

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 mucche
knownen 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."