

## 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 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 sauvgarde 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.