

THE CANTERBURY TALES.

THE PROLOGUE.

WHEN that Aprilis, with his showers swoot\*,  
\*sweet  
The drought of March hath pierced to the root,  
And bathed every vein in such licour,  
Of which virtue engender'd is the flower;  
When Zephyrus eke with his swoote breath  
Inspired hath in every holt\* and heath  
forest \*grove,  
The tender croppes\* and the younge sun  
boughs \*twigs,  
Hath in the Ram <1> his halfe course y-run,  
And smalle fowles make melody,  
That sleepen all the night with open eye,  
(So pricketh them nature in their corages\*); \*hearts,  
inclinations  
Then longe folk to go on pilgrimages,  
And palmers <2> for to seeke strange strands,  
To \*ferne hallows couth\* in sundry lands; \*distant saints  
known\*<3>  
And specially, from every shire's end  
Of Engleland, to Canterbury they wend,  
The holy blissful Martyr for to seek,  
That them hath holpen\*, when that they were sick.  
\*helped

Befell that, in that season on a day,  
In Southwark at the Tabard <4> as I lay,  
Ready to wenden on my pilgrimage  
To Canterbury with devout corage,  
At night was come into that hostelry  
Well nine and twenty in a company  
Of sundry folk, \*by aventure y-fall  
fallen \*who had by chance  
In fellowship\*, and pilgrims were they all, into company.\*  
<5>  
That toward Canterbury woulde ride.  
The chamber, and the stables were wide,  
And \*well we weren eased at the best.\* \*we were well  
provided  
And shortly, when the sunne was to rest, with the  
best\*  
So had I spoken with them every one,  
That I was of their fellowship anon,  
And made forword\* early for to rise,  
\*promise  
To take our way there as I you devise\*. \*describe,  
relate

But natheless, while I have time and space,  
Ere that I farther in this tale pace,  
Me thinketh it accordant to reason,

To tell you alle the condition  
Of each of them, so as it seemed me,  
And which they weren, and of what degree;  
And eke in what array that they were in:  
And at a Knight then will I first begin.

A KNIGHT there was, and that a worthy man,  
That from the time that he first began  
To riden out, he loved chivalry,  
Truth and honour, freedom and courtesy.  
Full worthy was he in his Lorde's war,  
And thereto had he ridden, no man farre\*,  
\*farther

As well in Christendom as in Heatheness,  
And ever honour'd for his worthiness  
At Alisandre <6> he was when it was won.  
Full often time he had the board begun  
Above alle nations in Prusse.<7>  
In Lettowe had he reysed,\* and in Russe,  
\*journeyed

No Christian man so oft of his degree.  
In Grenade at the siege eke had he be  
Of Algesir, and ridden in Belmarie. <8>  
At Leyes was he, and at Satalie,  
When they were won; and in the Greate Sea  
At many a noble army had he be.  
At mortal battles had he been fifteen,  
And foughten for our faith at Tramissene.  
In listes thries, and aye slain his foe.  
This ilke\* worthy knight had been also  
<9>

\*same

Some time with the lord of Palatie,  
Against another heathen in Turkie:  
And evermore \*he had a sovereign price\*.  
very

\*He was held in

And though that he was worthy he was wise,  
esteem.\*

high

And of his port as meek as is a maid.  
He never yet no villainy ne said  
In all his life, unto no manner wight.  
He was a very perfect gentle knight.  
But for to telle you of his array,  
His horse was good, but yet he was not gay.  
Of fustian he weared a gipon\*,  
doublet

\*short

Alle \*besmotter'd with his habergeon,\* \*soiled by his coat of  
mail.\*

For he was late y-come from his voyage,  
And wente for to do his pilgrimage.

