doctrine that pleasure is the chief good (cp. l. 337 sq.), the life that he and his friends led was one of the greatest temperance and simplicity. They were content, we are told, with a small cup of light wine, and an inscription over the gate promised to those who might wish to enter no better fare than barley cakes and water (Chambers' *Encyclopaedia*). The crystallization of the slanders upon the Epicureans in the modern word 'epicure' seems to date in England from the sixteenth century.

**The Franklin.**

340. Saint Julian was he in his contree: St. Julian, to whom no one has ventured to assign a country or date, having murdered his parents under a misapprehension, by way of penance founded a house for travellers on the bank of a dangerous river, over which he ferried his guests. His name was given to many houses of rest for travellers, and the Franklin's hospitality was so great that his house is likened to one of these.

341. after oon: according to one quality, and that presumably the best.

342. A bettre envyned man: as we should say 'a man with a better cellar.'

350. many a breem and many a luce in stuwe: to provide fish for the numerous fast-days, at a time when transit from the coast was slow, it was the custom for large houses, as well as monasteries,
to maintain special fish-ponds or ‘stews.’ Failing a supply from these they would have to fall back on ‘stock fish,’ i.e. fish hardened and salted.

351. Wo was his cook. ‘Wo’ may be taken either as a substantive with ‘cook’ as a dative (woe was to his cook, his cook felt woe), or as an adjective. ‘The latter use would be due to a misunderstanding of the former.

352. al his geere, presumably the cups and plates for the table.

353. table dormant, a ‘sleeping’ table, i.e. one fixed to the floor and always ready for use, as opposed to a movable one or a board set up over trestles. [Hales’ *Domesday of St. Pauls* (Camden Society), p. 137: “In aula fuerunt duo bancha tornatilia et una mensa dormiens et unum buffum,” Ben Jonson speaks of ‘the table dormant’ in the *Alchemist* (1610) as if such fixtures were still in use.]

355. At sessions, etc. The Franklin took the lead among the county magistrates. Chaucer himself was a Justice of the Peace for Kent, and may have had such a franklin as his chairman. Like Chaucer, the Franklin was also a Knight of the Shire (l. 356), i.e. a representative in Parliament of a division of a county, as contrasted with the members for boroughs.

357. An anlaas, etc. It is characteristic of Chaucer’s conversational way of describing his pilgrims that he interrupts his enumeration of the Franklin’s dignities with these particulars as to his dagger and pouch, and then resumes them in l. 359.

359. A shirrve, the king’s steward (reeve) in a shire. The sheriff is responsible for keeping the king’s peace, and carrying out all legal judgments. While his year of office lasts, he is the chief man in his shire after the Lord Lieutenant.

... countour, accountant or auditor, “an officer who appears to have assisted in early times in collecting or auditing the county dues” (*New Eng. Dict.*).

**THE FIVE GILDSMEN.**

The Fraternities or Gilds of the fourteenth century were of two kinds, those whose objects were purely religious and social, and those of which each was restricted to members of a particular craft or trade, for which they made regulations. These five pilgrims apparently also belonged to their craft-gilds, but as they were of five different occupations, the fraternity of which they all wore the livery was obviously only social and religious. [In Chaucer’s time such gilds abounded all over England and we may learn their character from the closely similar rules of the two gilds of S. Katherine and SS. Fabian and Sebastian, both connected with the Church of S. Botulph, Aldersgate, as reported to Richard II. in 1389, adding a few particulars from others in the country. Brothers and
sisters were received into the gild, and paid yearly fees, on the
annual day of meeting, when they heard mass and chose their
officers; one disabled or in poverty might have a weekly allowance
of 14d. (equal to as many shillings in present value) or be helped to
get work; a loan could be borrowed, on security, from the gild
funds. Funerals of the dead brethren were to be attended by all
the members and prayers to be said for their souls, the cost for poor
brethren being paid by the gild. Wax lights were to be provided for
certain festivals in church. Many gilds undertook the maintenance
of the fabric of churches, some supported schools, others repaired
bridges or roads. All required good behaviour at feasts and
meetings, with obedience to their officers, and these were in many
cases required to exercise arbitration between members in dispute.
Thus a great part of the social life of the Middle classes between
the reigns of Edward III. and Edward VI. centred round the gilds.
Yet on the ground that their paying for masses for the souls of
dead members made them superstitious institutions, the property
of the social and religious class was confiscated by Edward VI.,
c. 14, a mere fragment of it being devoted to founding grammar
schools, while most of the rest was granted to court favourites. A
blow was thus struck at English social life from which it has never
recovered. (See English Gilds. The ordinances of more than one
hundred early English gilds, edited by Toulmin Smith, 1870.)

361. An Haberdashe's. The Haberdashers of London were an
offshoot of the ancient trade of Mercers, and in Chaucer's time dealt
in numerous small wares such as caps and hats, ribands, thread, pins,
spectacles, game., paper, and many imported articles. [The name
is supposed to come from 'hapsers,' a kind of stout cloth mentioned
in the time of Edward I., which they may then have sold. Mr.
Saunders, in his book on the Canterbury Tales, reminds us that
while the most influential London gilds at this time sent six mem-
bers to the Common Council, the Haberdashers, Weavers and
Tapestry-makers sent four each, the Carpenters two, and the Dyers,
apparently, none, though it was one of the gilds that possessed the
right of keeping swans on the Thames. But, as already noted,
although the Haberdashers and his friends doubtless belonged to
these city companies, it was the livery of a social and religious gild
they were now wearing.]

363. And they: resumptive. H smooths the construction by
reading: "Weren with usse ecke, clothed in o lyvere." To
illustrate this use of a livery we may quote the rule of the Gild of
S. James at Garlekhith, London (founded in 1375), which pro-
vided that "the brethren and susten of the brethrenede, every yer,
shul be clothed in suyt, and every man paye for that he hath."
Some gilds, presumably poorer ones, only required their members to
wear a gild hoot. The suit was intended specially for use at meet-
ings of the gild, but a pilgrimage being an act of religion, and one
which many of the gilds favoured, it would be appropriate to wear
the gild livery while engaged in it. The fraternity of the five
pilgrims was a “great” and evidently a rich one.

366. Hir knyves were chaped noght with bras, but al with
silver. Tradesmen and mechanics were forbidden by the sumptuary
laws to carry silver-mounted knives, but the wealth of Chaucer’s
pilgrims (see l. 373) put them into a higher class.

wroght ful cleane and weel. [Mr. Liddell puts a semicolon
before wroght and omits the comma after weel, thus restricting wroght
ful cleane and weel to the pouches and girdles. This makes excellent
sense, and the omission of a verb is easily paralleled in Chaucer.
But it was not his custom to begin so distinct a clause in the middle
of one line, and run on without a comma to the next.] With the
punctuation here given we must understand wroght ful cleane and
weel to apply to the knives, and take the girdles and pouches as
mentioned by an afterthought.

369-370. a fair burgyeys To sitten in a yeledehalle, on a deys:
The municipal government of English towns was recruited from the
merchants and chief tradesmen, members of gilds; we have here a
genial picture of the well-to-do craftsman and burgess, conscious of
his civic wisdom and his full pocket, fit, when his time comes, to sit
as alderman with the mayor in the court of hustings in the gildhal
of his city—whether London, York, or Winchester, or elsewhere.
We should be much mistaken, Chaucer says, to leave the wives out of
the question, they were ambitious, too, to be called Madame. (Women
could belong to gilds, but there does not seem any allusion to that
here.) Chaucer’s description is written with a courtier’s smile,
witnesse, too, the “mantel roialliche y-bore” (see next note).

377, 378. These two lines may refer both to the craft burgesses
and to their wives In Worcester and in Bristol the members of
crafts attended the city officers at the vigils of S. John [Midsummer]
and S. Peter. If the wives accompanied them, the richer ones
doubtless had their mantles carried for them, as Speght describes in
his account of the parish vigils. At the induction of a new mayor of
Bristol, if it were his first mayoralty he was “to come without any
cloke, in his scarlet coun. And all other that have be mareis, the
same wise, suf their servants shulle bare their clokes after them”
(English Gilds, pp 430, 408, 415).

In his glossary to Chaucer, Speght writes: “It was the custom in
times past upon festival eves, called vigils, for parishioners to meet
in their church-houses, and there to have a drinking-fit [rather a
spiteful phrase] for the time. There they used to end many quarrels
between neighbour and neighbour; hither came the wives in comely
manner; and they which were of the better sort, had their mantles
carried with them, as well for show, as to keep them from cold at
the table. These mantles also many did use in the church, at morrow-
masses, and other times.” It was thus evidently the custom on
certain occasions for the gild-wives to have their mantles carried for
show as well as for use, perhaps aping more high-born ladies.
The Cook.

If not so great a knave as the Pardoner or Summoner, the Cook is among the most disreputable of Chaucer's pilgrims. Though he could make blanc-manges and mortreux, we are not to think of him as a chef, able to superintend one of the portentous medieval banquets, but as the proprietor of an eating-house, wont to stand outside

his shop crying "Hote pies, hote, Good gees and grys ( pigs), Go we dyne, go we!" like the cooks and their knaves in Langland's Vision (Prologue, l. 104 sq.), or the sellers of 'Hot shpe's teete' in Candlewick Street, of whom we read in the London Lykpenny. When, in his unseemly delight at the Miller's tale, he offers to tell a story himself, the Host says to him:

"Now telle on, Roger, looke that it be good;
For many a pastee hastow laten blood,
And many a Jakke of Dover¹ hastow sold,
That hath been twies hot and twies cold;
Of many a pilgrim hastow Cristes curs,
For of thy percel yet they fare the wors,
That they hav eten with thy stubbel goos.
For in thy shop is many a flye loos."

¹The commentators are uncertain as to whether a Jack of Dover was a sea-fish or a pudding.
NOTES

The tale he begins to tell is of a rascally apprentice, and we lose little by its being left a mere fragment. As the pilgrims near Canterbury he becomes so drunk that he falls from his horse,

"And er that he agayn were in his sadel
Ther was greet shovying, bothe to and fro,
To lifte hym up, and muchel care and wo,
So unweelde was this sory, pallid goost."

