

1.1 General Prologue

- 1 **Whan that Aprill with his shoures soote**
 When April with its sweet-smelling showers
- 2 **The droghte of March hath perced to the roote,**
 Has pierced the drought of March to the root,
- 3 **And bathed every veyne in swich licour**
 And bathed every vein (of the plants) in such liquid
- 4 **Of which vertu engendred is the flour;**
 By which power the flower is created;
- 5 **Whan Zephirus eek with his sweete breeth**
 When the West Wind also with its sweet breath,
- 6 **Inspired hath in every holt and heeth**
 In every wood and field has breathed life into
- 7 **The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne**
 The tender new leaves, and the young sun
- 8 **Hath in the Ram his half cours yronne,**
 Has run half its course in Aries,
- 9 **And smale foweles maken melodye,**
 And small fowls make melody,
- 10 **That slepen al the nyght with open ye**
 Those that sleep all the night with open eyes
- 11 **(So priketh hem Nature in hir corages),**
 (So Nature incites them in their hearts),
- 12 **Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages,**
 Then folk long to go on pilgrimages,
- 13 **And palmeres for to seken straunge strondes,**
 And professional pilgrims to seek foreign shores,
- 14 **To ferne halwes, kowthe in sondry londes;**
 To distant shrines, known in various lands;
- 15 **And specially from every shires ende**
 And specially from every shire's end
- 16 **Of Engelond to Caunterbury they wende,**
 Of England to Canterbury they travel,
- 17 **The hooly blisful martir for to seke,**
 To seek the holy blessed martyr,
- 18 **That hem hath holpen whan that they were seeke.**
 Who helped them when they were sick.
- 19 **Bifil that in that seson on a day,**
 It happened that in that season on one day,
- 20 **In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay**
 In Southwark at the Tabard Inn as I lay
- 21 **Redy to wenden on my pilgrymage**
 Ready to go on my pilgrimage
- 22 **To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,**
 To Canterbury with a very devout spirit,

23 **At nyght was come into that hostelrye**
 At night had come into that hostelry
 24 **Wel nyne and twenty in a compaignye**
 Well nine and twenty in a company
 25 **Of sondry folk, by aventure yfalle**
 Of various sorts of people, by chance fallen
 26 **In felaweshipe, and pilgrimes were they alle,**
 In fellowship, and they were all pilgrims,
 27 **That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde.**
 Who intended to ride toward Canterbury.
 28 **The chambres and the stables weren wyde,**
 The bedrooms and the stables were spacious,
 29 **And wel we weren esed atte beste.**
 And we were well accommodated in the best way.
 30 **And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste,**
 And in brief, when the sun was (gone) to rest,
 31 **So hadde I spoken with hem everichon**
 I had so spoken with everyone of them
 32 **That I was of hir felaweshipe anon,**
 That I was of their fellowship straightway,
 33 **And made forward erly for to ryse,**
 And made agreement to rise early,
 34 **To take oure wey ther as I yow devyse.**
 To take our way where I (will) tell you.

35 **But nathelees, whil I have tyme and space,**
 But nonetheless, while I have time and opportunity,
 36 **Er that I ferther in this tale pace,**
 Before I proceed further in this tale,
 37 **Me thynketh it acordaunt to resoun**
 It seems to me in accord with reason
 38 **To telle yow al the condicioun**
 To tell you all the circumstances
 39 **Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,**
 Of each of them, as it seemed to me,
 40 **And whiche they weren, and of what degree,**
 And who they were, and of what social rank,
 41 **And eek in what array that they were inne;**
 And also what clothing that they were in;
 42 **And at a knyght than wol I first bigynne.**
 And at a knight then will I first begin.

43 **A KNYGHT ther was, and that a worthy man,**
 A KNIGHT there was, and that (one was) a worthy man,
 44 **That fro the tyme that he first bigan**
 Who from the time that he first began
 45 **To riden out, he loved chivalrie,**
 To ride out, he loved chivalry,