With him there was his son, a younge SQUIRE,  
A lover, and a lusty bachelor,  
With lockes crulle\* as they were laid in press.  
\*curled

Of twenty year of age he was I guess.  
Of his stature he was of even length,



Nor wet her fingers in her sauce deep.  
 Well could she carry a morsel, and well keep,  
 That no droppe ne fell upon her breast.  
 In courtesy was set full much her lest\*.  
 \*pleasure  
 Her over-lippe wiped she so clean,  
 That in her cup there was no farthing\* seen  
 \*speck  
 Of grease, when she drunken had her draught;  
 Full seemly after her meat she raught\*:                   \*reached out her  
 hand  
 And \*sickerly she was of great disport\*,                   \*surely she was of a  
 lively  
 And full pleasant, and amiable of port,  
 disposition\*  
 And \*pained her to counterfeite cheer                   \*took pains to  
 assume  
 Of court,\* and be estately of mannere,                   a courtly  
 disposition\*  
 And to be holden digne\* of reverence.  
 \*worthy  
 But for to speaken of her conscience,  
 She was so charitable and so pitous,\*                   \*full of  
 pity  
 She woulde weep if that she saw a mouse  
 Caught in a trap, if it were dead or bled.  
 Of smalle houndes had she, that she fed  
 With roasted flesh, and milk, and \*wastel bread.\*       \*finest white  
 bread\*  
 But sore she wept if one of them were dead,  
 Or if men smote it with a yarde\* smart:  
 \*staff  
 And all was conscience and tender heart.  
 Full seemly her wimple y-pinched was;  
 Her nose tretis;\* her eyen gray as glass;<13>                   \*well-  
 formed  
 Her mouth full small, and thereto soft and red;  
 But sickerly she had a fair forehead.  
 It was almost a spanne broad I trow;  
 For \*hardily she was not undergrow\*.                   \*certainly she was not  
 small\*  
 Full fetis\* was her cloak, as I was ware.  
 \*neat  
 Of small coral about her arm she bare  
 A pair of beades, gauded all with green;  
 And thereon hung a brooch of gold full sheen,  
 On which was first y-written a crown'd A,  
 And after, \*Amor vincit omnia.\*                   \*love conquers  
 all\*  
 Another Nun also with her had she,  
 [That was her chapelleine, and PRIESTES three.]  
  
 A MONK there was, a fair \*for the mast'ry\*,                   \*above all  
 others\*<14>  
 An out-rider, that loved venery\*;  
 \*hunting  
 A manly man, to be an abbot able.



So much of dalliance and fair language.  
 He had y-made full many a marriage  
 Of younge women, at his owen cost.  
 Unto his order he was a noble post;  
 Full well belov'd, and familiar was he  
 With franklins \*over all\* in his country,  
 \*everywhere\*  
 And eke with worthy women of the town:  
 For he had power of confession,  
 As said himselfe, more than a curate,  
 For of his order he was licentiate.  
 Full sweetely heard he confession,  
 And pleasant was his absolution.  
 He was an easy man to give penance,  
 \*There as he wist to have a good pittance:\* \*where he know he  
 would  
 For unto a poor order for to give get good  
 payment\*  
 Is signe that a man is well y-shrive.  
 For if he gave, he \*durste make avant\*, \*dared to  
 boast\*  
 He wiste\* that the man was repentant.  
 \*knew  
 For many a man so hard is of his heart,  
 He may not weep although him sore smart.  
 Therefore instead of weeping and prayeres,  
 Men must give silver to the poore freres.  
 His tippet was aye farsed\* full of knives  
 \*stuffed  
 And pinnes, for to give to faire wives;  
 And certainly he had a merry note:  
 Well could he sing and playen \*on a rote\*; \*from  
 memory\*  
 Of yeddings\* he bare utterly the prize.  
 \*songs  
 His neck was white as is the fleur-de-lis.  
 Thereto he strong was as a champion,  
 And knew well the taverns in every town.  
 And every hosteler and gay tapstere,  
 Better than a lazar\* or a beggere,  
 \*leper  
 For unto such a worthy man as he  
 Accordeth not, as by his faculty,  
 To have with such lazars acquaintance.  
 It is not honest, it may not advance,  
 As for to deale with no such pouraille\*, \*offal,  
 refuse  
 But all with rich, and sellers of vitaille\*.  
 \*victuals  
 And \*ov'r all there as\* profit should arise, \*in every place  
 where&  
 Courteous he was, and lowly of service;  
 There n'as no man nowhere so virtuous.  
 He was the beste beggar in all his house:  
 And gave a certain farme for the grant, <19>  
 None of his bretheren came in his haunt.  
 For though a widow hadde but one shoe,

