THE FRIAR'S TALE.

THE PROLOGUE.<1>

This worthy limitour, this noble Frere, He made always a manner louring cheer* *countenance Upon the Sompnour; but for honesty* *courtesy No villain word as yet to him spake he: But at the last he said unto the Wife: "Dame," quoth he, "God give you right good life, Ye have here touched, all so may I the,* *thrive In school matter a greate difficulty. Ye have said muche thing right well, I say; But, Dame, here as we ride by the way, Us needeth not but for to speak of game, And leave authorities, in Godde's name, To preaching, and to school eke of clergy. But if it like unto this company, I will you of a Sompnour tell a game; Pardie, ye may well knowe by the name, That of a Sompnour may no good be said; I pray that none of you be *evil paid;* *dissatisfied* A Sompnour is a runner up and down With mandements* for fornicatioun, *mandates, summonses* And is y-beat at every towne's end." Then spake our Host; "Ah, sir, ye should be hend* *civil, gentle And courteous, as a man of your estate; In company we will have no debate: Tell us your tale, and let the Sompnour be." "Nay," quoth the Sompnour, "let him say by me What so him list; when it comes to my lot, By God, I shall him quiten* every groat! *pay him off I shall him telle what a great honour It is to be a flattering limitour And his office I shall him tell y-wis". Our Host answered, "Peace, no more of this." And afterward he said unto the frere, "Tell forth your tale, mine owen master dear."