THE COOK'S TALE.

THE PROLOGUE.

THE Cook of London, while the Reeve thus spake, For joy he laugh'd and clapp'd him on the back: "Aha!" quoth he, "for Christes passion, This Miller had a sharp conclusion, Upon this argument of herbergage.* *lodging Well saide Solomon in his language, Bring thou not every man into thine house, For harbouring by night is perilous. *Well ought a man avised for to be* *a man should take good heed* Whom that he brought into his privity. I pray to God to give me sorrow and care If ever, since I highte* Hodge of Ware, *was called Heard I a miller better *set a-work*; *handled He had a jape* of malice in the derk. *trick But God forbid that we should stinte* here, *stop And therefore if ye will vouchsafe to hear A tale of me, that am a poore man, I will you tell as well as e'er I can A little jape that fell in our city."

Our Host answer'd and said; "I grant it thee. Roger, tell on; and look that it be good, For many a pasty hast thou letten blood, And many a Jack of Dover<1> hast thou sold, That had been twice hot and twice cold. Of many a pilgrim hast thou Christe's curse, For of thy parsley yet fare they the worse. That they have eaten in thy stubble goose: For in thy shop doth many a fly go loose. Now tell on, gentle Roger, by thy name, But yet I pray thee be not *wroth for game*; *angry with my jesting* A man may say full sooth in game and play." "Thou sayst full sooth," quoth Roger, "by my fay; But sooth play quad play,<2> as the Fleming saith, And therefore, Harry Bailly, by thy faith, Be thou not wroth, else we departe* here, *part company Though that my tale be of an hostelere.* *innkeeper But natheless, I will not tell it yet, But ere we part, y-wis* thou shalt be quit."<3> *assuredly And therewithal he laugh'd and made cheer,<4> And told his tale, as ye shall after hear.

Notes to the Prologue to the Cook's Tale

1. Jack of Dover: an article of cookery. (Transcriber's note: suggested by some commentators to be a kind of pie, and by others to be a fish)

2. Sooth play quad play: true jest is no jest.