In the Ellesmere picture he is represented holding a three-pronged flesh-hook in one hand and his hat in the other, as if appealing to the company for a hearing.

379. A Cook they hadde with hem, etc. Apparently the gildsmen, anxious, like city magnates of the present day, that they should have plenty of good fare, had taken the Cook from his shop to cook for them in case of any deficiencies in the inns on the road.

for the nones. See note to l. 545.

382. Londoun ale. Tyrwhitt informs us that a century later (in 1504) London ale was priced at 5s. a barrel more than that of Kent. Apparently in Chaucer’s time it was already famous.

384. mortreux. "Mortrewe we find from a printed ms. of the Royal Society of ‘Ancient Cookery,’ consisted of pork or other meat brayed in a mortar (in the French, une mortreise, and hence the name), mixed with milk, eggs, spices, etc., and coloured very deep with saffron" (Saunders).

387. blankmanger. This appears to have been made of grated capon, milk, cream and rye-flour, boiled with sugar and rose-water.

THE SHIPMAN.

Chaucer’s Shipman was the master of his barge, ‘the Maudelayne,’ since it was he who was responsible for its steering and for the fate of its assailants. A vessel named the ‘Maudelayne’ of Dartmouth, Peter Risshenden, master, paid custom duties in 1386, but as Chaucer only says that his Shipman may have come from Dartmouth, we must not rush to the conclusion that it was Peter Risshenden who tossed his prisoners overboard, and stole the wine he was carrying. An excellent paper on the Shipman was contributed to Part V. of the Chaucer Society’s Essays by Dr. P. Q. Karkeek. Most of the following notes are drawn from this.

388. by weste, towards the west, in the west country.

389. For aught I woot he was of Dartsmouth. A west-country sailor would be likely to come from either Dartmouth or Fowey, as these in Chaucer’s days were the two chief western ports. [For the siege of Calais in 1347 Yarmouth contributed 43 ships and 1905 men; Fowey, 47 ships and 770 men; Dartmouth, 31 ships and 757 men; London, only 25 ships and 602 men.]
390  He rood upon a rouncy as he kouthe. A rouncy was "a heavy powerful animal either a packhorse or such as is suited for rough agricultural purposes." Dr. Karkeek suggests that the Shipman had paid the usual two shillings horse-hire for the journey from London to Canterbury, and that the dealer had taken advantage of his sailor's ignorance to give him a bad horse. The words 'as he kouthe' suggest that the Shipman knew very little about riding.

393. About his neck, etc. Sailors in the Royal Navy are said still to carry their knives by means of a cord hung round their necks.

The Shipman.

397. Fro Burdeaux-ward. It was the custom to go to Bordeaux once a year to fetch wine. [Dr. Karkeek adds: 'Froissart describes a fleet of 'Deux cents nefs d'une voile, marins d'Angleterre et de Galles et d'Ecosse,' who had come together for the sake of the safety which is supposed to lie in numbers.' If one of these was captured by pirates the owners of the other ships in the fleet had to contribute to the loss. The cost of carriage was 10s. per tun, and the 'tunnage' claimed by the king was 3s. 4d.; each sailor in the vintage season received eight shillings wages and the free carriage of a tun of wine in which he could speculate on his own account. The Shipman, therefore, might have used his own wine on the voyage, but preferred to steal that of one of the merchants.] Fro Burdeaux-ward = from-ward Bordeaux, coming from Bordeaux.
400. By water he sente hem hoom, etc., *i.e.* he threw his prisoners into the sea. This seems to have been the usual practice of the time. Thus at the battle of *L’Espagnols sur mer*, off Winchelsea, 1350, when the King boarded a Spanish ship, “the unhappy Spaniards were hurled into the sea,” etc. And in the same battle, when the Prince performed the same exploit, all the Spaniards “were cruelly hove overboard” by his triumphant followers. And a little later, in 1403, the Sire du Chatel having seized some English vessels, “threw all their fighting men into the sea,” etc. See Hamilton Williams’ *Britain’s Naval Power*, 1894, pp. 24, 25, 35.

402. *hym bisides*, that beset him.

404. *Cartage*, the promontory on which Carthage had stood remained a landmark long after the city was in ruins.

408. *From Gootlund to the Cape of Fynystere*, *i.e.* along the west coast of Europe from the south of Sweden to the north of Spain. Wisby, the capital of the Isle of Gottland in the Baltic, one of the chief of the Hanse towns, rivalling Venice in commercial importance, was the furthest goal of ordinary trading voyages to the north.


**DOCTOR OF PHYSIC.**

Chaucer’s character of his Doctor of Physic introduces us to a world of thought so different from our own that it would need many pages to offer an adequate commentary on it. In his day every part of the human body was supposed to be under the domination of one of the twelve Signs or Constellations (see Chaucer’s *Astrology*), Aries governing the head, Taurus the neck, etc. Knowledge of these relations was thought so essential that a picture illustrating them was placed in all the early printed Books of Hours or prayer books for lay use, and a physician was supposed to choose the part of the body at which to bleed a patient according to the sign then in the ascendant. Complications were introduced by the sign under which the patient was born, which was thought to rule his destiny through life; by the sign in the ascendant when his illness began, etc., etc. The skill of the astrologer-physician would be exercised in calculating the hours when the balance of contending influences would be most favourable to his patient, and choosing these for the application of his remedies. These remedies were directed, in the case of disease, to restoring the balance of the four qualities of hot, cold, dry, and moist. [As to these the popular 15th-16th century compendium, *The Kalender of Shepherdes*, remarks “the whiche whan they be well tempred and egall, that one surmount not the other, than the body of a man is hole. But whan they ben unegall and myssetempered, that one domyne over another, than a man is seke or dysposed to sekeness; and they ben the qualytes that the bodyes holdeth of the elementes that they ben made and composed of, that is to wete of the fyre heet, of the water colde, of the ayre moyste, and
of the erth drve” (Pynson’s edition, 1506, ed. Sommer, 1892, p. 107).] Chaucer’s physician to attain the degree of Doctor of Physic must have mastered all this lore, besides what was known of anatomy and other medical studies, properly so called. He must have been a rich man to take the degree of Doctor, which involved great expenses in fees, presents, and feasting. But he was himself thrifty and abstemious, with a touch of miserliness, and the tendency to despise theological studies, which was supposed, down to the days of Sir Thomas Browne, who wrote his Religio Medici as a protest, to characterize his profession. In the Ellesmere manuscript the Doctor is shown in a purple surcoat and stockings, with a blue hood trimmed with white fur. He carries with him the large flask, which was taken as the pictorial emblem of his profession, and is scrutinizing its contents.

415. *He kepte his pacient a ful greeat deel In houres, by his magyke naturee.* Natural magic was astrology, the science of the ‘Magi,’ which worked by the observation of the heavenly bodies, as opposed to black magic which dealt with spirits. The Physician watched (kepte) his patient assiduously during the time of the
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different conjunctions of the planets so as to apply his remedies at the most propitious moment. [To what has already been said on this point we may add as a further illustration a quotation from a book popular nearly two centuries after Chaucer wrote: “Wherefore first the position and state of the Heavens is necessary to be foreknown, and diligently to be learned of the Phisitian, then the first hour of sickness approaching, is exquisitely to be sought out: Last of all, the mutual habitation and disposition of the Stars for the time present is absurdly to be discussed, and perfectly to be examined: For without their secret influence and working, in humane bodies, there is nothing either sound or subject to infirmities. Recurrent acute or vehement descases engender not: no patient may possibly be cured by the only art and industrie of the Phisitian, be he never so skilful or diligent, without the favourable configuration and fortunate constitution of them: but either he shall perish, being destitute thereof, or recover by their means. But if the first hour of the disease cannot certainly be known, that hour is then to be observed, in which the disease is first signified unto the Phisitian, and then, a celestiall figure for that time being erected, the position of the Heavens is cunningly to be wayed” (The learned worke of Hermes Trismegistus intituled Iatromathematica, London, 1583).]

417 sq. Wel koude he fortunen the ascendent of his ymages for his pacient. He was skilful in choosing for making talismans for his patients the times when the influence of the planets would make the talismans most efficacious. The images here mentioned must not be confused with those in the figure of a man which sorcerers made in order by injuring them to work corresponding injuries to the person they represented. Such images were known in England—in the reign of Edward IV. the Duchess of Bedford was accused of making a leaden one in the shape of a man-of-arms to injure the king—but a maker of them, if detected, would have been hanged or burnt. The images here alluded to were talismans, gems, or small plates of metal, such as that to which Dousterswivel in Scott's Antiquary (chap. 24) attributed the finding by Sir Arthur Wardour of the hidden treasure. [Thus an image or figure of a falcon cut on a topaz was supposed to attract the favour of kings, while a Lion engraved on gold, made when the Sun was in Leo and the Moon had no aspect towards Saturn, was a preservative against the stone and all 'hot complaints' (Falconis imago, si in topatia sit, ad acquirendam benevolentiam regum, principum et magnumum facit.—Imago Leonis sculpta in auro, Sole existente in Leone, Luna Saturnum non respiciens, praeseruat a calculo calidisque aegritudinibus. Vetusum Sophorum Sigilla et Imagines Magicae, e Ioan Trithemii manuscripto erutae, 1612.) Arnold of Villanova, the fashionable teacher when Chaucer's physician was at school, explains very distinctly that the virtue of these talismans depended entirely on the aspect of the planets at the time when they were made. (Ymagines sunt habentes virtutes lapidum
preciosorum mineralium nec ab aliquo habent virtutem nisi ab aspectu planetarum in tempore quo artificiuntur: cum materia illarum sit terrea, quod aperte sunt vel metallea, igitur hinc ex parte materiae non potest multam acquirere virtutem: sed solum ex virtuti celesti que fit in tempore factionis eorum. Sic est de concoctionibus quibuslibet a medicis compositis. Paulominus habent virtutem a tempore concoctionis, sed in illo comparatur melius quam ex parte materiae ex qua componuntur. Arnoldi de Villanova Opera Omnia, Lugd. 1520, f. 295.) Chaucer tells us that his physician knew well how to ‘fortunen the ascendent’ of his images so as to make them efficacious for his patients. Here ‘fortunen’ is plainly equivalent to the ‘shapen for to be fortunat’ of a passage in his treatise on the Astrolabe (II. § 4), and the ‘ascendent of his images’ refers to the position of the heavenly bodies at the time chosen for the images or talismans to be made. An Ascendant in astrology is the point of the ecliptic, or degree of the zodiac which at any moment is just rising above the eastern horizon, the 5 degrees of the zodiac above this point and the 25 below it being known as the ‘House of the Ascendant.’ Thus what the physician did was to choose the time when these degrees were occupied by favourable planets. "Yit seyn thysse astrologiens," Chaucer tells us, "that the assendent . . . may be shapen for to be fortunat or infortunat, as thus: a fortunat ascendent clepen they whan that no wykked planete, as Saturne or Mars, or elles the Tail of the Dragoun, is in the hous of the assendent, ne that no wikked planete have non aspekte of enemite upon the assendent; but they wool caste that they have a fortunat planet in hir assendent, and yit in hir felicitee, and than sey they that it is wel." See Chaucer’s Astrology and the preliminary note on the Doctor.]

