

Notes to the Prologue to the Manciple's Tale

1. Bob-up-and-down: Mr Wright supposes this to be the village of Harbledown, near Canterbury, which is situated on a hill, and near which there are many ups and downs in the road. Like Boughton, where the Canon and his Yeoman overtook the pilgrims, it stood on the skirts of the Kentish forest of Blean or Blee.

2. Dun is in the mire: a proverbial saying. "Dun" is a name for an ass, derived from his colour.

3. The mention of the Cook here, with no hint that he had already told a story, confirms the indication given by the imperfect condition of his Tale, that Chaucer intended to suppress the Tale altogether, and make him tell a story in some other place.

4. The quintain; called "fan" or "vane," because it turned round like a weather-cock.

5. Referring to the classification of wine, according to its effects on a man, given in the old "Calendrier des Bergiers," The man of choleric temperament has "wine of lion;" the sanguine, "wine of ape;" the phlegmatic, "wine of sheep;" the melancholic, "wine of sow." There is a Rabbinical tradition that, when Noah was planting vines, Satan slaughtered beside them the four animals named; hence the effect of wine in making those who drink it display in turn the characteristics of all the four.

6. The pose: a defluxion or rheum which stops the nose and obstructs the voice.

7. Bring thee to his lure: A phrase in hawking -- to recall a hawk to the fist; the meaning here is, that the Cook may one day bring the Manciple to account, or pay him off, for the rebuke of his drunkenness.