

Notes to the Manciple's Tale

1. "The fable of 'The Crow,' says Tyrwhitt, "which is the subject of the Manciple's Tale, has been related by so many authors, from Ovid down to Gower, that it is impossible to say whom Chaucer principally followed. His skill in new dressing an old story was never, perhaps, more successfully exerted."
2. See the parallel to this passage in the Squire's Tale, and note 34 to that tale.
3. Wantrust: distrust -- want of trust; so "wanhope," despair - - want of hope.
4. This is quoted in the French "Romance of the Rose," from Cato "De Moribus," 1. i., dist. 3: "Virtutem primam esse puta compescere linguam." ("The first virtue is to be able to control the tongue")
5. "Semel emissum volat irrevocabile verbum." ("A word once uttered flies away and cannot be called back") -- Horace, Epist. 1., 18, 71.
6. This caution is also from Cato "De Moribus," 1. i., dist. 12: "Rumoris fuge ne incipias novus auctor haberi." ("Do not pass on rumours or be the author of new ones")