

## Notes to the Reeve's Tale

1. The incidents of this tale were much relished in the Middle Ages, and are found under various forms. Boccaccio has told them in the ninth day of his "Decameron".

2. Camuse: flat; French "camuse", snub-nosed.

3. Gite: gown or coat; French "jupe."

4. Soler Hall: the hall or college at Cambridge with the gallery or upper storey; supposed to have been Clare Hall. (Transcribers note: later commentators identify it with King's Hall, now merged with Trinity College)

5. Manciple: steward; provisioner of the hall. See also note 47 to the prologue to the Tales.

6. Testif: headstrong, wild-brained; French, "entete."

7. Strother: Tyrwhitt points to Anstruther, in Fife: Mr Wright to the Vale of Langstroth, in the West Riding of Yorkshire. Chaucer has given the scholars a dialect that may have belonged to either district, although it more immediately suggests the more northern of the two. (Transcribers note: later commentators have identified it with a now vanished village near Kirknewton in Northumberland. There was a well-known Alein of Strother in Chaucer's lifetime.)

8. Wanges: grinders, cheek-teeth; Anglo-Saxon, "Wang," the cheek; German, "Wange."

9. See note 1 to the Prologue to the Reeves Tale

10. In the "Cento Novelle Antiche," the story is told of a mule, which pretends that his name is written on the bottom of his hind foot. The wolf attempts to read it, the mule kills him with a kick in the forehead; and the fox, looking on, remarks that "every man of letters is not wise." A similar story is told in "Reynard the Fox."

11. Levesell: an arbour; Anglo-Saxon, "lefe-setl," leafy seat.

12. Noth: business; German, "Noth," necessity.

13. Bathe: both; Scottice, "baith."
14. Capel: horse; Gaelic, "capall;" French, "cheval;" Italian, "cavallo," from Latin, "caballus."
15. Make a clerkes beard: cheat a scholar; French, "faire la barbe;" and Boccaccio uses the proverb in the same sense.
16. "Gar" is Scotch for "cause;" some editions read, however, "get us some".
17. Chalons: blankets, coverlets, made at Chalons in France.
18. Crock: pitcher, cruse; Anglo-Saxon, "crocca;" German, "krug;" hence "crockery."
19. Dwale: night-shade, *Solanum somniferum*, given to cause sleep.
20. Burdoun: bass; "burden" of a song. It originally means the drone of a bagpipe; French, "bourdon."
21. Compline: even-song in the church service; chorus.
22. Ferly: strange. In Scotland, a "ferlie" is an unwonted or remarkable sight.
23. A furlong way: As long as it might take to walk a furlong.
24. Cockenay: a term of contempt, probably borrowed from the kitchen; a cook, in base Latin, being termed "coquinarius." compare French "coquin," rascal.
25. Unhardy is unsely: the cowardly is unlucky; "nothing venture, nothing have;" German, "unselig," unhappy.
26. Holy cross of Bromeholm: A common adjuration at that time; the cross or rood of the priory of Bromholm, in Norfolk, was said to contain part of the real cross and therefore held in high esteem.
27. In manus tuas: Latin, "in your hands".