

Whan that Aprill with his shoures soote  
The droghte of March hath perceud to the roote,  
And bathed every veyne in swich licoure  
Of which vertu engendred is the bloure;  
Whan Zephirus eek with his sweete breethe  
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth  
The tenbre croppes, and the yonge sonne  
Hath in the Ram his halfe coures greonne,  
And smale fowles maken melodye,  
That slepen al the nyght with open ye  
(So priketh hem Nature in hire corages),  
Thanne lengen folk to green on pilgrymages,  
And palmeres for to seken straunge strandes,  
To ferre halves, kowthe in sondry londes;  
And specially from every shires ende  
Of Engelond to Caunterbury they wende,  
The holy blisshel martir for to seke,  
That hem hath holpen whan that they were seeke.  
Pifil that in that seson on a day,  
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay  
Redy to warden on my pilgrymage  
To Caunterbury with ful deuout corages,  
At nyght was come into that hostelrye  
Wel nyne and twenty in a compaignye  
Of sondry folk, by aventure yballe  
In felawshippe, and pilgrymes were they alle,

That toward Lancaster warden ryde.  
The chambres and the stables weren wyde,  
And wel we weren esed atte beste.  
And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste,  
So haddle I spoken with hem everichon  
That I was of hire felaweshippe apon,  
And made foreward evely for to reyse,  
To take ure my ther as I yow devyse.  
But nonetheless, whil I have tyme and spase,  
Se that I further in this tale pace,  
Me thynketh it accordaunt to resoun  
To telle yow al the condicoun  
Of ech of hem, so as it semed, me  
And whiche theyp weren, and of what degree,  
And eek in what array that they were inne;  
And at a knyght than wel I first slypoun.  
A KNYGHT ther was, and that a worthy man,  
That fro the tyme that he first bigan  
To riden out, he loved chivalrie,  
Trouthe and honoure, freedom and certeisie.  
Ful worthy was he in his lordeles merre,  
And thereto haddle he riden, no man ferre,  
As wel in cristendom as in hethenesse;  
It were honoureol bire his worthynesse;  
It Alisaundree he was whan it was wenue.  
Ful ofte tyme he haddle the lored slypoun  
Aboren alle nacions in Reece;  
In Letton haddle he reyseol and in Reece,

No Cristen man so obte of his degree.

In Gernagle at the seige eek hadde he be  
Of Alperzir, and riden in Belnearye.

At lyeys was he and at Satalye  
Whan they were wonne, and in the Crete see  
At mony a noble armee hadde he be.

At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,  
And foughten for eure feith at Teamyssene,  
In lystes thries, and ay slayn his fo.

This elke worthy knyght hadde been also  
Somtyne with the lord of Palatye  
Agayn another hethen in Turkey;

And everemoore he hadde a sovereyn preys.

And though that he were worthy, he was wys,  
And of his port as meeke as is a mayde.

He nevere yet no rileynghe ne sayde  
In al his lyf unto no manere wight.

He was a verreyay, parfit gentil knyght.

Bet for to tellen you of his array

His hors were goodle, but he was nat gay.

Of bustian he wered a gypon

Al dismotered with his habergeon,

For he was late ycomme from his riveye,

And wente for to doon his pilgrymage.

With hym there was his sone, a young SQUYER,

of levtere and a lusty bachelere,

With lokkes creule as they were leyol in presse.

Of twenty yeer of age he was, I geese.

Of his stature he was at evene lengthe  
And wonderly delyvere, and at greet strengthe.  
And he hadde been savyse in chevauchie  
In Flounbees, in Artoys, and Pycarolie,  
And bren hym wel, as of so litel spacie,  
In hope to standen in his lady grace  
Embroideled was he, as it were a meode  
As ful of fresche flowers, whyte and reede.  
Syngynge he was, or bleytynge, al the day;  
He was as bressh as is the mouth of May.  
Shoret was his gonne, with sleeves longe and wycle.  
Wel koude he sitt on hors and faire ryde.  
He koude songes make and wel endite,  
Juste and eek daunce, and wel portreye and write.  
So hooche he lovede that by nyghtertale  
He sleep namore than deoth a nyghtyngale.  
Certeis he was, lowly, and servysable,  
And carf liforen his fader at the table.  
A YELMANT hadde he and servauntz name  
At that tyme, for hym liste ride so,  
And he was clad in cote and hood of grene.  
A shefe of peacock awes, bright and kene,  
Under his belt he bare ful thrichtily  
(We koude he dresse his takel yemanly)  
His awes desyred noct with fetheres leue),  
And in his hand he bare a myghty bowe.  
A not heed hadde he, with a browen visage.  
Of wodercraft wel koude he al the usage...