So pleasant was his In Principio, <20>  
 Yet would he have a farthing ere he went;  
 His purchase was well better than his rent.  
 And rage he could and play as any whelp,  
 In lovedays <21>; there could he muchel\* help.  
 \*greatly  
 For there was he not like a cloisterer,  
 With threadbare cope as is a poor scholer;  
 But he was like a master or a pope.  
 Of double worsted was his semicope\*, \*short  
 cloak  
 That rounded was as a bell out of press.  
 Somewhat he lisped for his wantonness,  
 To make his English sweet upon his tongue;  
 And in his harping, when that he had sung,  
 His eyen\* twinkled in his head aright,  
 \*eyes  
 As do the starres in a frosty night.  
 This worthy limitour <18> was call'd Huberd.

A MERCHANT was there with a forked beard,  
 In motley, and high on his horse he sat,  
 Upon his head a Flandrish beaver hat.  
 His bootes clasped fair and fetisly\*.  
 \*neatly  
 His reasons aye spake he full solemnly,  
 Sounding alway th' increase of his winning.  
 He would the sea were kept <22> for any thing  
 Betwixte Middleburg and Orewell<23>  
 Well could he in exchange shieldes\* sell \*crown coins <24>  
 This worthy man full well his wit beset\*;  
 \*employed  
 There wiste\* no wight\*\* that he was in debt, \*knew  
 \*\*man  
 So \*estately was he of governance\* \*so well he  
 managed\*  
 With his bargains, and with his chevisance\*. \*business  
 contract  
 For sooth he was a worthy man withal,  
 But sooth to say, I n'ot\* how men him call. \*know  
 not

A CLERK there was of Oxenford\* also,  
 \*Oxford  
 That unto logic hadde long y-go\*. \*devoted  
 himself  
 As leane was his horse as is a rake,  
 And he was not right fat, I undertake;  
 But looked hollow\*, and thereto soberly\*\*. \*thin;  
 \*\*poorly  
 Full threadbare was his \*overest courtepy\*, \*uppermost short  
 cloak\*  
 For he had gotten him yet no benefice,  
 Ne was not worldly, to have an office.  
 For him was lever\* have at his bed's head  
 \*rather  
 Twenty bookes, clothed in black or red,





A COOK they hadde with them for the nones\*,  
\*occasion  
To boil the chickens and the marrow bones,  
And powder merchant tart and galingale.  
Well could he know a draught of London ale.  
He could roast, and stew, and broil, and fry,  
Make mortrewes, and well bake a pie.  
But great harm was it, as it thoughte me,  
That, on his shin a mormal\* hadde he.  
\*ulcer  
For blanc manger, that made he with the best <34>

A SHIPMAN was there, \*wonned far by West\*:  
far \*who dwelt  
For ought I wot, be was of Dartemouth. to the  
West\*  
He rode upon a rouncey\*, as he couth,  
\*hack  
All in a gown of falding\* to the knee. \*coarse  
cloth  
A dagger hanging by a lace had he  
About his neck under his arm adown;  
The hot summer had made his hue all brown;  
And certainly he was a good fellow.  
Full many a draught of wine he had y-draw  
From Bourdeaux-ward, while that the chapmen sleep;  
Of nice conscience took he no keep.  
If that he fought, and had the higher hand,  
\*By water he sent them home to every land.\* \*he drowned  
his  
But of his craft to reckon well his tides,  
prisoners\*  
His streames and his strandes him besides,  
His herberow\*, his moon, and lodemanage\*\*,  
\*harbourage  
There was none such, from Hull unto Carthage  
\*\*pilotage<35>  
Hardy he was, and wise, I undertake:  
With many a tempest had his beard been shake.  
He knew well all the havens, as they were,  
From Scotland to the Cape of Finisterre,  
And every creek in Bretagne and in Spain:  
His barge y-cleped was the Magdelain.

