

*same And held after the newe world the trace. He *gave not of the text a
 pulled hen,* *he cared nothing That saith, that hunters be not
 holy men: for the text* Ne that a monk, when he is cloisterless; Is
 like to a fish that is waterless; This is to say, a monk out of his cloister. This
 ilke text held he not worth an oyster; And I say his opinion was good. Why
 should he study, and make himselfe wood* *mad <17> Upon a
 book in cloister always pore, Or swinken* with his handes, and labour,
 *toil As Austin bid? how shall the world be served? Let Austin have his
 swink to him reserved. Therefore he was a prickasour* aright:
 hard rider Greyhounds he had as swift as fowl of flight; Of pricking and of
 hunting for the hare *riding Was all his lust,* for no cost
 would he spare. *pleasure I saw his sleeves *purfil'd at the hand
 worked at the end with a With gris, and that the finest of the land.
 fur called "gris"* And for to fasten his hood under his chin, He had of gold y-
 wrought a curious pin; A love-knot in the greater end there was. His head
 was bald, and shone as any glass, And eke his face, as it had been anoint;
 He was a lord full fat and in good point; His eyen steep,* and rolling in his
 head, *deep-set That steamed as a furnace of a lead. His
 bootes supple, his horse in great estate, Now certainly he was a fair prelate;
 He was not pale as a forpined* ghost; *wasted A fat swan
 lov'd he best of any roast. His palfrey was as brown as is a berry.

A FRIAR there was, a wanton and a merry, A limitour <18>, a full solemne
 man. In all the orders four is none that can* *knows 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, Of Aristotle, and his philosophy, Than robes rich, or fiddle, or psalt'ry.
 But all be that he was a philosopher, Yet hadde he but little gold in coffer,
 But all that he might of his friendes hent*, *obtain On bookes
 and on learning he it spent, And busily gan for the soules pray Of them that
 gave him <25> wherewith to scholay* *study Of study took he

one livery, Of a solemn and great fraternity. Full fresh and new their gear y-
 picked* was. *spruce Their knives were y-chaped* not with
 brass, *mounted But all with silver wrought full clean and well,
 Their girdles and their pouches *every deal*. *in every part* Well
 seemed each of them a fair burgess, To sitten in a guild-hall, on the dais.
 <32> Evereach, for the wisdom that he can*, *knew Was
 shapely* for to be an alderman. *fitted For chattels hadde
 they enough and rent, And eke their wives would it well assent: And elles
 certain they had been to blame. It is full fair to be y-clep'd madame, And for
 to go to vigils all before, And have a mantle royally y-bore.<33>

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, *wonne far by West*: *who dwelt far For
 ought I wot, be was of Dartmouth. to the West* He rode upon
 a rouncy*, 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. *Buck-toothed<41> 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*
jest, talk Of remedies of love she knew perchance For of that art she could
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 truly 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*. *he was satisfied with Wide was his parish, and
 houses far asunder, very little* 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, *great and small* 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, To seeke him a chantery<42> for souls,
 Or with a brotherhood to be withhold:* *detained But dwelt at
 home, and kepte well his fold, So that the wolf ne made it not miscarry. He
 was a shepherd, and no mercenary. And though he holy were, and virtuous,
 He was to sinful men not dispitous* *severe Nor of his
 speche dangerous nor dign* *disdainful But in his teaching
 discreet and benign. To drawen folk to heaven, with fairness, By good
 ensample, was his business: *But it were* any person obstinate,
 but if it were What so he were of high or low estate, Him would he snibbe*
 sharply for the nones**. *reprove **nonce, occasion A better priest I trow
 that nowhere none is. He waited after no pomp nor reverence, Nor maked
 him a *spiced conscience*, *artificial conscience* But Christe's lore,
 and his apostles' twelve, He taught, and first he follow'd it himselfe.

With him there was a PLOUGHMAN, was his brother, That had y-laid of
 dung full many a fother*. *ton A true swinker* and a good
 was he, *hard worker Living in peace and perfect charity.
 God loved he beste with all his heart At alle times, were it gain or smart*,
 *pain, loss And then his neighebour right as himselfe. He woulde thresh,
 and thereto dike*, and delve, *dig ditches For Christe's sake, for
 every poore wight, Withouten hire, if it lay in his might. His tithes payed he
 full fair and well, Both of his *proper swink*, and his chattel** *his own
 labour* **goods In a tabard* he rode upon a mare. *sleeveless
 jerkin

There was also a Reeve, and a Millere, A Sompnour, and a Pardoner also, A
 Manciple, and myself, there were no mo'.

The MILLER was a stout carle for the nones, Full big he was of brawn, and
 eke of bones; That proved well, for *ov'r all where* he came,
 wheresoever At wrestling he would bear away the ram.<43> He was short-

shouldered, broad, a thicke gnarr*, *stump of wood There was no
 door, that he n'old* heave off bar, *could not Or break it at a
 running with his head. His beard as any sow or fox was red, And thereto
 broad, as though it were a spade. Upon the cop* right of his nose he had
 *head <44> A wart, and thereon stood a tuft of hairs Red as the bristles of a
 sowe's ears. His nose-thirles* blacke were and wide. *nostrils
 <45> A sword and buckler bare he by his side. His mouth as wide was as a
 furnace. He was a jangler, and a goliardais*, *buffoon <46>
 And that was most of sin and harlotries. Well could he steale corn, and tolle
 thrice And yet he had a thumb of gold, pardie.<47> A white coat and a blue
 hood weared he A baggepipe well could he blow and soun', And therewithal
 he brought us out of town.