420. Were it of hoot, etc., the four qualities on the maintenance of which in due proportion the health of the body was supposed to depend. [See quotation from The Kalender of Shepherdes in the note on the Doctor.]

427. ech of hem made oother for to wynne. [As Gower says (Mirour de l'Omm, l. 25627 sqq.):

"L'un la receptie ordeinera
Et l'autre la componera.
Mais la value d'un botoun
Pour un florin vendu serra."]

429-34. Wel knew he the olde Esculapius, etc. If we understand from these five lines that the Physician had read all the best medical authors and that Chaucer was learned enough to have heard of them, we shall carry away the impression we are meant to receive. But brief notes on each writer will be found in the following skilful summary: ["The order of the fifteen names in Chaucer’s list is mainly historical—first the Greeks, then the Arabs, then the more modern men. Inside these divisions the order is mainly decided by con-
siderations of rhythm or rhyme. Aesclusius heads the list, and the
physician would have found some difficulty to know his works, for
he left none, if indeed he ever existed. It has been suggested that
his name may have been borrowed from some treatise on medicine
not now extant, but this is to enter the large and fertile but un-
satisfactory field of conjecture. Hippocrates the Great—his name
corrupted in the middle ages to Ypocras, and then used also for the
name of a cunningly compounded drink—belongs to the fifth and
fourth centuries before Christ. His treatises are the earliest extant
upon medicine. Dioscorides, a writer on materia medica, chiefly
herbs, is the earliest after the Christian era. Galen and Rufus
also belonged to the second century, living in the palmy days of the
Roman Empire, when the model Emperor Trajan was master of the
world. Rufus was of Ephesus and wrote on the names of the parts
of the human body. Galen—spelt in the Middle Ages, Galien—was
probably the most eminent of all on the list. It may be doubted
whether medical science made much advance from Galen to Chaucer's
time. In the list of the Arabian authorities Chaucer has preserved
no order. When Greek learning became pedantry, the torch of medical
learning kindled at that of the Greek schools was kept alight at
Damascus and Bagdad. John of Damascus represents the one, and
Rhases, a great authority on small-pox, the other. Both belong to
the ninth century. Next come three eleventh-century men. Avicenna
(born at Bokhara), Haly, and Serapion. Averroes (born in
Cordova) is of the twelfth. Haly is Alhazen, a Persian, author of a
medical treatise known as the Royal Book, but more famous for his
knowledge and discoveries in astronomy, i.e. astrology; but
Chaucer's physician recognized a close connexion between star-lore
and the healing craft. Indeed, several of the six were not specially
distinguished as physicians, but as men of wide learning. Avicenna
was a commentator upon Aristotle, and Averroes upon Plato and
Aristotle. Avicenna's book was the Canon of Medicine, a text-book
of medical study in the European universities of the Middle Ages.
No doubt the physician read all these books in Latin—in his time
Greek was [little] studied, Arabic [even less]. Serapion is a Greek
name, and it was that of a famous physician living long before the
time of Christ, an Alexandrine Greek who wrote against Hippo-
crates. His works, however, are not extant, and it is more likely
that the reference is to one of two Arab physicians of the name,
who very likely assumed it because of its ancient renown; they be-
longed to the eleventh century. Constantyn is Constantius Afer,
a native of Carthage, and probably of Arab origin, but a Christian
monk, who left Carthage and became one of the founders of the
famous medical school at Salerno in Italy. The three last [authorities]
mentioned by Chaucer lived nearer to his own time. Gilbertyn
is Gilbertus Anglicus, Gilbert the Englishman, who wrote his Com-
pendium Medicinae at some time after the middle of the thirteenth
century. Bernard Gordon was a Scot, who became Professor of
Medicine at Montpellier. John of Gaddesden, of Merton Col-
lege, Oxford, belongs to the generation just before Chaucer's, dying in 1361. He is usually described as Court Physician to Edward II. He certainly had a large London practice, and once treated the king's brother for small-pox, [by wrapping him] in scarlet cloth, in a bed and room with scarlet hangings" (Prof. E. E. Morris, on "The Physician in Chaucer" in An English Miscellany, Oxford, 1901). (Gaveston was of a thrifty disposition, and it has been conjectured, though without much grounds, that Chaucer had him in his mind in this sketch.

438. His studie was but litel on the Bible. [Prof. E. E. Morris not unfairly comments "Incidentally Chaucer remarks that the study of the physician was 'but litel on the Bible.' This comes as a surprise to those who thought that Protestantism first introduced the study of the Bible amongst the laity. There is a truly modern flavour about the jibe." As a matter of fact the knowledge of the Bible shown by most medieval writers is very great, and the only reason why it was not translated sooner was that almost everyone who could read at all could read Latin. But Sir Thomas Browne owns of his fellow physicians "The villany of (the Devil) takes a hint of infidelity from our studies, and by demonstrating a naturality in one way makes us mistrust a miracle in another." Hence the proverb "Ubi tres medici, duo athei," despite the twenty-nine medical saints and martyrs in the Roman calendar.]

441. esy of dispence, a sluggish spender.

443. For gold in phisik is a cordial. Modern medicine is content to be mainly empirical, the old practitioners tried to imagine what remedies ought to be good in the nature of things, and in the nature of things any very precious substance seemed likely to be very efficacious. [Hence the famous electuary of thes recorded by Mesue, in which not only gold and silver leaf but pearls, fragments of sapphire, jacinth, garnets, emerald, sard, etc., were among the thirty-three ingredients. This not only cured palpitations of the heart and syncope, but improved the morals, for which reason it was much recommended to kings. In writing on gold Serapion says "limatura auri confert cardiaeae melancholeae et debilitati cordis," and Avicenna asserts that it strengthens the heart, so that cordial has its full meaning, something good for the heart, rather than, more generally, 'a sovereign remedy,' as it is usually explained. The belief in gold as a remedy lasted long after Chaucer's time. In 1610 there was published at Cambridge a tract entitled "Medicinæ chymicæ et veri potabilis auri assertio ex lucubrationibus Francisci Anthonii," which provoked much controversy (e.g. the epitaph on Anthony in St. Bartholomew's the Great, 'Yet shall they all commend that high design Of purest gold to make a medicine,' etc., quoted in Knight's London, ii. 50-61. 1842 ed.). As late as 1721 at least two formulae containing gold appear in the authorized pharmacopoeia issued with the sanction of such men as Sir Hans Sloane and Dr. Mead. For the information in this note I am
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indebted—to Dr. J. F. Payne and Prof. Hales. I may add that if we ask why gold was thought to be specially good for the heart the most probable answer is, because the heart was influenced by the sign Leo, which was the House of the Sun, and gold is the metal of the Sun. See Chaucer’s Astrology, §§ 4, 12, etc.

THE WIFE OF BATH.

Chaucer has supplemented this character-sketch of the Wife of Bath by making her give, as a prologue to her tale, an only too vivid history of her very varied married life. From this we learn

THE WIFE OF BATH.

that she was married for the first time at twelve, and for the fifth at forty. Age, she tells us, had now bereft her of her beauty, but in a phrase which even in the mouth of so coarse a woman retains some pathos, she says also,

“ Unto this day it doth myne herte boote
That I have had my world as in my tyme.”

Her first three husbands were all rich old men, who left her their lands. As Bath was a centre of the cloth trade we must imagine
that one of them had been a cloth-maker (this according to the trade
custom of the time would give anyone who married his widow a
right to succeed to his place in the clothmaker’s gild) and so account
for the Wife’s own skill in the craft. The gild system did not en-
courage the employment of women in manufactures, but in the
kin’dred craft of the Fullers a workman was allowed to work “with
the master’s wife or her maid who sits at her table” (Regulation of
the Lincoln Fullers, 1337) though with no other woman. Next to her
matrimonial experiences, the most noteworthy thing which Chaucer
tells us about her is the extent of her pilgrimages, on the longest of
which she seems to have gone alone, since she says of her fourth
husband “He deyde whan I cam fro Jerusalem,” which implies that
he had not gone with her. But such long journeys seem to have
been more rather than less common in Chaucer’s time than now, as is
suggested by special provision being made for them in the ordinances
of some of the gilds. Thus in the rules of the Tailors of Lincoln we
read: “If anyone (i.e. any member of the gild) wishes to make a
pilgrimage to the Holy Land of Jerusalem, each brother and sister
shall give him a penny; and if to St. James’s or Rome, a halfpenny;
and they shall go with him outside the gates of the city of Lincoln;
and on his return they shall meet him and go with him to his mother
church.” In the same way a brother or sister of the gild of the
B.V. Mary at Hull, who wished to go to the Holy Land, were
released from the yearly payment “in order that all the gild may
share in his pilgrimage.” In the Ellesmere manuscript the Wife is
depicted, quite appropriately, as riding a-tride her horse, the custom of
women riding side-saddle having only been introduced into England
by Anne of Bohemia, Richard II.’s first wife, and not yet having
become general, though the fashionable Priorss is made to adopt it.
The artist has done justice to the size of the Wife’s hat and kerchiefs.
Her gown is red, her trouser-like foot-mantel blue. The scarlet
hosen are not visible.