With us there was a DOCTOR OF PHYSIC;  
In all this worlde was there none him like  
To speak of physic, and of surgery:  
For he was grounded in astronomy.  
He kept his patient a full great deal  
In houres by his magic natural.  
Well could he fortune\* the ascendent \*make  
fortunate  
Of his images for his patient,.  
He knew the cause of every malady,  
Were it of cold, or hot, or moist, or dry,  
And where engender'd, and of what humour.  
He was a very perfect practisour

The cause y-know,\* and of his harm the root,  
 \*known  
 Anon he gave to the sick man his boot\*  
 \*remedy  
 Full ready had he his apothecaries,  
 To send his drugges and his lectuaries  
 For each of them made other for to win  
 Their friendship was not newe to begin  
 Well knew he the old Esculapius,  
 And Dioscorides, and eke Rufus;  
 Old Hippocras, Hali, and Gallien;  
 Serapion, Rasis, and Avicen;  
 Averrois, Damascene, and Constantin;  
 Bernard, and Gatisden, and Gilbertin. <36>  
 Of his diet measurable was he,  
 For it was of no superfluity,  
 But of great nourishing, and digestible.  
 His study was but little on the Bible.  
 In sanguine\* and in perse\*\* he clad was all \*red  
 \*\*blue  
 Lined with taffeta, and with sendall\*. \*fine  
 silk  
 And yet \*he was but easy of dispense\*: \*he spent very  
 little\*  
 He kept \*that he won in the pestilence\*. \*the money he  
 made  
 For gold in physic is a cordial; during the  
 plague\*  
 Therefore he loved gold in special.

A good WIFE was there OF beside BATH,  
 But she was somedeal deaf, and that was scath\*. \*damage;  
 pity  
 Of cloth-making she hadde such an haunt\*,  
 \*skill  
 She passed them of Ypres, and of Gaunt. <37>  
 In all the parish wife was there none,  
 That to the off'ring\* before her should gon, \*the offering at  
 mass  
 And if there did, certain so wroth was she,  
 That she was out of alle charity  
 Her coverchiefs\* were full fine of ground \*head-  
 dresses  
 I durste swear, they weighede ten pound <38>  
 That on the Sunday were upon her head.  
 Her hosen weren of fine scarlet red,  
 Full strait y-tied, and shoes full moist\* and new \*fresh  
 <39>  
 Bold was her face, and fair and red of hue.  
 She was a worthy woman all her live,  
 Husbands at the church door had she had five,  
 Withouten other company in youth;  
 But thereof needeth not to speak as nouth\*.  
 \*now  
 And thrice had she been at Jerusalem;  
 She hadde passed many a strange stream  
 At Rome she had been, and at Bologne,

In Galice at Saint James, <40> and at Cologne;  
She coude\* much of wand'rng by the Way.

\*knew

Gat-toothed\* was she, soothly for to say.  
toothed<41>

\*Buck-

Upon an ambler easily she sat,  
Y-wimpled well, and on her head an hat  
As broad as is a buckler or a targe.  
A foot-mantle about her hippes large,  
And on her feet a pair of spurres sharp.  
In fellowship well could she laugh and carp\*  
talk

\*jest,

Of remedies of love she knew perchance  
For of that art she coud\* the olde dance.

\*knew

A good man there was of religion,  
That was a poore PARSON of a town:  
But rich he was of holy thought and werk\*.

\*work

He was also a learned man, a clerk,  
That Christe's gospel trully woulde preach.  
His parishens\* devoutly would he teach.

\*parishioners

Benign he was, and wonder diligent,  
And in adversity full patient:  
And such he was y-proved \*often sithes\*.

\*oftentimes\*

Full loth were him to curse for his tithes,  
But rather would he given out of doubt,  
Unto his poore parishens about,  
Of his off'ring, and eke of his substance.