46 **Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisie.**
 Fidelity and good reputation, generosity and courtesy.
 47 **Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,**
 He was very worthy in his lord's war,
 48 **And therto hadde he riden, no man ferre,**
 And for that he had ridden, no man farther,
 49 **As wel in cristendom as in hethenesse,**
 As well in Christendom as in heathen lands,
 50 **And evere honoured for his worthynesse;**
 And (was) ever honored for his worthiness;
 51 **At Alisaundre he was whan it was wonne.**
 He was at Alexandria when it was won.
 52 **Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne**
 He had sat very many times in the place of honor,
 53 **Aboven alle nacions in Pruce;**
 Above (knights of) all nations in Prussia;
 54 **In Lettow hadde he reysed and in Ruce,**
 He had campaigned in Lithuania and in Russia,
 55 **No Cristen man so ofte of his degree.**
 No Christian man of his rank so often.
 56 **In Gernade at the seege eek hadde he be**
 Also he had been in Grenada at the siege
 57 **Of Algezir, and riden in Belmarye.**
 Of Algeciras, and had ridden in Morocco.
 58 **At Lyeys was he and at Satalye,**
 He was at Ayash and at Atalia,
 59 **Whan they were wonne, and in the Grete See**
 When they were won, and in the Mediterranean
 60 **At many a noble armee hadde he be.**
 He had been at many a noble expedition.
 61 **At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,**
 He had been at fifteen mortal battles,
 62 **And foughten for oure feith at Tramysene**
 And fought for our faith at Tlemcen
 63 **In lystes thries, and ay slayn his foo.**
 Three times in formal duels, and each time slain his foe.
 64 **This ilke worthy knyght hadde been also**
 This same worthy knight had also been
 65 **Somtyme with the lord of Palatye**
 At one time with the lord of Balat
 66 **Agayn another hethen in Turkye;**
 Against another heathen in Turkey;
 67 **And everemoore he hadde a sovereyn prys.**
 And evermore he had an outstanding reputation
 68 **And though that he were worthy, he was wys,**
 And although he was brave, he was prudent,
 69 **And of his port as meeke as is a mayde.**
 And of his deportment as meek as is a maid.
 70 **He nevere yet no vileynye ne sayde**

He never yet said any rude word
 71 **In al his lyf unto no maner wight.**
 In all his life unto any sort of person.
 72 **He was a verray, parfit gentil knyght.**
 He was a truly perfect, noble knight.
 73 **But for to tellen yow of his array,**
 But to tell you of his clothing,
 74 **His hors were goode, but he was nat gay.**
 His horses were good, but he was not gaily dressed.
 75 **Of fustian he wered a gypon**
 He wore a tunic of coarse cloth
 76 **Al bismotered with his habergeon,**
 All stained (with rust) by his coat of mail,
 77 **For he was late ycome from his viage,**
 For he was recently come (back) from his expedition,
 78 **And wente for to doon his pilgrymage.**
 And went to do his pilgrimage.

79 **With hym ther was his sone, a yong SQUIER,**
 With him there was his son, a young SQUIRE,
 80 **A lovyere and a lusty bachelor,**
 A lover and a lively bachelor,
 81 **With lokkes crulle as they were leyd in presse.**
 With locks curled as if they had been laid in a curler.
 82 **Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.**
 He was twenty years of age, I guess.
 83 **Of his stature he was of evene lengthe,**
 Of his stature he was of moderate height,
 84 **And wonderly delyvere, and of greet strengthe.**
 And wonderfully agile, and of great strength.
 85 **And he hadde been somtyme in chyvachie**
 And he had been for a time on a cavalry expedition
 86 **In Flaundres, in Artoys, and Pycardie,**
 In Flanders, in Artois, and Picardy,
 87 **And born hym weel, as of so litel space,**
 And conducted himself well, for so little a space of time,
 88 **In hope to stonden in his lady grace.**
 In hope to stand in his lady's good graces.
 89 **Embrouded was he, as it were a meede**
 He was embroidered, as if it were a mead
 90 **Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and reede.**
 All full of fresh flowers, white and red.
 91 **Syngynge he was, or floytynge, al the day;**
 Singing he was, or fluting, all the day;
 92 **He was as fressh as is the month of May.**
 He was as fresh as is the month of May.
 93 **Short was his gowne, with sleeves longe and wyde.**
 His gown was short, with long and wide sleeves.
 94 **Wel koude he sitte on hors and faire ryde.**

He well knew how to sit on horse and handsomely ride.
 95 **He koude songes make and wel endite,**
 He knew how to make songs and well compose (the words),
 96 **Juste and eek daunce, and weel purtreye and write.**
 Joust and also dance, and well draw and write.
 97 **So hoot he loved that by nyghtertale**
 He loved so passionately that at nighttime
 98 **He sleep namoore than dooth a nyghtyngale.**
 He slept no more than does a nightingale.
 99 **Curteis he was, lowely, and servysable,**
 Courteous he was, humble, and willing to serve,
 100 **And carf biforn his fader at the table.**
 And carved before his father at the table.