446. She was som-del deaf, and that was scathe. The little
deafness for which Chaucer pitied the Wife was the result of a blow
received from her fifth husband who, while reading out sarcasms on
women from an old book, suddenly found himself knocked into the
fire and three leaves torn out of his precious manuscript. He was
so frightened, when she fainted at the blow he gave her in return,
that the book was burnt and she ruled him, for his good, ever after-
wards.

447. Of clooth-makyng she hadde swich an haunt, etc. The
making of cloth, in which the Wife was so expert, was at this time
one of the chief west-country industries, so much so that the manu-
facturers of this district had developed their own tricks of trade, and
in 13 Richard II. those of Somerset, Dorset, Bristol, and Gloucester
were forbidden so to fold and tack their cloths as to prevent pur-
chasers from examining them. In 50 Edward III. the merchants of
Bristol were forbidden to interfere with the annual cloth-fair held at
Bath, and that they had attempted to do so proves how important a centre of the trade Bath had then become.

448. She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt: Ypres, Ghent, and Bruges were the chief seats of the Flemish wool trade in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It was from these towns that the Flemish weavers were attracted by the protection offered by Edward III. to settle in large numbers in England. It is probable that Chaucer had these immigrants in mind when he wrote this verse: the Wife was cleverer than the foreign workmen who came over to teach her.

449. wif ne was ther noon That to the offrynge before hire sholde goon. Cp. l. 377. Precedence was immensely thought of in the Middle Ages, and is still respected in country churches. [A rare example of 'going' to the offering survives at S. John's College, Cambridge, where, at the offertory in the Communion Service, those present go up in order of their academical rank and place their offering on a small table set near the altar rails, at which they kneel before going back to their seat. This must exactly continue the medieval custom]

453. fyne ... of ground, finely woven.

454. they wayeden ten pound: this is said to be only a slight exaggeration.

457. streyte, straitly, tightly.

460. at chirche dore. The greater part of the marriage-service, including the putting on of the ring, used to be said before (i.e. outside) the church door. [The rubrics directing this continue to be quite explicit in the Sarum Manuals of the sixteenth century (In primis statuantur vir & mulier ante ostium ecclesie coe & populo ... [After the joining of hands and benediction] Hic intrent ecclesiam usque ad gradum altaris. Manuale ad usum Eccl. Sor., Paris, 1526). A good picture of such a marriage outside the church will be found in a French fifteenth-century Horae at the British Museum, Add. ms. 27697. No doubt the object of the custom was to ensure the greatest possible publicity for the fact of marriage.]

461. Withouten oother compaignye, besides other lovers. ["This expression (copied from Le Rom. de la Rose. l. 12985—autre companie") makes it quite certain that the character of the Wife of Bath is copied in some respects from that of La Visiile in the Roman de la Rose, as further appears in the Wife's Prologue." Skeat's note.]

465. at Boloigne, probably Boulogne, where an image of the B. Virgin, or rather a fragment of one, is still venerated. Pilgrimages were also made to Bologna, but it is reasonable to suppose that the reference is to the nearer place.

466. In Galice at Saint Jame: the shrine of S. James, the Greater, at Compostella in Galicia in Spain.
466. and at Cologne: the shrine of the Three Kings of the East who ended their travels at Cologne.

468. Gat tothed. According to Prot. Skeat, this means "gap-toothed (a gap is an opening, and is allied to gate), having teeth wide apart or separated from one another," supposed to be a sign that one "should be lucky and travel." This suits the context here very well, but in the Wife's Prologue she says (P 603 sq.):

"'Gat-tothed I was, and that bicam me weel
I hadde the prente of Seint Venus seel':"

and this points rather to the derivation goat-toothed, i.e. lascivious. If the word were in common use it would account for Chaucer's retaining any popular pronunciation, despite the fact that his ordinary form for 'goat' is 'goot.'

475. Of remedies of love she knew per chaunce, etc. [Prof. Liddell omits the stop at the end of the previous line, so that 'remedies of love' are made the subject of the wife's 'carping.' But this gives no very good sense to 'per-chance,' and the ellipse of the relative (she knew = which she knew) is also against it. With the punctuation here adopted the most pointed sense would be obtained by giving initial capitals to 'remedies' and 'love' and translating: Perhaps she knew Ovid's Remedias Amoris [this, of course, is a jest] for she was well versed in all the approved devices of lovemaking. If we reject this, we must make a knowledge of the 'remedies' of (means of relieving, i.e. gratifying) love, distinct from a knowledge of love's 'old dance' (the recognized tricks of lovers).]

The Poor Parson.

Professor Skeat remarks that "Chaucer, in his description of the parson, contrasts the piety and industry of the secular clergy with the wickedness and laziness of the religious orders or monks." This goes a little beyond the record. Chaucer's characters are individuals, and we cannot fairly say that because he drew a good parish priest (a 'parson,' it should be noted, was properly a 'rector'), a good knight, and a good clerk he meant to hold up knights, parish priests, or clerks for our admiration as contrasted with other professions. In the Miller's tale he draws a picture of a clerk who is a worthless fellow enough, and here in describing the Parson he contrasts him (l. 507 sqq.) with other members of his own order. A passage in Mr. G. M. Trevelyan's England in the Age of Wycliffe illustrates very well the temptations by which 'poor parsons' in Chaucer's time were beset, and to which too many of them succumbed. "The inadequate stipends of many parsons caused many of the less faithful to desert their ill-paid duties. 'It has come to our ears,' wrote Archbishop Sudbury (Wilkins iii. 120), 'that rectors of our diocese scorn to keep due residence in their churches, and go to dwell in distant and perhaps unhonest places, without our license,
and let their churches out to farm to persons less fitted. Lay persons with their wives and children sometimes dwell in their rectories, frequently keeping taverns and other foul and unhonest things in them." Although the Primate complained when this was done without his license, such licenses to let out the rectory to farm were easily obtained from the Bishops (ms. Calendar of Lambeth Register, Lambeth Library, passim). To regard the cure of souls as a source of income only, was then recognized and even authorised. Many

[Image: The Poor Parson.

Parsons without leaving a vicar in charge, deserted their dull round of duties among an ignorant and half-savage peasantry, to live in the great cities or in the mansions of the nobility. Here it was not hard for them to get employment as chantry priests, to sing private masses; with the money earned for such easier tasks they eked out the pittance received for parish duties which they were neglecting. As Langland wrote (170, b 83-86):

‘Parsones and parish prestes pleyned hem to the bishop,
That here parisshes were pore, sith the pestilence tyme,
To have a lycence and a leve at London to dwelle,
And syngen there for symonye, for silver is sweete.’

As the tithes and dues were partially or wholly alienated the parish priest was in great need of a good stipend from the patron of the living. But Bishops and Parliaments combined to keep these stipends down by ordinances and statutes comparable to the Statutes of Labourers. [In 1354 Archbishop Islip limited these fees to seven marks a year as a maximum. Eight years later Parliament (36 Edwar. III. i. cap. 8) set a limit of six marks. The Black Death had made priests scarce, and like the labourers they took advantage
of the scarcity to try to improve their social position. How low that position was is illustrated by the chronicler's remark that these limitations of their stipends forced many to steal (Wals. i. 297). One is glad to find that the Act was no more successful than the Acts for keeping down other wages, since a statute of Henry the Fifth's reign complained that parsons refused to serve for less than ten, eleven, or even twelve marks. At this stage of the question Archbishop Chicheley supported them, declaring that no vicar ought to be allowed less than such a sum] (England in the Age of Wycliffe, by G. M. Trevelyan, pp. 123 sq.). While the poor parsons were thus tempted to desert their flocks to gain an easier livelihood, we know from Bishops' visitation enquiries, the attacks of satirists, and the complaints of Wyclif, that other parish priests were concerned chiefly to make themselves useful to the patron or agreeable to his lady, and that others again, where their benefices were rich ones, showed themselves as fond of hunting and as extravagant in dress as Chaucer's Monk. We can thus draw no general conclusion as to the merits of the parish clergy of the fourteenth century from this portrait of one priest, beyond the fact that there were some saints to be found among them. The best pendant indeed to Chaucer's picture is the story told by Caxton (in the Epilogue to his Aesop) of a worldly ecclesiastic who, finding that an old friend of his was rector of a fine church, asked him, a little jealously, how much the living was worth to him a year.

"'Forsothe,' sayde the good symple man, 'I wote neuer; for I make neuer accompte therof, how wele I haue had hit four or fyue yere.' 'And knawe ye not,' said he, 'what it is worth? It shold seme a good benefyce.' 'No, forsothe,' sayd he, 'but I wot wel what it shalle be worth to me.' 'Why,' sayd he, 'what shalle hit be worth?' 'Forsothe,' sayd he, 'if I doo my trewe dylygence in the cure of my parysshens, in prechyng and techynge; and doo my parte longynge to my cure, I shalle haue heuen thersfore, and if theyre soules ben lost, or ony of them, by my defawe, I shalle be punysshéd therfore, and hereof am I sure.'

"'This was a good answere of a good preest and an honest,' comments Caxton, and we may be sure that Chaucer's Parson would have approved it."

It is rather surprising to a modern reader to find the Parson depicted in the Ellesmere ms. as wearing a red gown, but in the fourteenth century this seems to have been the usual colour for a parish priest to wear.

480. He was also a lerned man, etc. Many priests, Wyclif says, got themselves ordained by bribery, and "afterward wolen not bisien hem to lerne, but bete stretis up an doun and synge and pleie as mynstralis and use vanytee and ydelnesse" so that "men scornen hem in seyne of here servyce and redynge of here pistil and gospel." Chaucer was not content that his ideal priest should be a good shepherd, he must be a good teacher as well.
486. Ful looth were hym to cursen for his tithes. Wyclif (Of Clerkes Possessioners, Cap. 25) speaks of men who “for four peny-worth good curse many thousand soules to helle.” A man who remained obdurate after being thus excommunicated could eventually be imprisoned.