\*He could in little thing have suffisance\*.  
with

\*he was satisfied

Wide was his parish, and houses far asunder,  
little\*

very

But he ne left not, for no rain nor thunder,  
In sickness and in mischief to visit

The farthest in his parish, \*much and lit\*,  
small\*

\*great and

Upon his feet, and in his hand a staff.  
This noble ensample to his sheep he gaf\*,  
\*gave

That first he wrought, and afterward he taught.

Out of the gospel he the wordes caught,

And this figure he added yet thereto,

That if gold ruste, what should iron do?

For if a priest be foul, on whom we trust,

No wonder is a lewed\* man to rust:

\*unlearned

And shame it is, if that a priest take keep,  
To see a shitten shepherd and clean sheep:  
Well ought a priest ensample for to give,  
By his own cleanness, how his sheep should live.

He sette not his benefice to hire,

And left his sheep eucumber'd in the mire,

And ran unto London, unto Saint Paul's,







That him might helpen of his whelkes\* white,  
\*pustules  
Nor of the knobbes\* sitting on his cheeks.  
\*buttons

Well lov'd he garlic, onions, and leeks,  
And for to drink strong wine as red as blood.  
Then would he speak, and cry as he were wood;  
And when that he well drunken had the wine,  
Then would he speake no word but Latin.

A fewe termes knew he, two or three,  
That he had learned out of some decree;  
No wonder is, he heard it all the day.  
And eke ye knowen well, how that a jay  
Can clepen\* "Wat," as well as can the Pope.

\*call  
But whoso would in other thing him grope\*,  
\*search  
Then had he spent all his philosophy,  
Aye, *Questio quid juris*, <51> would he cry.

He was a gentle harlot\* and a kind;  
fellow<52>

\*a low

A better fellow should a man not find.  
He woulde suffer, for a quart of wine,  
A good fellow to have his concubine  
A twelvemonth, and excuse him at the full.  
Full privily a \*finch eke could he pull\*.  
man\*

\*"fleece" a

And if he found owhere\* a good fellow,  
\*anywhere

He woulde teache him to have none awe  
In such a case of the archdeacon's curse;  
\*But if\* a manne's soul were in his purse;  
\*unless\*

For in his purse he should y-punished be.  
"Purse is the archdeacon's hell," said he.  
But well I wot, he lied right indeed:  
Of cursing ought each guilty man to dread,  
For curse will slay right as assoiling\* saveth;  
\*absolving

And also 'ware him of a significavit<53>.  
In danger had he at his owen guise  
The younge girles of the diocese, <54>  
And knew their counsel, and was of their rede\*.  
\*counsel

A garland had he set upon his head,  
As great as it were for an alestake\*:        \*The post of an alehouse  
sign

A buckler had he made him of a cake.

With him there rode a gentle PARDONERE <55>  
Of Ronceval, his friend and his compere,  
That straight was comen from the court of Rome.  
Full loud he sang, "Come hither, love, to me"  
This Sompnour \*bare to him a stiff burdoun\*,  
bass\*

\*sang the

Was never trump of half so great a soun'.



That highte the Tabard, fast by the Bell.<59>  
 But now is time to you for to tell  
 \*How that we baren us that ilke night\*,      \*what we did that same  
 night\*  
 When we were in that hostelry alight.  
 And after will I tell of our voyage,  
 And all the remnant of our pilgrimage.  
 But first I pray you of your courtesy,  
 That ye \*arete it not my villainy\*,      \*count it not rudeness in  
 me\*  
 Though that I plainly speak in this mattere.  
 To tellen you their wordes and their cheer;  
 Not though I speak their wordes properly.  
 For this ye knowen all so well as I,  
 Whoso shall tell a tale after a man,  
 He must rehearse, as nigh as ever he can,  
 Every word, if it be in his charge,  
 \*All speak he\* ne'er so rudely and so large;      \*let him  
 speak\*  
 Or elles he must tell his tale untrue,  
 Or feigne things, or finde wordes new.  
 He may not spare, although he were his brother;  
 He must as well say one word as another.  
 Christ spake Himself full broad in Holy Writ,  
 And well ye wot no villainy is it.  
 Eke Plato saith, whoso that can him read,  
 The wordes must be cousin to the deed.  
 Also I pray you to forgive it me,  
 \*All have I\* not set folk in their degree,      \*although I  
 have\*  
 Here in this tale, as that they shoulde stand:  
 My wit is short, ye may well understand.