101 **A YEMAN hadde he and servantz namo**
 He (the Knight) had A YEOMAN and no more servants
 102 **At that tyme, for hym liste ride so,**
 At that time, for it pleased him so to travel,
 103 **And he was clad in cote and hood of grene.**
 And he (the yeoman) was clad in coat and hood of green.
 104 **A sheef of pecok arwes, bright and kene,**
 A sheaf of peacock arrows, bright and keen,
 105 **Under his belt he bar ful thriftily**
 He carried under his belt very properly
 106 **(Wel koude he dresse his takel yemanly;**
 (He well knew how to care for his equipment as a yeoman should;
 107 **His arwes drouped noght with fetheres lowe),**
 His arrows did not fall short because of drooping feathers),
 108 **And in his hand he baar a myghty bowe.**
 And in his hand he carried a mighty bow.
 109 **A not heed hadde he, with a broun visage.**
 He had a close-cropped head, with a brown face.
 110 **Of wodecraft wel koude he al the usage.**
 He well knew all the practice of woodcraft.
 111 **Upon his arm he baar a gay bracer,**
 He wore an elegant archer's wrist-guard upon his arm,
 112 **And by his syde a swerd and a bokeler,**
 And by his side a sword and a small shield,
 113 **And on that oother syde a gay daggere**
 And on that other side an elegant dagger
 114 **Harneised wel and sharp as point of spere;**
 Well ornamented and sharp as the point of a spear;
 115 **A Cristopher on his brest of silver sheene.**
 A Christopher-medal of bright silver on his breast.
 116 **An horn he bar, the bawdryk was of grene;**
 He carried a horn, the shoulder strap was green;
 117 **A forster was he, soothly, as I gesse.**
 He was a forester, truly, as I guess.

118 **Ther was also a Nonne, a PRIORESSE,**
 There was also a Nun, a PRIORESS,
 119 **That of hir smylyng was ful symple and coy;**
 Who was very simple and modest in her smiling;
 120 **Hire gretteste ooth was but by Seinte Loy;**
 Her greatest oath was but by Saint Loy;
 121 **And she was cleped madame Eglentyne.**
 And she was called Madam Eglantine.
 122 **Ful weel she soong the service dyvyne,**
 She sang the divine service very well,
 123 **Entuned in hir nose ful semely;**
 Intoned in her nose in a very polite manner;
 124 **And Frenssh she spak ful faire and fetisly,**
 And she spoke French very well and elegantly,
 125 **After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,**
 In the manner of Stratford at the Bow,
 126 **For Frenssh of Parys was to hire unknowe.**
 For French of Paris was to her unknown.
 127 **At mete wel ytaught was she with alle;**
 At meals she was well taught indeed;
 128 **She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,**
 She let no morsel fall from her lips,
 129 **Ne wette hir fyngres in hir sauce depe;**
 Nor wet her fingers deep in her sauce;
 130 **Wel koude she carie a morsel and wel kepe**
 She well knew how to carry a morsel (to her mouth) and take good care
 131 **That no drope ne fille upon hire brest.**
 That no drop fell upon her breast.
 132 **In curteisie was set ful muchel hir lest.**
 Her greatest pleasure was in good manners.
 133 **Hir over-lippe wyped she so clene**
 She wiped her upper lip so clean
 134 **That in hir coppe ther was no ferthyng sene**
 That in her cup there was seen no tiny bit
 135 **Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte.**
 Of grease, when she had drunk her drink.
 136 **Ful semely after hir mete she raughte.**
 She reached for her food in a very seemly manner.
 137 **And sikerly she was of greet desport,**
 And surely she was of excellent deportment,
 138 **And ful plesaunt, and amyable of port,**
 And very pleasant, and amiable in demeanor,
 139 **And peyned hire to countrefete cheere**
 And she took pains to imitate the manners
 140 **Of court, and to been estatlich of manere,**
 Of court, and to be dignified in behavior,
 141 **And to ben holden digne of reverence.**
 And to be considered worthy of reverence.
 142 **But for to speken of hire conscience,**

But to speak of her moral sense,
 143 **She was so charitable and so pitous**
 She was so charitable and so compassionate
 144 **She wolde wepe, if that she saugh a mous**
 She would weep, if she saw a mouse
 145 **Kaught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde.**
 Caught in a trap, if it were dead or bled.
 146 **Of smale houndes hadde she that she fedde**
 She had some small hounds that she fed
 147 **With rosted flessch, or milk and wastel-breed.**
 With roasted meat, or milk and fine white bread.
 148 **But soore wepte she if oon of hem were deed,**
 But sorely she wept if one of them were dead,
 149 **Or if men smoot it with a yerde smerte;**
 Or if someone smote it smartly with a stick;
 150 **And al was conscience and tendre herte.**
 And all was feeling and tender heart.
 151 **Ful semyly hir wympul pynched was,**
 Her wimple was pleated in a very seemly manner,
 152 **Hir nose tretys, hir eyen greye as glas,**
 Her nose well formed, her eyes gray as glass,
 153 **Hir mouth ful smal, and therto softe and reed.**
 Her mouth very small, and moreover soft and red.
 154 **But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed;**
 But surely she had a fair forehead;
 155 **It was almoost a spanne brood, I trowe;**
 It was almost nine inches broad, I believe;
 156 **For, hardily, she was nat undergrowe.**
 For, certainly, she was not undergrown.
 157 **Ful fetys was hir cloke, as I was war.**
 Her cloak was very well made, as I was aware.
 158 **Of smal coral aboute hire arm she bar**
 About her arm she bore of small coral
 159 **A peire of bedes, gauded al with grene,**
 A set of beads, adorned with large green beads,
 160 **And theron heng a brooch of gold ful sheene,**
 And thereon hung a brooch of very bright gold,
 161 **On which ther was first write a crowned A,**
 On which there was first written an A with a crown,
 162 **And after Amor vincit omnia.**
 And after "Love conquers all."

