THE MANCIPLE'S TALE.

THE PROLOGUE.

Awake, thou Cook," quoth he; "God give thee sorrow What aileth thee to sleepe *by the morrow?* *in the day time* Hast thou had fleas all night, or art drunk? Or had thou with some quean* all night y-swunk,** *whore **laboured So that thou mayest not hold up thine head?" The Cook, that was full pale and nothing red, Said to Host, "So God my soule bless, As there is fall'n on me such heaviness, I know not why, that me were lever* *rather Than the best gallon wine that is in Cheap." sleep, "Well," quoth the Manciple, "if it may do ease To thee, Sir Cook, and to no wight displease Which that here rideth in this company, And that our Host will of his courtesy, I will as now excuse thee of thy tale; For in good faith thy visage is full pale: Thine eyen daze,* soothly as me thinketh, *are dim And well I wot, thy breath full soure stinketh, That sheweth well thou art not well disposed; Of me certain thou shalt not be y-glosed.* *flattered See how he yawneth, lo, this drunken wight, As though he would us swallow anon right. Hold close thy mouth, man, by thy father's kin; The devil of helle set his foot therein! Thy cursed breath infecte will us all: Fy! stinking swine, fy! foul may thee befall. Ah! take heed, Sirs, of this lusty man. Now, sweete Sir, will ye joust at the fan?<4> Thereto, me thinketh, ye be well y-shape. I trow that ye have drunken wine of ape, <5> And that is when men playe with a straw."

And with this speech the Cook waxed all wraw,* *wrathful And on the Manciple he gan nod fast For lack of speech; and down his horse him cast, Where as he lay, till that men him up took. This was a fair chevachie* of a cook: *cavalry expedition Alas! that he had held him by his