Great cheere made our Host us every one,  
 And to the supper set he us anon:  
 And served us with victual of the best.  
 Strong was the wine, and well to drink us lest\*.  
 \*pleased  
 A seemly man Our Hoste was withal  
 For to have been a marshal in an hall.  
 A large man he was with eyen steep\*,      \*deep-  
 set.  
 A fairer burgess is there none in Cheap<60>:  
 Bold of his speech, and wise and well y-taught,  
 And of manhoode lacked him right naught.  
 Eke thereto was he right a merry man,  
 And after supper playen he began,  
 And spake of mirth amonges other things,  
 When that we hadde made our reckonings;  
 And saide thus; "Now, lordinges, truly  
 Ye be to me welcome right heartily:  
 For by my troth, if that I shall not lie,  
 I saw not this year such a company  
 At once in this herberow\*, am is now.      \*inn  
 <61>  
 Fain would I do you mirth, an\* I wist\* how.      \*if I  
 knew\*



This thing was granted, and our oath we swore  
With full glad heart, and prayed him also,  
That he would vouchesafe for to do so,  
And that he woulde be our governour,  
And of our tales judge and reportour,  
And set a supper at a certain price;  
And we will ruled be at his device,  
In high and low: and thus by one assent,  
We be accorded to his judgement.  
And thereupon the wine was fet\* anon.  
\*fetched.

We drunken, and to reeste went each one,  
Withouten any longer tarrying  
A-morrow, when the day began to spring,  
Up rose our host, and was \*our aller cock\*, \*the cock to wake us  
all\*

And gather'd us together in a flock,  
And forth we ridden all a little space,  
Unto the watering of Saint Thomas<62>:  
And there our host began his horse arrest,  
And saide; "Lordes, hearken if you lest.  
Ye \*weet your forword,\* and I it record. \*know your  
promise\*

If even-song and morning-song accord,  
Let see now who shall telle the first tale.  
As ever may I drinke wine or ale,  
Whoso is rebel to my judgement,  
Shall pay for all that by the way is spent.  
Now draw ye cuts\*, ere that ye farther twin\*\*. \*lots  
\*\*go  
He which that hath the shortest shall begin."

"Sir Knight (quoth he), my master and my lord,  
Now draw the cut, for that is mine accord.  
Come near (quoth he), my Lady Prioress,  
And ye, Sir Clerk, let be your shamefastness,  
Nor study not: lay hand to, every man."  
Anon to drawen every wight began,  
And shortly for to tellen as it was,  
Were it by a venture, or sort\*, or cas\*\*, \*lot  
\*\*chance

The sooth is this, the cut fell to the Knight,  
Of which full blithe and glad was every wight;  
And tell he must his tale as was reason,  
By forword, and by composition,  
As ye have heard; what needeth wordes mo'?  
And when this good man saw that it was so,  
As he that wise was and obedient  
To keep his forword by his free assent,  
He said; "Sithen\* I shall begin this game,  
\*since  
Why, welcome be the cut in Godde's name.  
Now let us ride, and hearken what I say."  
And with that word we ridden forth our way;  
And he began with right a merry cheer  
His tale anon, and said as ye shall hear.