489. Of his offrygng and eek of his substaunce. The Easter offering (the traditional amount seems to have been two pence for each person) has always been for the benefit of the parson. Sub-staunce must denote the priest’s property, however derived.

494. muohe and lite, almost the same as “of heigh or lowe estat” in l. 522.

495. Upon his feet, and in his hand a staf. Because Chaucer’s priest thus traversed his parish he has been sometimes confounded with the ‘poor priests’ whom Wyclif sent preaching through the country. This is even more unreasonable than the accusation, brought against him in one of the Talks on the Road by the Shipman and Host, of being a Lollard (8 1172-1182) because he objected to swearing. All religious teachers who try to lead a spiritual life in a worldly age are likely to have many points in common. But there is no reason whatever to think that Chaucer sympathized with any of Wyclif’s specific doctrines. Sir John Seeley’s guess that the Poor Parson was intended for Wyclif himself is absolutely baseless. Wyclif’s followers had no love for pilgrimages, and it is thus the more unreasonable to make this pilgrim-parson a Wyclifite, merely because he was a good man.


500. If gold ruste what shal Iren doo? Prof. Kittredge (Modern Lang. Notes, xii. 113) has discovered a use of this ‘figure’ in Li Romans de Carité: “se ors enrunge, queus ert fers?” We cannot tell where Chaucer got it from.

507. sette nat his benefice to byre. Cp. the quotation in preliminary note on the Parson. [It was not only bad parsons who did this. In the tract Of Servants and Lords Wyclif says that “a costly curat or prest that lyveth a good lif in mekenesse and doynge almes to pore men” . . . more especially if he reprove lords “of here wicked lif and teche hem the beste weie to hevene” may be so persecuted “that he schal be fayn to sette his chirche to ferme” and go elsewhere.]

509. unto Saunt Poulles. According to Dugdale there were thirty-five chantries at S. Paul’s served by fifty-four priests. In 1391, soon after the Prologue was written, the Dean and Chapter prohibited any chantry at S. Paul’s being held except by their own minor canons (Cutts, Parish Priests and their People, p. 464 note).

510. To seken hym a chaunterie for soules. A chantry was a provision for a priest to sing mass daily and say other prayers for the repose of a soul. The usual remuneration in the fourteenth century was
L5 a year, and as the priest was left with nearly all his time to himself it was an easy way of getting a living. [Some testators, however, while providing for these masses to be sung for their own souls provided also for the education of poor children, the chantry-priest being required to act as school-master. The sweeping away many of these chantry-schools was one of the crimes which attended the English Reformation. A good instance of a bequest for priestly services only is that of Robert Johnson, Alderman of York (Test. Ebor. iv. 121, quoted by Cutts): “I leave to the exhibition of an honest prest to syngle at the alter of Our Lady daily by the space of ij yeres xxxvii. And I will that what prest that shall serve it every day, when that he hath saide masse, shall stand afore my grave in his alle and ther to say the psalme of De Profundis, with the colettes, and then cast holy water upon my grave.”]  

511. Or with a brotherhood to been witholde: “or to be kept away from his parish in the service of a gild.” A few of the gilds (see supra, note on the ‘Five Gildsmen’) had chaplains of their own [e.g. the chief object of the Gild of S. George, the Martyr, founded in 1376, at Bishop’s Lynn, was “to fynden a Preste to syngen atte autere of Seinte George in the chirche of Seinte Margere of Lenne, in the worship of God and the holy martir, and for alle the brethir and sistren that to the fraternite longes” (Toulmin Smith, Early English Gilds, p. 74)]. The rest paid for masses to be said on the death of one of their members, the number of masses varying from ten to thirty or more. There was thus clerical work, both temporary and permanent, to be obtained from them.  

514. He was a sheperde, and noght a mercenarie: Dr. Flügel shows that ‘chappelain mercenaire’ was a recognized title in French for priests who made their living solely by saying Mass; but the reference is surely not to this, but to John x. 12: “Mercenarius autem, et qui non est pastor, cujus non sunt oves propriae, videt lupum venientem, et dimittit oves, et fugit.”  

517. daungerous ne digne: neither domineering nor disdainful.  

523. for the nones, see note to l. 545.  

526. a spiced conscience: “Spiced here seems to signify, says Tyrwhitt, nice, scrupulous .... The origin of the phrase is French. The name of espices (spices) was given to the fees or dues which were payable (in advance) to judges. A ‘spiced’ judge, who would have a ‘spiced’ conscience, was scrupulous and exact, because he had been prepaid, and was inaccessible to any but large bribes” (Skeat’s note). Accepting Dr. Skeat’s history of the word we may question whether the sense should not be the reverse of that he assigns. On the low view of human nature which predominates in word-making a prepaid judge would not be ‘scrupulous and exact,’ but disinclined to trouble himself. Cp. D 434-6:  

“Ye sholde been al-pacient and meke  
And han a sweete spiced conscience,  
Sith ye so preche of Jobes pacience”;
where 'spiced' seems to mean easy-going. Dr. Liddell writes: 'a spiced conscience was one that depended on formal distinctions, spiced being identical in meaning with N.E. specious.' This would account for the two apparently contradictory meanings the word seems to have, for it is as easy by artificial distinctions to turn wrong into right as right into wrong.

**The Ploughman.**

As Chaucer's Ploughman paid tithes, both of the fruits of his tillage and of his cattle, he must have been his own master, not merely a 'hind,' or hired labourer, though not far removed from one. He may have been a small tenant farmer, or the lands he held may have been 'Lammas lands,' i.e. the property of the village, but held as private property, from August to August, by successive cultivators. The latter supposition would fit very well with his lending a hand to a poor neighbour, as under the Lammas system such mutual help would be needed. As he tells no story there is no picture of him in the Ellesmere manuscript.

529. was his brother. The relative (who) is here omitted, just as the pronoun (he) in introducing the Parson (l. 468). There was nothing unusual in Chaucer's days in a priest, although 'a lerned man, a clerk' having the smallest of small farmers as his brother.

539. His tithes payede he ful faire and wel. The smallest pig in a litter is still called 'the parson's pig' as the one which a reluctant tithe-payer would offer his parson. In the Wakefield miracle-play of the "Death of Abel," Cain is shown counting his corn-sheaves wrongly, so as to make fewer tenths among them, and refusing to include any of the specially good ones.

540. Bothe of his propre swynk and his catel: i.e. both of the fruits of the fields he ploughed and of the increase of his cattle.

541. In a tabard he rood upon a mare. Chaucer mounts his ploughman on a mare, as became his social position. No person pretending to belong to the 'quality' would have mounted a mare, except under circumstances of the direst necessity. [In a Latin poem on the execution of Archbishop Scrope (1405) allusion is made to the additional indignity of being led to the scene of punishment riding on a mare: "jumento vehitur hinc ad supplicium" (Dr. Karkeck).] Save that it is doubtful whether it had sleeves, the tabard was the fourteenth century equivalent for the smock-frock now dying out of use.

**The Miller.**

A lively account of the rights and privileges of a Scottish miller will be found in Chap. XIII. of Sir Walter Scott's *Monastery*, and with some difference of terms this will apply very well to Chaucer's Miller. There was little free-trade in milling in those days, and
restrictions survived as late as the eighteenth century. Every one raising corn on a manor would have to take it to the manor mill to be ground, and thus, free from any check of competition, medieval millers became famous for their knavish thefts. In the Reeve’s Tale Chaucer tells how two Cambridge clerks tried to protect the college corn by standing one where the corn went in, the other where the meal came out. But the Miller turned their horse loose and made it run away, and while they were trying to catch it he stole more than ever. Scott suggests that millers in those days had to be ‘stout carles,’ like the Miller of the Prologue, to silence complainants and enforce their fines, when corn was taken to be ground elsewhere. The illustration in the Ellesmere manuscript does justice both to our Miller’s blue hood and to his bagpipe. As to the appropriateness of this last on a pilgrimage, see Introduction. p. xxxix.

545. for the nones. The n in nones belongs to the previous word, cp. attē nale = attēn aic, at the alehouse (n 1349), then being a corruption of them, the old dative of the definite article. Thus, for the nones is ‘for the once,’ for the occasion. In ll. 379, 523 the
meaning is clear. The gildsmen took the cook with them, the Parson reproved his erring parishioners ‘for the occasion,’ i.e. for that particular time. It is not so easy to see why we are told that the Miller was a stout call for the occasion. It has been suggested to me that the order of the words is loose, and that we should take for the noes with Miller, the Miller for the noes being equivalent to ‘the Miller we had with us,’ ‘our particular Miller.’ But perhaps Chaucer means that the Miller was a stouter fellow than you could expect to meet on a peaceful pilgrimage.

547. That proved wel, his muscle and bones stood the test of hard work.

548. he wolde have alway the ram. The ram was the usual prize at a wrestling match. For ‘have alway’ (E. C. Hn.), it reads ‘bere awey.’

561. And that, i.e. his talk.

562. and tollen thries, take his proper toll or due three times over.

563. And yet he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee. ‘If the allusion be, as is most probable, to the old proverb Every [An?] honest Miller has a thumb of gold, this passage may mean that our Miller, notwithstanding his thefts, was an honest miller, i.e. as honest as his brethren’ (Tyrwhitt’s note). But honest in the fourteenth century did not necessarily refer to scrupulous integrity: it carried with it the idea of skill, just as ‘good’ does at present. The miller’s thumb is said to take a peculiar shape from its constant use in testing the fineness of samples of corn or flour spread out on the palm of the hand. The proverb may be one of those which owe their success to their bearing two meanings, (i.) a clever miller grows rich, (ii.) an upright miller is as rare as one with a gold thumb. But I am inclined to take it here in its good sense and paraphrase, ‘he could steal cleverly and yet he had no need to, since he was skillful and could have done well without stealing.’

The Manciple.