 163 **Another NONNE with hire hadde she,**
 She had another NUN with her,
 164 **That was hir chapeleyne, and preestes thre.**
 Who was her secretary, and three priests.

165 **A MONK ther was, a fair for the maistrie,**
 There was a MONK, an extremely fine one,
 166 **An outridere, that lovede venerie,**
 An outrider (a monk with business outside the monastery), who loved hunting,
 167 **A manly man, to been an abbot able.**
 A virile man, qualified to be an abbot.
 168 **Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in stable,**
 He had very many fine horses in his stable,
 169 **And whan he rood, men myghte his brydel heere**
 And when he rode, one could hear his bridle
 170 **Gynglen in a whistlynge wynd als cleere**
 Jingle in a whistling wind as clear
 171 **And eek as loude as dooth the chapel belle**
 And also as loud as does the chapel belle
 172 **Ther as this lord was kepere of the celle.**
 Where this lord was prior of the subordinate monastery.
 173 **The reule of Seint Maure or of Seint Beneit --**
 The rule of Saint Maurus or of Saint Benedict --
 174 **By cause that it was old and somdel streit**
 Because it was old and somewhat strict
 175 **This ilke Monk leet olde thynges pace,**
 This same Monk let old things pass away,
 176 **And heeld after the newe world the space.**
 And followed the broader customs of modern times.
 177 **He yaf nat of that text a pulled hen,**
 He gave not a plucked hen for that text
 178 **That seith that hunters ben nat hooly men,**
 That says that hunters are not holy men,
 179 **Ne that a monk, whan he is recchelees,**
 Nor that a monk, when he is heedless of rules,
 180 **Is likned til a fissh that is waterlees --**
 Is like a fish that is out of water --
 181 **This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloystre.**
 This is to say, a monk out of his cloister.
 182 **But thilke text heeld he nat worth an oystre;**
 But he considered that same text not worth an oyster;
 183 **And I seyde his opinion was good.**
 And I said his opinion was good.
 184 **What sholde he studie and make hymselfen wood,**
 Why should he study and make himself crazy,
 185 **Upon a book in cloystre alwey to poure,**
 Always to pore upon a book in the cloister,
 186 **Or swynken with his handes, and laboure,**
 Or work with his hands, and labor,
 187 **As Austyn bit? How shal the world be served?**
 As Augustine commands? How shall the world be served?
 188 **Lat Austyn have his swynk to hym reserved!**
 Let Augustine have his work reserved to him!
 189 **Therefore he was a prikasour aright:**

Therefore he was indeed a vigorous horseman:
 190 **Grehoundes he hadde as swift as fowel in flight;**
 He had greyhounds as swift as fowl in flight;
 191 **Of prikyng and of huntyng for the hare**
 Of tracking and of hunting for the hare
 192 **Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.**
 Was all his pleasure, by no means would he refrain from it.
 193 **I seigh his sleeves purfiled at the hond**
 I saw his sleeves lined at the hand
 194 **With grys, and that the fyneste of a lond;**
 With squirrel fur, and that the finest in the land;
 195 **And for to festne his hood under his chyn,**
 And to fasten his hood under his chin,
 196 **He hadde of gold ywroght a ful curious pyn;**
 He had a very skillfully made pin of gold;
 197 **A love-knotte in the gretter ende ther was.**
 There was an elaborate knot in the larger end.
 198 **His heed was balled, that shoon as any glas,**
 His head was bald, which shone like any glass,
 199 **And eek his face, as he hadde been enoynt.**
 And his face did too, as if he had been rubbed with oil.
 200 **He was a lord ful fat and in good poynt;**
 He was a very plump lord and in good condition;
 201 **His eyen stepe, and rollynge in his heed,**
 His eyes were prominent, and rolling in his head,
 202 **That stemed as a forneys of a leed;**
 Which gleamed like a furnace under a cauldron;
 203 **His bootes souple, his hors in greet estaat.**
 His boots supple, his horse in excellent condition.
 204 **Now certainly he was a fair prelaat;**
 Now certainly he was a handsome ecclesiastical dignitary;
 205 **He was nat pale as a forpyned goost.**
 He was not pale as a tormented spirit.
 206 **A fat swan loved he best of any roost.**
 A fat swan loved he best of any roast.
 207 **His palfrey was as broun as is a berye.**
 His saddle horse was as brown as is a berry.