A gentle MANCIPILE <48> was there of a temple, Of which achatours* mighte
 take ensample *buyers For to be wise in buying of vitaille*.
 *victuals For whether that he paid, or took *by taile*, *on credit
 Algate* he waited so in his achate**, *always **purchase That he
 was aye before in good estate. Now is not that of God a full fair grace That
 such a lewed* mannes wit shall pace** *unlearned **surpass The
 wisdom of an heap of learned men? Of masters had he more than thries ten,
 That were of law expert and curious: Of which there was a dozen in that
 house, Worthy to be stewards of rent and land Of any lord that is in
 Engleland, To make him live by his proper good, In honour debtless, *but if
 he were wood*, *unless he were mad* Or live as scarcely as him list
 desire; And able for to helpen all a shire In any case that mighte fall or hap;
 And yet this Manciple *set their aller cap* *outwitted them all*

The REEVE <49> was a slender choleric man His beard was shav'd as nigh
 as ever he can. His hair was by his eares round y-shorn; His top was docked
 like a priest befor Full longe were his legges, and full lean Y-like a staff,
 there was no calf y-seen Well could he keep a garner* and a bin*
 *storeplaces for grain There was no auditor could on him win Well wist he by
 the drought, and by the rain, The yielding of his seed and of his grain His
 lorde's sheep, his neat*, and his dairy *cattle His swine, his
 horse, his store, and his poultry, Were wholly in this Reeve's governing, And
 by his cov'nant gave he reckoning, Since that his lord was twenty year of
 age; There could no man bring him in arrearage There was no bailiff, herd,
 nor other hine* *servant That he ne knew his *sleight and his
 covine* *tricks and cheating* They were adrad* of him, as of the death
 in dread His wonning was full fair upon an heath *abode
 With greene trees y-shadow'd was his place. He coulde better than his lord
 purchase Full rich he was y-stored privily His lord well could he please
 subtilly, To give and lend him of his owen good, And have a thank, and yet*

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*, *sang the bass* Was never trump of half so great a soun'.
 This Pardoner had hair as yellow as wax, But smooth it hung, as doth a
 strike* of flax: *strip By ounces hung his lockes that he had,
 And therewith he his shoulders oversprad. Full thin it lay, by culpons* one
 and one, *locks, shreds But hood for jollity, he weared none, For it
 was trussed up in his wallet. Him thought he rode all of the *newe get*,
 latest fashion<56> Dishevel, save his cap, he rode all bare. Such glaring
 eyen had he, as an hare. A vernicle* had he sew'd upon his cap.
 image of Christ <57> His wallet lay before him in his lap, Bretful of pardon
 come from Rome all hot. *brimful A voice he had as small as
 hath a goat. No beard had he, nor ever one should have. As smooth it was
 as it were new y-shave; I trow he were a gelding or a mare. But of his craft,
 from Berwick unto Ware, Ne was there such another pardonere. For in his
 mail* he had a pillowbere**, *bag <58> **pillowcase Which, as he
 saide, was our Lady's veil: He said, he had a gobbet* of the sail
 *piece That Sainte Peter had, when that he went Upon the sea, till Jesus
 Christ him hent*. *took hold of He had a cross of latoun* full of
 stones, *copper And in a glass he hadde pigge's bones. But
 with these relics, whenne that he fond A poore parson dwelling upon lond,
 Upon a day he got him more money Than that the parson got in moneths
 tway; And thus with feigned flattering and japes*, *jests He
 made the parson and the people his apes. But truely to tellen at the last, He
 was in church a noble ecclesiast. Well could he read a lesson or a story, But
 alderbest* he sang an offertory: *best of all For well he wiste,
 when that song was sung, He muste preach, and well afile* his tongue,
 *polish To winne silver, as he right well could: Therefore he sang full merrily
 and loud.

Now have I told you shortly in a clause Th' estate, th' array, the number,
 and eke the cause Why that assembled was this company In Southwark at
 this gentle hostelry, 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 matter. 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* And of a mirth I am right now bethought. To do you ease*, and it shall coste nought. *pleasure Ye go to Canterbury; God you speed, The blissful Martyr *quite you your meed*; *grant you what And well I wot, as ye go by the way, you deserve* Ye *shapen you* to talken and to play: *intend to* For truly comfort nor mirth is none To ride by the way as dumb as stone: And therefore would I make you disport, As I said erst, and do you some comfort. And if you liketh all by one assent Now for to standen at my judgement, And for to worken as I shall you say To-morrow, when ye riden on the way, Now by my father's soule that is dead, *But ye be merry, smiteth off* mine head. *unless you are merry, Hold up your hands withoute more speech. smite off my head*

Our counsel was not longe for to seech*: *seek Us thought it was not worth to *make it wise*, *discuss it at length* And granted him withoute more advise*, *consideration And bade him say his verdict, as him lest. Lordinges (quoth he), now hearken for the best; But take it not, I pray you, in disdain; This is the point, to speak it plat* and plain. *flat That each of you, to shorten with your way In this voyage, shall tellen tales tway, To Canterbury-ward, I mean it so, And homeward he shall tellen other two, Of adventures that whilom have befall. And which of you that bear'th him best of all, That is to say, that telleth in this case Tales of best sentence and most solace, Shall have a supper *at your aller cost* *at the cost of you all* Here in this place, sitting by this post, When that ye

come again from Canterbury. And for to make you the more merry, I will myselfe gladly with you ride, Right at mine owen cost, and be your guide. And whoso will my judgement withsay, Shall pay for all we spenden by the way. And if ye vouchesafe that it be so, Tell me anon withoute wordes mo'*, *more And I will early shape me therefore."

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 drawn 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.