A Manciple (the derivation of the word seems uncertain) is a servant of a college or inn-of-court who purchases provisions under the direction of the cook and the steward. Chaucer’s Manciple was attached to ‘a temple,’ i.e. to one of the two inns-of-court (Inner and Middle Temple) which occupied the buildings of the old Knights Templar in the Strand at London. In an account of the Middle Temple (quoted by Robert Pearce, in his Guida to the Inns of Court (1855 ed., p. 276) from a manuscript of the time of Henry VIII. (Cotton Ms. Vitell. c. ix.), the wages of the steward are given as 53s. 4d., the chief cook received 40s., while “the manciple, or steward’s servant, his wages by the year” were 26s. 8d. A note informs us, “also at Easter the cook’s manciple has in reward of ever
gentleman of the house 12d. or therabouts," and if this refers to the same person his wage must thus have been considerably increased. As Chaucer, however, plainly hints, the Manciple had ways of making money independently of his wages and tips. In the Taiks

by the Road the hint is repeated, for when the Manciple lectures the Cook on his drunkenness, the tolerant Host remarks:

"But yet, Manciple, in feith thou art to nyce
Thus openly repreve hym of his vice;
Another day he Wolfe, peraventure,
Reclayme thee and bringe thee to lure,—

1 to nyce, too foolish.  2 reclayme thee, etc., pull you up snore.
I meene he spoke wole of smale thynges,
As for to pynchen at thy rekenynges:
That were nat honeste, if it cam to preef.
No, quod the Manciple, that were a greet mescheef!
So myghte he lyghtly bryng me in the snare “;

and to propitiate the already drunken Cook he gives him a draught of wine from a ‘gourd’ he carries with him. According to Mr. Saunders it is this gourd or bottle that he is carrying in his hand in the Ellesmere picture, and Mr. Saunders is probably right. His coat is blue; its lining, as well as the cape, hose, and purse, red.

567. of a temple, i.e. of an inn of court, or college for lawyers. After the dissolution of the order of the Knights Templar in 1312 the house which they had built for themselves in the Strand in the reign of Henry II. was first bestowed on some royal favourites and ultimately by Edward III. on the Knights Hospitaller of S. John, who let it, it is said for a rent of £10, to the teachers and students of law who had previously occupied Thavies Inn, Holborn. The buildings were attacked and the lawyers’ records destroyed by Wat Tyler, but the Temple is still occupied by the lawyers at the present day.

570. took by taille, i.e. on credit. The ‘taille,’ or tally, was a stick marked with notches to indicate payments. When split down the middle it provided debtor and creditor with identical records. The use of tallies in the Exchequer for certain purposes survived till about 1812.

581. by his propre good, on his own income.

582. wood, mad.

586. sette hir eller cappe: set the caps of, i.e. befooled, them all. Hir eller is the genitive plural. We find the phrase again in A 3143, ‘a clerk hath set the wrightes cappe,’ and in A 3911 the similar one, ‘somdeel sette his howve.’ A very slight alteration in the tilt of a hat will make the most respectable citizen look ridiculous.

THE Reeve.

It is fortunate that Chaucer’s sketch of the Reeve presents no difficulties, as materials for illustrating it are unusually scanty. Except from the accounts of Robert Oldham, the bailiff of Cuxham in Roger’s Agriculture and Prices in England (Vol. I.) there is little to be gleaned. In noting that Oldham was a serf of the manor, Prof. Skeat adds “as reeves always were”; but the Oldhams lived before the Black Death, in which the whole family perished, and it seems improbable that Chaucer’s Reeve, who belongs to a period some forty years later, was a serf. The Ellesmere picture shows the Reeve wearing a blue coat, with a red hood and red

1 that were nat honeste, that would not be creditable.
stockings. From the Talks by the Road, in which he fell foul of the Miller for bringing a member of his old craft of carpentry into ridicule, we learn that his name was Oswald. It is perhaps noteworthy that Chaucer makes him come from one of the eastern counties, with which his own family had connexion, and further localises him as belonging to a small place like Baldeswell.

587. colerik. See note on sangwyn, l. 333.

590. His tope was doked, etc., his hair was cut short at the front of his head. The allusion is not to a priest’s tonsure, but to his hair being kept short.

594. on him wynne, get the better of him.

602. brynge hym in arrerage, whatever money he had to receive on his lord’s behalf he always collected it in good time.

603. There nas bailiff, etc. ‘Bailiff’ and ‘reeve’ are usually treated as exchangeable terms for the same office. If the Reeve had one or more bailiffs under him they must have had the management of separate farms, while he was bailiff of the whole manor. It does not seem probable that a bailiff of another estate altogether would have stood in such terror of Oswald.

606. His wonyng, etc. It is perhaps not fanciful to think that the mention of the Reeve’s prettily-situated house just here was
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caused by the thought of herdsman and labourers coming to him with their accounts, all the more afraid of him because he lived in a good house. Then we have the usual suggestion how he came to be so well off. Like the Merchant, Lawyer, Shipman, Cook, Miller, and Manciple, the Reeve made dishonest profits. The imputations become almost monotonous.

615. stot, a low-bred undersized horse.

616. scot, said in Bell’s edition of Chaucer to be still a Norfolk name for a horse.

620. a toun men clepen Baldeswelle. Baldeswell, or Bawdeswell, is part of the hundred of Eynford in Norfolk. [According to Blomefield’s History of Norfolk (Vol. VIII.), with the neighbouring manor of Foxley, it passed, 13 Richard II., on the death of John de Hastings, Earl of Pembroke, to Reginald, Lord Grey, of Ruthyn.]

621. Tukked, i.e. with his long coat shortened by being hitched up and kept so by a girdle.

622. And over he rood the hyndreste, etc., probably rather from unsociability than, as has been suggested, because his horse was a bad one.

THE SUMMONER.

The Summoner or Apparitor was the officer of the ecclesiastical court of the Bishop, or his subordinate, the Archdeacon. This court dealt with sins of immorality, witchcraft, usury, simony, neglect of the sacraments, and withholding tithes or offerings, a list of offences taken from the beginning (d 1299-1320) of the tale about a wicked Summoner which Chaucer puts into the mouth of the Friar. The Archdeacon extorted fines by threats of excommunication, the fact of excommunication, when notified to a civil magistrate, procuring the offenders imprisonment (see below, l. 662). The Summoners made a living for themselves, over and above their lawful fees, by threatening to report people to the Archdeacon for real or imaginary offences, unless they were bought off. The Ellesmere ms. shows the Summoner in a blue jacket with scarlet pantaloons, whereas his official costume appears to have been of a tawny colour. He wears a garland and carries a cake as mentioned by Chaucer, and holds out a writ of summons in his hand.

624. a fyr-reed cherubynnes face, a face of a cherub as red as fire. Cherubs being usually depicted in red, ‘cherubic’ came to mean brilliant. So the author of the Philobiblon speaks of brightly illuminated books as “cherubici libri.” The New Eng. Dict. quotes from Thynne’s Pride and Lowliness (c. 1570), “A Vintener, His face was redd as any Cherubyn.” Cherubin, or rather Cherubim, is a Hebrew plural, but both forms were commonly used as singulars.

646. Questio quid juris. The question is what [section] of the law applies to this case. [“This kind of question occurs frequently
in Ralph de Hengham. After having stated a case, he adds, *Quid juris?* and then proceeds to give an answer to it." See Heng. Mag. c. xi. "Esto autem quod reus nullo modo venerit ad hunc diem: quid juris?" etc. Tyrwhitt."

647. a gentil harlot. 'Harlot' is found used as a masculine early in the 13th century, as a feminine not till the 15th. It seems to have been most frequently applied to travelling jugglers, but is used generally for vagabond, or rascal.

652. a fynch eek koude he pulle, plunder a foolish fellow. Cp. the modern phrase, to 'pluck a pigeon.' No other use of 'finch' in this sense is quoted.

![The Summoner](image)

658. 'Purs is the Ercedekenes helle,' seyde he. Zupitza would apparently scan 'Purs is|th' Ercedek|enes hel|lé sey|de he'—a very ugly rhythm. But Ten Brink quotes this line, and with it 655, as instances of 'the' remaining unelided before a following vowel. Thus, we may treat both 'helle' and 'seyde' as monosyllables and read 'Purs is|the Er|edek|enes helle|seyde he.'

661. For curs wol also,—right as assollyng savith. Chaucer was no rebel against the religious doctrines of his day, but it is impossible not to believe (what is indicated here by the dash) that he was quite aware that the second half of this line rather diminishes than increases the force of the first. Wyclif openly taught that unrighteous excommunications should be disregarded. Absolution is of no effect unless the penitent is truly contrite. In saying that excommunication is as effective as absolution Chaucer left it open to his readers to think that under certain circumstances neither the one nor the other was of much weight.
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662. A Significavit: the writ de excommunicato capiendulo, commonly called a Significavit from the beginning of the writ, which is as follows: "Rex Vicecomiti... salutem. Significavit nobis venerabilis pater... Episcopus," etc. (Tyrwhitt).

The purport of the writ was that the Bishop had signified to the King (i.e. the civil authorities) that a man had remained obstinate after being excommunicated for forty days, and he was therefore forthwith to be put in prison till he made submission.

Ten Brink says that "significavit must be pronounced synficavit" (so Liddell). But no one who understands the genius of English rhythm need find any difficulty in keeping the ordinary pronunciation, making 'him' a redundant syllable before the cæsura: "And al so war him | of a Sig | nifi | cavit."

663. In danger hadde he, etc., under his jurisdiction, in his power to harm. [Cp. Merchant of Venice, iv, i. 180, "You stand within his danger, do you not?" and Tyrwhitt's quotation from a History of the Abbey of Pipewell: "Nec audebant Abbates eadem resistere, quia aut pro denaris aut pro bladis semper fuerunt abbates in dangerio dicti officialis."

at his owene gise, to make them follow his own devices.

667. As great as it were for an ale-stake. A pole projecting from a house, with a garland, or bunch of foliage, on it, was the usual sign of a tavern, whence the proverb, "good wine needs no bush." [A contemporary picture of an ale-house with its ale-stake will be found in Jusserand's English Wayfaring Life, p. 132. By an Act of Parliament of 1375 it was forbidden to make the poles extend more than seven feet over the public way.]