208 **A FRERE ther was, a wantowne and a merye,**
 There was a FRIAR, a pleasure-loving and merry one,
 209 **A lymytour, a ful solempne man.**
 A limiter (with an assigned territory), a very solemn man.
 210 **In alle the ordres foure is noon that kan**
 In all the four orders of friars is no one that knows
 211 **So muchel of daliaunce and fair langage.**
 So much of sociability and elegant speech.
 212 **He hadde maad ful many a mariage**
 He had made very many a marriage
 213 **Of yonge wommen at his owene cost.**

Of young women at his own cost.
 214 **Unto his ordre he was a noble post.**
 He was a noble supporter of his order.
 215 **Ful wel biloved and famulier was he**
 Very well beloved and familiar was he
 216 **With frankeleyns over al in his contree,**
 With landowners every where in his country,
 217 **And eek with worthy wommen of the toun;**
 And also with worthy women of the town;
 218 **For he hadde power of confessioun,**
 For he had power of confession,
 219 **As seyde hymself, moore than a curat,**
 As he said himself, more than a parish priest,
 220 **For of his ordre he was licenciat.**
 For he was licensed by his order.
 221 **Ful swetely herde he confessioun,**
 He heard confession very sweetly,
 222 **And plesaunt was his absolucioun:**
 And his absolution was pleasant:
 223 **He was an esy man to yeve penaunce,**
 He was a lenient man in giving penance,
 224 **Ther as he wiste to have a good pitaunce.**
 Where he knew he would have a good gift.
 225 **For unto a povre ordre for to yive**
 For to give to a poor order (of friars)
 226 **Is signe that a man is wel yshryve;**
 Is a sign that a man is well confessed;
 227 **For if he yaf, he dorste make avaunt,**
 For if he gave, he (the friar) dared to assert,
 228 **He wiste that a man was repentaunt;**
 He knew that a man was repentant;
 229 **For many a man so hard is of his herte,**
 For many a man is so hard in his heart,
 230 **He may nat wepe, althogh hym soore smerte.**
 He can not weep, although he painfully suffers.
 231 **Therefore in stede of wepynge and preyerres**
 Therefore instead of weeping and prayers
 232 **Men moote yeve silver to the povre freres.**
 One may give silver to the poor friars.
 233 **His typet was ay farsed ful of knyves**
 His hood was always stuffed full of knives
 234 **And pynnes, for to yeven faire wyves.**
 And pins, to give to fair wives.
 235 **And certainly he hadde a murye note:**
 And certainly he had a merry voice:
 236 **Wel koude he synge and pleyen on a rote;**
 He well knew how to sing and play on a rote (string instrument);
 237 **Of yeddynges he baar outrely the pris.**
 He absolutely took the prize for reciting ballads.

238 **His nekke whit was as the flour-de-lys;**
 His neck was white as a lily flower;
 239 **Therto he strong was as a champioun.**
 Furthermore he was strong as a champion fighter.
 240 **He knew the tavernes wel in every toun**
 He knew the taverns well in every town
 241 **And everich hostiler and tappestere**
 And every innkeeper and barmaid
 242 **Bet than a lazar or a beggestere,**
 Better than a leper or a beggar-woman,
 243 **For unto swich a worthy man as he**
 For unto such a worthy man as he
 244 **Acorded nat, as by his facultee,**
 It was not suitable, in view of his official position,
 245 **To have with sike lazars aqueyntaunce.**
 To have acquaintance with sick lepers.
 246 **It is nat honest; it may nat avaunce,**
 It is not respectable; it can not be profitable,
 247 **For to deelen with no swich poraille,**
 To deal with any such poor people,
 248 **But al with riche and selleres of vitaille.**
 But all with rich people and sellers of victuals.
 249 **And over al, ther as profit sholde arise,**
 And every where, where profit should arise,
 250 **Curteis he was and lowely of servyse;**
 He was courteous and graciously humble;
 251 **Ther nas no man nowher so vertuous.**
 There was no man anywhere so capable (of such work).
 252 **He was the beste beggere in his hous;**
 He was the best beggar in his house;
 252a **[And yaf a certeyn ferme for the graunt;**
 [And he gave a certain fee for his grant (of begging rights);
 252a **Noon of his bretheren cam ther in his haunt;]**
 None of his brethren came there in his territory;]
 253 **For thogh a wydwe hadde noght a sho,**
 For though a widow had not a shoe,
 254 **So plesaunt was his "In principio,"**
 So pleasant was his "In the beginning,"
 255 **Yet wolde he have a ferthyng, er he wente.**
 Yet he would have a farthing, before he went away.
 256 **His purchas was wel better than his rente.**
 His total profit was much more than his proper income.
 257 **And rage he koude, as it were right a whelp.**
 And he knew how to frolic, as if he were indeed a pup.
 258 **In love-dayes ther koude he muchel help,**
 He knew how to be much help on days for resolving disputes,
 259 **For ther he was nat lyk a cloysterer**
 For there he was not like a cloistered monk
 260 **With a thredbare cope, as is a povre scoler,**

