



the nonce. I pray to God give him confusion That first thee brought into religion. Thou would'st have been a treade-fowl\* aright; \*cock  
 Hadst thou as greate leave, as thou hast might, To perform all thy lust in engendrure,\* \*generation, begettting Thou hadst begotten many a creature. Alas! why wearest thou so wide a cope? <3> God give me sorrow, but, an\* I were pope, \*if Not only thou, but every mighty man, Though he were shorn full high upon his pan,\* <4> \*crown Should have a wife; for all this world is lorn;\* \*undone, ruined Religion hath ta'en up all the corn Of treading, and we borel\* men be shrimps: \*lay Of feeble trees there come wretched imps.\* \*shoots <5> This maketh that our heires be so slender And feeble, that they may not well engender. This maketh that our wives will assay Religious folk, for they may better pay Of Venus' payementes than may we: God wot, no lusheburghes <6> paye ye. But be not wroth, my lord, though that I play; Full oft in game a sooth have I heard say."

This worthy Monk took all in patience, And said, "I will do all my diligence, As far as \*souneth unto honesty,\* \*agrees with good manners\* To telle you a tale, or two or three. And if you list to hearken hitherward, I will you say the life of Saint Edward; Or elles first tragedies I will tell, Of which I have an hundred in my cell. Tragedy \*is to say\* a certain story, \*means\* As olde bookes maken us memory, Of him that stood in great prosperity, And is y-fallen out of high degree In misery, and endeth wretchedly. And they be versified commonly Of six feet, which men call hexametron; In prose eke\* be indited many a one, \*also And eke in metre, in many a sundry wise. Lo, this declaring ought enough suffice. Now hearken, if ye like for to hear. But first I you beseech in this mattere, Though I by order telle not these things, Be it of popes, emperors, or kings, \*After their ages,\* as men written find, \*in chronological order\* But tell them some before and some behind, As it now cometh to my remembrance, Have me excused of mine ignorance."

#### Notes to the Prologue to The Monk's Tale

1. The Corpus Madrian: the body of St. Maternus, of Treves.
2. That her misdoth or saith: that does or says any thing to offend her.
3. Cope: An ecclesiastcal vestment covering all the body like a cloak.
4. Though he were shorn full high upon his pan: though he were tonsured, as the clergy are.

5. Imps: shoots, branches; from Anglo-Saxon, "impian," German, "impfen," to implant, ingraft. The word is now used in a very restricted sense, to signify the progeny, children, of the devil.

6. Lusheburghes: base or counterfeit coins; so called because struck at Luxemburg. A great importation of them took place during the reigns of the earlier Edwards, and they caused much annoyance and complaint, till in 1351 it was declared treason to bring them into the country.