THE PARDONER.

A Pardoner was a trafficker in papal pardons or indulgences. In the early Church a penitent as a condition of receiving absolution would have to fast (i.e. abstain from meat), or do other penance, for so many days, according to the gravity of his sin. Later on, a payment of money to an approved charitable purpose was accepted as an equivalent for so many days' penance, and a certificate of such payment was called a pardon or indulgence. The indulgence was a remission of ecclesiastical penance, not a remission of sins, but its true character was easily obscured, and a theory of a 'treasury' of superabounding merits of the Virgin and saints 'promulgated by Pope Clement V. in 1350' introduced new confusion. In order to raise money for building or repairing a church or other good object, men were sent all over Europe offering indulgences to all who contributed a certain sum. Moreover these authorized alms-gatherers were out-rivalled by irregular ones, who, having obtained, or forged, a license from a Pope or Bishop, exhibited relics, to the veneration of which, so they pretended, special indulgences had been attached in the case of those offering money for the privilege. Popes, Bishops, and Kings
all tried at various times to suppress these irregular Pardoners, but the traffic in both authorized and unauthorized indulgences went on till the Reformation. An indulgence to those contributing to the war against the Turks was the earliest dated printed document (1454). One in 1517, issued by Leo X., to raise funds for the completion of S. Peter's at Rome, provoked Luther's revolt.

"The Ellesmere Manuscript shows the long yellow hair, spread in parted locks upon the Pardoner's shoulders, his surcoat of scarlet trimmed with white, and his scarlet cap with the vernicle in front. His stockings are blue. In his hand he carries the cross of laton, a kind of brass or mixed metal, coloured at the points, yellow, red, and blue. The white lambskin wallet, bearing such precious relics, rests on the horse's back, and is carefully guarded by strings, which the Pardoner has hung round his neck" (Saunders, op. cit.)
had property granted by the Earl of Pembroke. Suppressed as an alien priory by King Henry V., it was restored for a fraternity in 1475. In 1226 Archbishop Gray issued an indulgence for Roncevaux, and in 1391 Bishop Arundell of Ely gave one for Ronceval hospital (fo. 177), and in 1393 another for ‘Hospitale de Roncevall, Pampilion diocese,’ and for constructing a branch of it at Charingcross (Reg. fo. 181; cf. Dugd. Monast. vi. 677). There was also a Runcival Hall in St. John’s parish, Oxford, ‘ruinated’ before 1424 (Wood’s City, i., 180).

671. That straith was comen fro the court of Rome. This would be the Pardoner’s own story, and may or may not have been true. John Heywood, who borrowed freely from Chaucer in the play The Pardoner and the Frere, which he wrote in the reign of Henry VIII., makes his Pardoner say in his opening address:

“But first ye shall knowe well that I com fro Rome,
Lo here my bulles, all and some,”

and speak of

“this blessed pardon
Which is the greatest unde the son,
Granteth by the pope in his bulles under lede.”

Notice that Rome is dissyllabic, rhyming with ‘to me.’

672. Com hider, love, to me. The opening words or refrain of some popular song. Dr. Skeat writes “It is quoted again in l. 763 of the poem called The Pearl in the form—‘Come hyder to me, my lemmam swete’”; but such invitations are too common in lyric verse for it to be safe to assume that the quotations are from the same poem.

673. a stif burdoun: a strong bass accompaniment, the ‘burdoun’ (O. Fr. bourdon) being the low undersong or accompaniment, which was sung while the leading voice sang a melody. The word is here already confused with ‘burden,’ with which it has etymologically no connection, the notion apparently being that the bass or undersong was ‘heavier’ than the air. From the accompaniment going on when the singer of the air pauses, ‘burden’ got its meaning of refrain or chorus. [Abridged from articles “Bourdon” and “Burden” in New Eng. Dict.]

677. his lokkes that he hadde: ‘that he hadde’ suggests fewness.

682. Hym thoughte. ‘Thoughte’ here is not from ‘thenchen’ (O.E. thencan, ‘think’), but from ‘thünchen’ (O.E. thymcan, ‘seem’): it seemed to him, him seemed. This impersonal use survives in the phrase ‘methinks.’

of the newe jet: of the latest fashion. [The New Eng. Dict. cites Robert Mannyng’s Chronicle:

“After Syffilly com Glegabret
A syngere of the beste get,”

and Skelton’s Magnificence:

“What! would ye wyves counterfet,
The courtly gyse of the newe jet.”]
685. *A vernycle hadde he sowed upon his cappe.* A ‘vernicle’ is “a diminutive of Veronike (Veronica), a copy in miniature of the picture of Christ, which is supposed to have been miraculously impressed upon a handkerchief preserved in the Church of St. Peter at Rome” (Tyrwhitt). [A full account of S. Veronica, with an illustration from a picture by Memlinc is given in Mrs. Arthur Bell’s *The Saints in Christian Art* (Vol. I., pp. 163-168). Mrs. Bell writes: “As the fainting Saviour toiled along the Via Dolorosa on his way to Calvary, a woman, touched with compassion for His sufferings, pushed her way through the Roman guards and offered Him the white veil she was wearing on her head with which to wipe His face. The Master accepted it, and as a recompense left the impress of His face upon the soft material, and it being folded in three it received three distinct reproductions of the Divine features. In course of time it passed into the custody of the Holy See, and was long kept in a beautiful arborium in a chapel dedicated to it at St. Peter’s, for which, in the twelfth century, Pope Celestine had fine bronze gates cast. At intervals the ‘Holy Face,’ as the impression came to be called, was exhibited to the people.” Thus a miniature of the pictured veil came to be one of the customary tokens of having made a pilgrimage to Rome. Cp. Langland’s *Piers Plowman* (B. v. 529-531):

“[He bare] many a cruche on his cloke and keyes of Rome,
And the vernicle before, for men shulde knowe
And se bi his signes whom he soughte hadde.”

Dr. Skeat writes in his note on this line: “The legend was invented to explain the name. First the name of Bernice, taken from the Acts, was assigned to the woman who was cured by Christ of an issue of blood. Next Bernice, otherwise Veronica, was (wrongly) explained as meaning vera ico (i.e. true likeness), which was assigned as the name of a handkerchief on which the features of Christ were miraculously impressed.”]

691. *fro Berwyk unto Ware.* Ware is mentioned here in contrast to Berwick probably as the first town of any importance on the road from London to the north. [Hertford had previously held this position, by virtue of its Bailiff keeping the keys of the Bridge across the Lee at Ware and so diverting the traffic. But in the reign of Henry III. Ware was freed from this tyranny and “by this means” Chauncy writes (Antiquities of Hertfordshire, Vol. I. p. 203), “the great Road was turned from Hertford through this town,” which greatly throve in consequence.]

694. *For in his male he hadde,* etc. Lists of such mock relics are common with medieval satirists. In the excellent account of pardoners in Jusserand’s *English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages* he quotes not only from Chaucer, but from Boccaccio, Heywood, and Rabelais. Among Heywood’s relics are the jawbone of All Saints and the brain-pan of St. Michael.
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695. lady, the old feminine genitive. Cp. St. Mary Cray, as contrasted with the neighbouring Foot's Cray, which shows that 'Mary' is a genitive.

699. ful of stones, closely studded with (more or less) precious stones.

701. whan that he fond A pourse person dwellyngs upon lond, etc. M. Jusserand (op. cit.) translates from a Bull issued by Urban V., in 1369, against the pardoners employed by the Hospital of S. John of Jerusalem in England: "Very often, also, when they mean to hurt a rector, or his curate, they go to his church on some feast-day, especially at such time as the people are accustomed to come and make their offerings. They begin then to make their collections and continue until such an hour as it is not possible to celebrate mass conveniently that day. Thus they manage perversely to deprive these rectors and vicars of the offerings which accrue to them at such masses." Pardoners and friars were alike hated by the parish priests. Heywood makes the parson summon a constable (Neighbour Pratt) to help him turn both his visitors out of church, an attempt in which they are only partly successful.

702. upon lond: we should now say 'down in the country.'

703. Upon a day, on one day.

706. made the person and the peple his apes: fooled them. [A different turn is given to the phrase in the talk before the Prioress's Tale: "The monk put in the mannes hool an ape," imitated by Spenser, Faery Queen, III. ix. 31: "Thus was the ape by their faire handling put into Malbeccoes cape." See New Eng. Dict.]

708. He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste. Cp the account the Pardoner gives of his procedure in the Prologue to his Tale (c 329 sqq.):

"'Lordynges,' quod he, 'in chirches whan I preche,
I peyne me to han an hauteyn speche,
And rynge it out as round as gooth a belle,
For I kan al by rote that I telle.
My theme is alwey oon and evere was
Radix malorum est cupiditas. ¹
First, I pronounce whennes that I come,
And thanne my bulles shewe I alle and some;
Our lige lordes seele on my patente,
That shewe I first, my body to warente,
That no man be so boold, ne preest, ne clerk,
Me to destourbe of Cristes hooly werk;
And after that thanne telle I forth my tales,
Bulles of popes and of cardynales,

¹ Covetousness is the root of evils. The Pardoner's Tale, a version of the old story of Death and the three Rioters, is actually on this theme.
THE PROLOGUE

Of patriarkes and bishoppes I shewe,
And i Latyn I speke a wordes fewe
To saffron with my predicacioun,
And for to stire hem to devocioun;
Thanne shewe I forth my longe cristal stones
Y-crammed ful of cloutes and of bone,-
Relikes been they, a wenyn they echoon.

By this gau de have I wonne, yeer by yeer,
An hundred mark, sith I was Pardoner.
I stonde lyk a clerk in my pulpet,
And whan the lewed peple is doun y-set,
I preche so as ye han herde bifoore,
And telle an hundred false japes moore;
Thanne payne I me to streche forth the nekke,
And est and west upon the peple I bekke,
As dooth a dowve, sityng on a berne;
Myne handes and my tonge goon so yerne,
That it is joye to se my bisynesse.
Of avarice and of swich cursednesse
Is al my prechynge, for to make hem free,
To give hir pens, and namely unto me.’”