## Notes to the Prologue

1. Tyrwhitt points out that "the Bull" should be read here, not "the Ram," which would place the time of the pilgrimage in the end of March; whereas, in the Prologue to the Man of Law's Tale, the date is given as the "eight and twenty day of April, that is messenger to May."
2. Dante, in the "Vita Nuova," distinguishes three classes of pilgrims: palmieri - palmers who go beyond sea to the East, and often bring back staves of palm-wood; peregrini, who go to the shrine of St Jago in Galicia; Romei, who go to Rome. Sir Walter Scott, however, says that palmers were in the habit of passing from shrine to shrine, living on charity -- pilgrims on the other hand, made the journey to any shrine only once, immediately returning to their ordinary avocations. Chaucer uses "palmer" of all pilgrims.
3. "Hallows" survives, in the meaning here given, in All Hallows -- All-Saints -- day. "Couth," past participle of "conne" to know, exists in "uncouth."
4. The Tabard -- the sign of the inn -- was a sleeveless coat, worn by heralds. The name of the inn was, some three centuries after Chaucer, changed to the Talbot.
5. In y-fall, "y" is a corruption of the Anglo-Saxon "ge" prefixed to participles of verbs. It is used by Chaucer merely to help the metre. In German, "y-fall," or y-falle," would be "gefallen", "y-run," or "y-ronne", would be "geronnen."
6. Alisandre: Alexandria, in Egypt, captured by Pierre de Lusignan, king of Cyprus, in 1365 but abandoned immediately afterwards. Thirteen years before, the same Prince had taken Satalie, the ancient Attalia, in Anatolia, and in 1367 he won Layas, in Armenia, both places named just below.
7. The knight had been placed at the head of the table, above knights of all nations, in Prussia, whither warriors from all countries were wont to repair, to aid the Teutonic Order in their continual conflicts with their heathen neighbours in "Lettowe" or Lithuania (German. "Litthauen"), Russia, &c.
8. Algesiras was taken from the Moorish king of Grenada, in 1344: the Earls of Derby and Salisbury took part in the siege. Belmarie is supposed to have been a Moorish state in Africa; but "Palmyrie" has been suggested as the correct reading. The Great Sea, or the Greek sea, is the Eastern Mediterranean. Tramissene, or Tremessen, is enumerated by Froissart among the Moorish kingdoms in Africa. Palatie, or Palathia, in Anatolia, was a fief held by the Christian knights after the Turkish conquests -- the holders paying tribute to the infidel. Our knight had fought with one of those lords against a heathen neighbour.

9. Ilke: same; compare the Scottish phrase "of that ilk," -- that is, of the estate which bears the same name as its owner's title.
10. It was the custom for squires of the highest degree to carve at their fathers' tables.
11. Peacock Arrows: Large arrows, with peacocks' feathers.
12. A nut-head: With nut-brown hair; or, round like a nut, the hair being cut short.
13. Grey eyes appear to have been a mark of female beauty in Chaucer's time.
14. "for the mastery" was applied to medicines in the sense of "sovereign" as we now apply it to a remedy.
15. It was fashionable to hang bells on horses' bridles.
16. St. Benedict was the first founder of a spiritual order in the Roman church. Maurus, abbot of Fulda from 822 to 842, did much to re-establish the discipline of the Benedictines on a true Christian basis.
17. Wood: Mad, Scottish "wud". Felix says to Paul, "Too much learning hath made thee mad".
18. Limitour: A friar with licence or privilege to beg, or exercise other functions, within a certain district: as, "the limitour of Holderness".
19. Farme: rent; that is, he paid a premium for his licence to beg.
20. In principio: the first words of Genesis and John, employed in some part of the mass.
21. Lovedays: meetings appointed for friendly settlement of differences; the business was often followed by sports and feasting.
22. He would the sea were kept for any thing: he would for anything that the sea were guarded. "The old subsidy of tonnage and poundage," says Tyrwhitt, "was given to the king 'pour la saufgarde et custodie del mer.'" -- for the safeguard and keeping of the sea" (12 E. IV. C.3).
23. Middleburg, at the mouth of the Scheldt, in Holland; Orwell, a seaport in Essex.
24. Shields: Crowns, so called from the shields stamped on them; French, "ecu;" Italian, "scudo."
25. Poor scholars at the universities used then to go about begging for money to maintain them and their studies.

