

## Notes to the Squire's Tale

1. The Squire's Tale has not been found under any other form among the literary remains of the Middle Ages; and it is unknown from what original it was derived, if from any. The Tale is unfinished, not because the conclusion has been lost, but because the author left it so.

2. The Russians and Tartars waged constant hostilities between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries.

3. In the best manuscripts the name is "Cambynskan," and thus, no doubt, it should strictly be read. But it is a most pardonable offence against literal accuracy to use the word which Milton has made classical, in "Il Penseroso," speaking of

"him that left half-told The story of Cambuscan bold, Of Camball, and of Algarsife, And who had Canace to wife, That owned the virtuous Ring and Glass, And of the wondrous Horse of Brass, On which the Tartar King did ride"

Surely the admiration of Milton might well seem to the spirit of Chaucer to condone a much greater transgression on his domain than this verbal change -- which to both eye and ear is an unquestionable improvement on the uncouth original.

4. Couth his colours longing for that art: well skilled in using the colours -- the word-painting -- belonging to his art.

5. Aries was the mansion of Mars -- to whom "his" applies. Leo was the mansion of the Sun.

6. Sewes: Dishes, or soups. The precise force of the word is uncertain; but it may be connected with "seethe," to boil, and it seems to describe a dish in which the flesh was served up amid a kind of broth or gravy. The "sewer," taster or assayer of the viands served at great tables, probably derived his name from the verb to "say" or "assay;" though Tyrwhitt would connect the two words, by taking both from the French, "asseoir," to place -- making the arrangement of the table the leading duty of the "sewer," rather than the testing of the food.

7. Heronsews: young herons; French, "heronneaux."

8. Purpose: story, discourse; French, "propos."
9. Gawain was celebrated in mediaeval romance as the most courteous among King Arthur's knights.
10. Gin: contrivance; trick; snare. Compare Italian, "inganno," deception; and our own "engine."
11. Mr Wright remarks that "the making and arrangement of seals was one of the important operations of mediaeval magic."
12. Remued: removed; French, "remuer," to stir.
13. Polies: Apulian. The horses of Apulia -- in old French "Poille," in Italian "Puglia" -- were held in high value.
14. The Greeke's horse Sinon: the wooden horse of the Greek Sinon, introduced into Troy by the stratagem of its maker.
15. Master tower: chief tower; as, in the Knight's Tale, the principal street is called the "master street." See note 86 to the Knight's Tale.
16. Alhazen and Vitellon: two writers on optics -- the first supposed to have lived about 1100, the other about 1270. Tyrwhitt says that their works were printed at Basle in 1572, under the title "Alhazeni et Vitellonis Opticae."
17. Telephus, a son of Hercules, reigned over Mysia when the Greeks came to besiege Troy, and he sought to prevent their landing. But, by the art of Dionysus, he was made to stumble over a vine, and Achilles wounded him with his spear. The oracle informed Telephus that the hurt could be healed only by him, or by the weapon, that inflicted it; and the king, seeking the Grecian camp, was healed by Achilles with the rust of the charmed spear.
18. Ferne: before; a corruption of "forne," from Anglo-Saxon, "foran."
19. Aldrian: or Aldebaran; a star in the neck of the constellation Leo.
20. Chamber of parements: Presence-chamber, or chamber of state, full of splendid furniture and ornaments. The same expression is used in French and Italian.
21. In Pisces, Venus was said to be at her exaltation or greatest power. A

planet, according to the old astrologers, was in "exaltation" when in the sign of the Zodiac in which it exerted its strongest influence; the opposite sign, in which it was weakest, was called its "dejection."

22. Launcelot: Arthur's famous knight, so accomplished and courtly, that he was held the very pink of chivalry.

23. Trill: turn; akin to "thirl", "drill."

24. Ride: another reading is "bide," alight or remain.

25. Feasting: entertaining; French, "festoyer," to feast.

26. The old physicians held that blood dominated in the human body late at night and in the early morning. Galen says that the domination lasts for seven hours.

27. Fumosity: fumes of wine rising from the stomach to the head.

28. Fremde: foreign, strange; German, "fremd" in the northern dialects, "frem," or "fremmed," is used in the same sense.

29. Leden: Language, dialect; from Anglo-Saxon, "leden" or "laeden," a corruption from "Latin."

30. Tercelet: the "tassel," or male of any species of hawk; so called, according to Cotgrave, because he is one third ("tiers") smaller than the female.

31. "And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one Adah, and the name of the other Zillah" (Gen. iv. 19).

32. Galoche: shoe; it seems to have been used in France, of a "sabot," or wooden shoe. The reader cannot fail to recall the same illustration in John i. 27, where the Baptist says of Christ: "He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me; whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose."

33. Byleve; stay; another form is "bleve;" from Anglo-Saxon, "belitan," to remain. Compare German, "bleiben."

34. This sentiment, as well as the illustration of the bird which follows, is taken from the third book of Boethius, "De Consolatione Philosophiae," metrum 2. It has thus been rendered in Chaucer's translation: "All things

seek aye to their proper course, and all things rejoice on their returning again to their nature."

35. Men love of proper kind newfangledness: Men, by their own -- their very -- nature, are fond of novelty, and prone to inconstancy.

36. Blue was the colour of truth, as green was that of inconstancy. In John Stowe's additions to Chaucer's works, printed in 1561, there is "A balade whiche Chaucer made against women inconstaunt," of which the refrain is, "In stead of blue, thus may ye wear all green."

37. Unless we suppose this to be a namesake of the Camballo who was Canace's brother -- which is not at all probable -- we must agree with Tyrwhitt that there is a mistake here; which no doubt Chaucer would have rectified, if the tale had not been "left half-told," One manuscript reads "Caballo;" and though not much authority need be given to a difference that may be due to mere omission of the mark of contraction over the "a," there is enough in the text to show that another person than the king's younger son is intended. The Squire promises to tell the adventures that befell each member of Cambuscan's family; and in thorough consistency with this plan, and with the canons of chivalric story, would be "the marriage of Canace to some knight who was first obliged to fight for her with her two brethren; a method of courtship," adds Tyrwhitt, "very consonant to the spirit of ancient chivalry."

38. (Trancriber's note) In some manuscripts the following two lines, being the beginning of the third part, are found: -

Apollo whirleth up his chair so high, Till that Mercurius' house, the sly...