THE MERCHANT'S TALE.

THE PROLOGUE.<1>

"Weeping and wailing, care and other sorrow, I have enough, on even and on morrow," Quoth the Merchant, "and so have other mo', That wedded be; I trow* that it be so; *believe For well I wot it fareth so by me. I have a wife, the worste that may be, For though the fiend to her y-coupled were, She would him overmatch, I dare well swear. Why should I you rehearse in special Her high malice? she is *a shrew at all.* *thoroughly, in There is a long and large difference everything wicked* Betwixt Griselda's greate patience, And of my wife the passing cruelty. Were I unbounden, all so may I the,* *thrive I woulde never eft* come in the snare. *again We wedded men live in sorrow and care; Assay it whoso will, and he shall find That I say sooth, by Saint Thomas of Ind,<2> As for the more part; I say not all, -- God shielde* that it shoulde so befall. *forbid Ah! good Sir Host, I have y-wedded be These moneths two, and more not, pardie; And yet I trow* that he that all his life *believe Wifeless hath been, though that men would him rive* *wound Into the hearte, could in no mannere Telle so much sorrow, as I you here Could tellen of my wife's cursedness."* *wickedness

"Now," quoth our Host, "Merchant, so God you bless, Since ye so muche knowen of that art, Full heartily I pray you tell us part." "Gladly," quoth he; "but of mine owen sore, For sorry heart, I telle may no more."