With a threadbare cope, like a poor scholar,
 261 **But he was lyk a maister or a pope.**
 But he was like a master of arts or a pope.
 262 **Of double worstede was his semycope,**
 Of wide (expensive) cloth was his short cloak,
 263 **That rounded as a belle out of the presse.**
 Which was round as a bell fresh from the clothespress.
 264 **Somwhat he lipped, for his wantownesse,**
 Somewhat he lisped, for his affectation,
 265 **To make his Englissh sweete upon his tonge;**
 To make his English sweet upon his tongue;
 266 **And in his harpyng, whan that he hadde songe,**
 And in his harping, when he had sung,
 267 **His eyen twynkled in his heed aryght**
 His eyes twinkled in his head exactly
 268 **As doon the sterres in the frosty nyght.**
 As do the stars in the frosty night.
 269 **This worthy lymytour was cleped Huberd.**
 This worthy friar was called Huberd.

270 **A MERCHANT was ther with a forked berd,**
 There was a MERCHANT with a forked beard,
 271 **In mottelee, and hye on horse he sat;**
 Wearing parti-colored cloth, and proudly he sat on his horse;
 272 **Upon his heed a Flaundryssh bever hat,**
 Upon his head (he wore a) Flemish beaver hat,
 273 **His bootes clasped faire and fetisly.**
 His boots were buckled handsomely and elegantly.
 274 **His resons he spak ful solempnely,**
 His opinions he spoke very solemnly,
 275 **Sownynge alwey th' encrees of his wynnyng.**
 Concerning always the increase of his profits.
 276 **He wolde the see were kept for any thyng**
 He wanted the sea to be guarded at all costs
 277 **Bitwixe Middelburgh and Orewelle.**
 Between Middelburgh (Holland) and Orwell (England).
 278 **Wel koude he in eschaunge sheeldes selle.**
 He well knew how to deal in foreign currencies.
 279 **This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette:**
 This worthy man employed his wit very well:
 280 **Ther wiste no wight that he was in dette,**
 There was no one who knew that he was in debt,
 281 **So estatly was he of his governaunce**
 He was so dignified in managing his affairs
 282 **With his bargaynes and with his chevyssaunce.**
 With his buying and selling and with his financial deals.
 283 **For sothe he was a worthy man with alle,**
 Truly, he was a worthy man indeed,

284 **But, sooth to seyn, I noot how men hym calle.**
 But, to say the truth, I do not know what men call him.

285 **A CLERK ther was of Oxenford also,**
 There was also a CLERK (scholar) from Oxford,

286 **That unto logyk hadde longe ygo.**
 Who long before had begun the study of logic.

287 **As leene was his hors as is a rake,**
 His horse was as lean as is a rake,

288 **And he nas nat right fat, I undertake,**
 And he was not very fat, I affirm,

289 **But looked holwe, and therto sobrelly.**
 But looked emaciated, and moreover abstemious.

290 **Ful thredbare was his overeste courtepy,**
 His short overcoat was very threadbare,

291 **For he hadde geten hym yet no benefice,**
 For he had not yet obtained an ecclesiastical living,

292 **Ne was so worldly for to have office.**
 Nor was he worldly enough to take secular employment.

293 **For hym was levere have at his beddes heed**
 For he would rather have at the head of his bed

294 **Twenty bookes, clad in blak or reed,**
 Twenty books, bound in black or red,

295 **Of Aristotle and his philosophie**
 Of Aristotle and his philosophy

296 **Than robes riche, or fithele, or gay sautrie.**
 Than rich robes, or a fiddle, or an elegant psaltery.

297 **But al be that he was a philosophre,**
 But even though he was a philosopher,

298 **Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre;**
 Nevertheless he had but little gold in his strongbox;

299 **But al that he myghte of his freendes hente,**
 But all that he could get from his friends,

300 **On bookes and on lernynge he it spente,**
 He spent on books and on learning,

301 **And bisily gan for the soules preye**
 And diligently did pray for the souls

302 **Of hem that yaf hym wherwith to scoleye.**
 Of those who gave him the wherewithal to attend the schools.

303 **Of studie took he moost cure and moost heede.**
 He took most care and paid most heed to study.

304 **Noght o word spak he moore than was neede,**
 He spoke not one word more than was needed,

305 **And that was seyde in forme and reverence,**
 And that was said with due formality and respect,

306 **And short and quyke and ful of hy sentence;**
 And short and lively and full of elevated content;

307 **Sownynge in moral vertu was his speche,**
 His speech was consonant with moral virtue,

308 **And gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche.**
 And gladly would he learn and gladly teach.

