THE SQUIRE'S TALE.

THE PROLOGUE.

"HEY! Godde's mercy!" said our Hoste tho,* *then "Now such a wife I pray God keep me fro'. Lo, suche sleightes and subtilities In women be; for aye as busy as bees Are they us silly men for to deceive, And from the soothe* will they ever weive,** *truth **swerve, depart As this Merchante's tale it proveth well. But natheless, as true as any steel, I have a wife, though that she poore be; But of her tongue a labbing* shrew is she; *chattering And yet* she hath a heap of vices mo'. *moreover Thereof *no force;* let all such thinges go. *no matter* But wit* ye what? in counsel** be it said, *know **secret, confidence Me rueth sore I am unto her tied; For, an'* I shoulde reckon every vice *if Which that she hath, y-wis* I were too nice;** *certainly **foolish And cause why, it should reported be And told her by some of this company (By whom, it needeth not for to declare, Since women connen utter such chaffare <1>), And eke my wit sufficeth not thereto To tellen all; wherefore my tale is do.* *done Squier, come near, if it your wille be, And say somewhat of love, for certes ye *Conne thereon* as much as any man." *know about it* "Nay, Sir," quoth he; "but such thing as I can, With hearty will, -- for I will not rebel Against your lust,* -- a tale will I tell. *pleasure Have me excused if I speak amiss; My will is good; and lo, my tale is this."

Notes to the Prologue to the Squire's Tale

1. Women connen utter such chaffare: women are adepts at giving circulation to such wares. The Host evidently means that his wife would be sure to hear of his confessions from some female member of the company.