26. Parvis: The portico of St. Paul's, which lawyers frequented to meet their clients.
27. St Julian: The patron saint of hospitality, celebrated for supplying his votaries with good lodging and good cheer.
28. Mew: cage. The place behind Whitehall, where the king's hawks were caged was called the Mews.
29. Many a luce in stew: many a pike in his fish-pond; in those Catholic days, when much fish was eaten, no gentleman's mansion was complete without a "stew".
30. Countour: Probably a steward or accountant in the county court.
31. Vavasour: A landholder of consequence; holding of a duke, marquis, or earl, and ranking below a baron.
32. On the dais: On the raised platform at the end of the hall, where sat at meat or in judgement those high in authority, rank or honour; in our days the worthy craftsmen might have been described as "good platform men".
33. To take precedence over all in going to the evening service of the Church, or to festival meetings, to which it was the fashion to carry rich cloaks or mantles against the home-coming.
34. The things the cook could make: "marchand tart", some now unknown ingredient used in cookery; "galingale," sweet or long rooted cyprus; "mortrewes", a rich soup made by stamping flesh in a mortar; "Blanc manger", not what is now called blancmange; one part of it was the brawn of a capon.
35. Lodemanage: pilotage, from Anglo-Saxon "ladman," a leader, guide, or pilot; hence "lodestar," "lodestone."
36. The authors mentioned here were the chief medical text-books of the middle ages. The names of Galen and Hippocrates were then usually spelt "Gallien" and "Hypocras" or "Ypocras".
37. The west of England, especially around Bath, was the seat of the cloth-manufacture, as were Ypres and Ghent (Gaunt) in Flanders.
38. Chaucer here satirises the fashion of the time, which piled bulky and heavy waddings on ladies' heads.
39. Moist; here used in the sense of "new", as in Latin, "mustum" signifies new wine; and elsewhere Chaucer speaks of "moisty ale", as opposed to "old".
40. In Galice at Saint James: at the shrine of St Jago of Compostella in Spain.

41. Gat-toothed: Buck-toothed; goat-toothed, to signify her wantonness; or gap-toothed -- with gaps between her teeth.
42. An endowment to sing masses for the soul of the donor.
43. A ram was the usual prize at wrestling matches.
44. Cop: Head; German, "Kopf".
45. Nose-thirles: nostrils; from the Anglo-Saxon, "thirlian," to pierce; hence the word "drill," to bore.
46. Goliardais: a babbler and a buffoon; Goliath was the founder of a jovial sect called by his name.
47. The proverb says that every honest miller has a thumb of gold; probably Chaucer means that this one was as honest as his brethren.
48. A Manciple -- Latin, "manceps," a purchaser or contractor -- was an officer charged with the purchase of victuals for inns of court or colleges.
49. Reeve: A land-steward; still called "grieve" -- Anglo-Saxon, "gerefa" in some parts of Scotland.
50. Sompnour: summoner; an apparitor, who cited delinquents to appear in ecclesiastical courts.
51. Questio quid juris: "I ask which law (applies)"; a cant law-Latin phrase.
- 52 Harlot: a low, ribald fellow; the word was used of both sexes; it comes from the Anglo-Saxon verb to hire.
53. Significavit: an ecclesiastical writ.
54. Within his jurisdiction he had at his own pleasure the young people (of both sexes) in the diocese.
55. Pardoner: a seller of pardons or indulgences.
56. Newe get: new gait, or fashion; "gait" is still used in this sense in some parts of the country.
57. Vernicle: an image of Christ; so called from St Veronica, who gave the Saviour a napkin to wipe the sweat from His face as He bore the Cross, and received it back with an impression of His countenance upon it.
58. Mail: packet, baggage; French, "malle," a trunk.
59. The Bell: apparently another Southwark tavern; Stowe mentions a "Bull" as being near the Tabard.
60. Cheap: Cheapside, then inhabited by the richest and most prosperous citizens of London.

61. Herberow: Lodging, inn; French, "Herberge."

62. The watering of Saint Thomas: At the second milestone on the old Canterbury road.