309 **A SERGEANT OF THE LAWE, war and wys,**
 A SERGEANT OF THE LAW (high-ranking attorney), prudent and wise,

310 **That often hadde been at the Parvys,**
 Who often had been at the Porch of St. Paul's (where lawyers gather)

311 **Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.**
 Was also there, very rich in superior qualities.

312 **Discreet he was and of greet reverence --**
 He was judicious and of great dignity --

313 **He semed swich, his wordes weren so wise.**
 He seemed such, his words were so wise.

314 **Justice he was ful often in assise,**
 He was very often a judge in the court of assizes,

315 **By patente and by pleyn commissioun.**
 By royal appointment and with full jurisdiction.

316 **For his science and for his heigh renoun,**
 For his knowledge and for his excellent reputation,

317 **Of fees and robes hadde he many oon.**
 He had many grants of yearly income.

318 **So greet a purchasour was nowher noon:**
 There was nowhere so great a land-buyer:

319 **Al was fee symple to hym in effect;**
 In fact, all was unrestricted possession to him;

320 **His purchasyng myghte nat been infect.**
 His purchasing could not be invalidated.

321 **Nowher so bisy a man as he ther nas,**
 There was nowhere so busy a man as he,

322 **And yet he semed bisier than he was.**
 And yet he seemed busier than he was.

323 **In termes hadde he caas and doomes alle**
 He had in Year Books all the cases and decisions

324 **That from the tyme of kyng William were falle.**
 That from the time of king William have occurred.

325 **Therto he koude endite and make a thyng,**
 Furthermore, he knew how to compose and draw up a legal document,

326 **Ther koude no wight pynche at his writyng;**
 So that no one could find a flaw in his writing;

327 **And every statut koude he pleyn by rote.**
 And he knew every statute completely by heart.

328 **He rood but hoonly in a medlee cote,**
 He rode but simply in a parti-colored coat,

329 **Girt with a ceint of silk, with barres smale;**
 Girded with a belt of silk, with small stripes;

330 **Of his array telle I no lenger tale.**
 I tell no longer tale of his clothing.

331 **A FRANKLEYN was in his compaignye.**
 A FRANKLIN was in his company.
 332 **Whit was his berd as is the dayesye;**
 His beard was white as a daisy;
 333 **Of his complexioun he was sangwyn.**
 As to his temperament, he was dominated by the humor blood.
 334 **Wel loved he by the morwe a sop in wyn;**
 He well loved a bit of bread dipped in wine in the morning;
 335 **To lyven in delit was evere his wone,**
 His custom was always to live in delight,
 336 **For he was Epicurus owene sone,**
 For he was Epicurus' own son,
 337 **That heeld opinioun that pleyn delit**
 Who held the opinion that pure pleasure
 338 **Was verray felicitee parfit.**
 Was truly perfect happiness.
 339 **An housholdere, and that a greet, was he;**
 He was a householder, and a great one at that;
 340 **Seint Julian he was in his contree.**
 He was Saint Julian (patron of hospitality) in his country.
 341 **His breed, his ale, was always after oon;**
 His bread, his ale, was always of the same (good) quality;
 342 **A better envyned man was nowher noon.**
 Nowhere was there any man better stocked with wine.
 343 **Withoute bake mete was nevere his hous,**
 His house was never without baked pies
 344 **Of fissh and flessch, and that so plenteuous**
 Of fish and meat, and that so plentiful
 345 **It snewed in his hous of mete and drynke;**
 That in his house it snowed with food and drink;
 346 **Of alle deyntees that men koude thynke,**
 Of all the dainties that men could imagine,
 347 **After the sondry sesons of the yeer,**
 In accord with the various seasons of the year,
 348 **So chaunged he his mete and his soper.**
 So he varied his midday meal and his supper.
 349 **Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in muwe,**
 He had very many fat partridges in pens,
 350 **And many a breem and many a luce in stuwe.**
 And many a bream and many a pike in his fish pond.
 351 **Wo was his cook but if his sauce were**
 Woe was his cook unless his sauce was
 352 **Poynaunt and sharp, and redy al his geere.**
 Hotly spiced and sharp, and ready all his cooking equipment.
 353 **His table dormant in his halle alway**
 In his hall his dining table always
 354 **Stood redy covered al the longe day.**
 Stood covered (with table cloth) and ready all the long day.
 355 **At sessiouns ther was he lord and sire;**

He presided as lord and sire at court sessions;
 356 **Ful ofte tyme he was knyght of the shire.**
 He was a member of parliament many times.
 357 **An anlaas and a gipser al of silk**
 A dagger and a purse all of silk
 358 **Heeng at his girdel, whit as morne milk.**
 Hung at his belt, white as morning milk.
 359 **A shirreve hadde he been, and a contour.**
 He had been a sheriff, and an auditor of taxes.
 360 **Was nowher swich a worthy vavasour.**
 There was nowhere such a worthy landowner.