Though neither a priest nor a deacon the Pardoner was probably a clerk in minor orders, and in church would wear a surplice and sit in the choir.

709. Wel koude he rede a lessoun or a storie. The ‘lesson’ would be, as now in the English Church, a reading from the Bible, the ‘storie’ or ‘historia’ the life of a saint from the Golden Legend or similar collection.

710. He song an offertorie. In the Mass according to the usage of Salisbury (Sarum), which gradually spread over most of England, an anthem called an offertory was sung while the bread and wine were brought to the altar. These were originally provided by the worshippers, but money was afterwards collected instead. [Cp. the sarcastic allusion in the Homily against Peril of Idolatry, Part III.: “And while we offer (that we should not be weary or repent us of our cost), the music and minstrelsy goeth merrily all the offertory time.”] ‘Offertory sentences’ are still sung in the Communion Service of the Church of England.

711. Whan that song was songe, He moiste preche. In the use of Sarum, as now in the English Communion Service, the sermon came between the creed and the offertory, but some variation was permitted on this point. Moreover, the Sarum use was adopted in London only in the fifteenth century. Where the sermon came in the old London use we do not know. It is clear that though the offertory was sung before the Pardoner’s sermon, the offerings were made after it.
714. the murierly. Ten Brink speaks of -ly being occasionally added to the comparative of the adjective to make that of the adverb, and Professor Liddell speaks of 'a few' such forms being found. But neither scholar quotes any other instance. The unusual form has caused the Petworth group of manuscripts to read 'so merily.'

721. How that we baren us. Cp. ll. 87, 796.

726. narette it nat my vileynye. Ne arette, do not account it as my ill-breeding. 'Arette' is also used with a preposition (to or upon) in the sense of impute to: So Wyclif: "It was aretted to him into rightwysnesse" (it was imputed unto him for righteousness), and Caxton: "If they synde ony faulte to arette it to Socrates and not to me" (New English Dictionary).

729. properly, with individual correctness, just as each man spoke.

730, 731. Note the uses of 'also,' 'shall,' 'after.'

734. Al speke he: 'he' may refer either to the original speaker or his reporter. The former is the more probable. So in l. 737, "althogh he were his brother," 'he' is clearly the original speaker, otherwise for 'were' we should have to read 'be,' the past tense being caused by going back in thought to the original speech.

741. Eek Plato seith. As Tyrwhitt noted, this saying is quoted again (H 207-10):

"The wise Plato seith, as ye may rede,
The word moot nede accorde with the dede.
If men shal telle properly a thyng,
The word moot cosyn be to the werkyng."

Chaucer, no doubt, took it from Boethius, Bk. III., Prose 12, which he translates, "Thou hast lernyd by the sentence of Plato that the wordis moot nedes be cosynes to the thynges of whiche thi speken." [Boethius alluded to Plato's Timaeus, 29 b: "\(\delta\delta\ \delta\nu\ \pi\varepsilon\ \tau\epsilon\ \epsilon\lambda\kappa\omega\nu\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \pi\tau\alpha\\rho\delta\epsilon\gamma\upsilon\mu\alpha\tau\omega\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon\)\ 
\(\\omicron\nu\iota\nu\epsilon\iota\rho\iota\sigma\iota\epsilon\nu\ \iota\epsilon\gamma\gamma\eta\nu\tau\alpha\iota\),
\(\dot{\nu}\tau\omega\iota\nu\ \dot{\nu}\tau\omega\iota\nu\ \dot{\nu}\gamma\gamma\nu\epsilon\iota\eta\iota\epsilon\iota\).
"

whose that kan hym rede. An allusion to the lack of Greek scholars in England since the death of Robert Grosseteste and Roger Bacon. In Italy Petrarch and Boccaccio were studying Greek when Chaucer was a boy, and the first Greek professorship was founded at Florence in 1396. But it was not till about a century later that the study revived in England.

744. Al have I nat set folk in hir degree: the due order of precedence was very carefully observed in Chaucer's days. Compare what he says of the Wife of Bath, ll. 449-52. Perhaps in his apology, "My wit is short, ye may wel understonde," he is laughing at the importance attached to it.

750. lyste, a Kentish form, for Chaucer's more usual 'list.'
751. Oure Hooste: see Introduction, p. xliii.

754. A fairer burgeys is ther noon in Chepe: 'the Chepe,' whose name is preserved in 'Cheapside,' was the great marketplace of London. To understand the full force of the line we must remember that in 1327 the City of London had obtained a charter from Edward III. giving it authority over Southwark, on the ground that the latter was a harbour for rogues. Southwark regained its freedom a few years later and kept it until 1550, when it was once more placed under the City of London. But though it was independent of the city in Chaucer's days it was a very inferior place, and to say of one of its inhabitants that he was as good as any citizen in Cheapside was a high compliment.

761. lordynges, my masters, gentlemen. Used only in addressing a company.

763. if that I shal nat lye: 'if I am to speak truth,' or 'sooth to say.'

767. I am ... bythoght, I have thought of.

772. Ye shapen yow to talen and to playe: you are preparing to tell stories and jest. See Introduction, p. xxxix.

777. you liketh alle: 'liketh' is impersonal, 'you,' dative.

781. Now, by my fader soules, that is deed: 'fader' is here the uninflected genitive, as in b 1178; cp. 'fader kin' (c 3121), 'fader day' (e 1136). Save in such common phrases Chaucer uses 'faders' or 'fadres,' as in e 809, "Retourneth to your faders hous, quod he."

783. Hoold up youre hond: probably another proverbial phrase, and so influenced by the old plural form 'honde,' cp. b 606, "For which ful ofte he weep and wrong his hond." Chaucer's usual form is 'hondes,' as in g 189, "Urban for joye hi- hondes gan up holde." But after all 'hond' may here be singular, for each man would only hold up one hand.

784. Oure consell was nat longe for to seche: our resolution did not take long to arrive at. From implying absence, as here, 'to seek' came to suggest non-existence, as in g 874, of success in alchemy, "I warne yow wel, it is to seken ever."

785. Us thoughte it was noght worth to mak it wys: it seemed to us (cp. 682) not worth while to treat the matter seriously. 'Wys,' denotes worldly wisdom, as in the 'war and wvs' applied to the Sergeant of Law. For the phrase 'make it wys,' cp. A 3980, "And strange he made it of hir mariage," i.e. he was stand-off-like about her marriage, and Boke of Duchesse, 531, "He made it neither tough ne queynte," he was neither obstinate nor affected about it.

810. and oure othes swore: i.e. and we swore our oaths and prayed him, etc. It is too frequent a practice with our author
to omit the governing pronoun before his verbs. See below, b 621-23:

"But nathelees, ther was gret moornyng
Among the peple, and seyn they kan nat gesse
That she had doon so gret a wikkednesse."

Where 'and seyn' is for 'and they seyn.' (Adapted from Tyrwhitt.)

815. And sette a sooper at a certeyn pris: *i.e.* a festival supper on their return, at which the teller of the best story would be the guest and the other pilgrims pay their own reckonings and his as well. The fact that it was to be a special entertainment explains the arrangement as to cost, without obliging us to suppose with Professor Corson that the bills mentioned in l. 760 had been too high.

817. *In heigh and lough*: it would seem enough to explain high and low as equivalent to "in things both great and small," *i.e.* in all respects, but Tyrwhitt assures us that 'de alto et basso' and 'haut et bas' are respectively medieval Latin and French expressions "of entire submission on one side and sovereignty on the other."

823. *oure aller cok*, the cock, or waker, of us all.

825. *a litel moore than paas*: *i.e.* at rather more than a walking pace, cp. A 2897, of the procession at the funeral of Arcite:

"And riden forth a paas with sorweful cheere,"

and *Troilus*, ii. 626-7:

"And wounded was his hors, and gan to blede,
On whiche he rood a pas, ful softely,"

quotations which prove the existence of this sense. On the other hand, in 1535, in Coverdale's version of the Bible 'aspace' has undoubtedly its modern meaning 'quickly.'

826. *Unto the wateryng of Saint Thomas*: a brook near the second milestone on the Canterbury Road, where pilgrims watered their horses. In Tudor times, and perhaps earlier, Surrey criminals were hanged there as Middlesex ones at Tyburn. "In Carey's Map of 15 miles round London, so late as 1786, we have at the two milestone the Kent Road *Watering's Bridge*, a remnant of the old name" (Nares' Glossary, under the heading 'Watering,' St. Thomas à).

829. *I it yow recorde*: Dr. Liddell follows MSS. E. Hn. and Camb. in omitting 'I,' but the ellipsis is more awkward than in l. 810.

830. *If even-song and morwe-song accorde*: if you will sing the same tune in the morning as you sang overnight.

838 etc. *draweth ... cometh ... studeth*: polite plural imperatives. Harry Baily is represented as very careful in using these in talking to the pilgrims of good position or special worth, but to the Pardoner, the Monk, the Nun's Priest, etc., he uses the uncere-

monious singular, and the poet is himself addressed in the same way: "'What man artow,' quod he," etc. (b 1885 sqq.).
841. Ne studieth noght. We are told of the Clerk (l. 304)
"noght o word spak he more than was neede," and so the Host
took it for granted that he was always working out some philo-
sophical problem: cp. E 1-5:

"'Sire Clerk of Oxenford,' our Hoste sayde,
'Ye ryde as coy and stille as doth a mayde,
Were newe spoused, sittynge at the bورد;
This day ne herd I of your tonge a word.
I trowe ye studie aboute som sophyme;
But Salomon seith every thyng hath tyme.
For Goddes sake! as beth of bettre cheere!
It is no tyme for to studien heere.'"

It was said of S. Thomas Aquinas that 'once when dining with the
King of France' he fell into such a study, and woke from it only to
strike his fist on the table and cry 'They could never answer that,'
much to the King's delight.

844. by aventure, or sort, or cas: perhaps the three nearest
equivalents we can propose for these words are 'luck, fate, and
chance.'