361 **AN HABERDASSHERE and a CARPENTER,**
 A HABERDASHER and a CARPENTER,
 362 **A WEBBE, a DYERE, and a TAPYCER --**
 A WEAVER, a DYER, and a TAPESTRY-MAKER --
 363 **And they were clothed alle in o lyveree**
 And they were all clothed in one livery
 364 **Of a solempne and a greet fraternitee.**
 Of a solemn and a great parish guild.
 365 **Ful fressh and newe hir geere apiked was;**
 Their equipment was adorned all freshly and new;
 366 **Hir knyves were chaped noght with bras**
 Their knives were not mounted with brass
 367 **But al with silver, wroght ful clene and weel,**
 But entirely with silver, wrought very neatly and well,
 368 **Hire girdles and hir pouches everydeel.**
 Their belts and their purses every bit.
 369 **Wel semed ech of hem a fair burgeys**
 Each of them well seemed a solid citizen
 370 **To sitten in a yeldehalle on a deys.**
 To sit on a dais in a city hall.
 371 **Everich, for the wisdom that he kan,**
 Every one of them, for the wisdom that he knows,
 372 **Was shaply for to been an alderman.**
 Was suitable to be an alderman.
 373 **For catel hadde they ynogh and rente,**
 For they had enough possessions and income,
 374 **And eek hir wyves wolde it wel assente;**
 And also their wives would well assent to it;
 375 **And elles certeyn were they to blame.**
 And otherwise certainly they would be to blame.
 376 **It is ful fair to been ycleped "madame,"**
 It is very fine to be called "my lady,"
 377 **And goon to vigilies al bfore,**
 And go to feasts on holiday eves heading the procession,
 378 **And have a mantel roialliche ybore.**
 And have a gown with a train royally carried.

379 **A COOK they hadde with hem for the nones**
 A COOK they had with them for the occasion
 380 **To boille the chiknes with the marybones,**
 To boil the chickens with the marrow bones,
 381 **And poudre-marchant tart and galyngale.**
 And tart poudre-marchant and galingale (spices).
 382 **Wel koude he knowe a draughte of Londoun ale.**
 He well knew how to judge a draft of London ale.
 383 **He koude rooste, and sethe, and broille, and frye,**
 He knew how to roast, and boil, and broil, and fry,
 384 **Maken mortreux, and wel bake a pye.**
 Make stews, and well bake a pie.
 385 **But greet harm was it, as it thoughte me,**
 But it was a great harm, as it seemed to me,
 386 **That on his shyne a mormal hadde he.**
 That he had an open sore on his shin.
 387 **For blankmanger, that made he with the beste.**
 As for white pudding, he made that of the best quality.

388 **A SHIPMAN was ther, wonynge fer by weste;**
 A SHIPMAN was there, dwelling far in the west;
 389 **For aught I woot, he was of Dertemouthe.**
 For all I know, he was from Dartmouth.
 390 **He rood upon a rouncy, as he kouthe,**
 He rode upon a cart horse, insofar as he knew how,
 391 **In a gowne of faldyng to the knee.**
 In a gown of woolen cloth (that reached) to the knee.
 392 **A daggere hangynge on a laas hadde he**
 He had a dagger hanging on a cord
 393 **Aboute his nekke, under his arm adoun.**
 About his neck, down under his arm.
 394 **The hoote somer hadde maad his hewe al broun;**
 The hot summer had made his hue all brown;
 395 **And certainly he was a good felawe.**
 And certainly he was a boon companion.
 396 **Ful many a draughte of wyn had he ydrawe**
 He had drawn very many a draft of wine
 397 **Fro Burdeux-ward, whil that the chapman sleep.**
 While coming from Bordeaux, while the merchant slept.
 398 **Of nyce conscience took he no keep.**
 He had no concern for a scrupulous conscience.
 399 **If that he faught and hadde the hyer hond,**
 If he fought and had the upper hand,
 400 **By water he sente hem hoom to every lond.**
 He sent them home by water to every land (they walked the plank).
 401 **But of his craft to rekene wel his tydes,**
 But of his skill to reckon well his tides,
 402 **His stremes, and his daungers hym bisides,**
 His currents, and his perils near at hand,

403 **His herberwe, and his moone, his lodemenage,**
 His harbors, and positions of his moon, his navigation,
 404 **Ther nas noon swich from Hulle to Cartage.**
 There was none other such from Hull to Cartagena (Spain).
 405 **Hardy he was and wys to undertake;**
 He was bold and prudent in his undertakings;
 406 **With many a tempest hadde his berd been shake.**
 His beard had been shaken by many a tempest.
 407 **He knew alle the havenes, as they were,**
 He knew all the harbors, how they were,
 408 **Fro Gootlond to the cape of Fynystere,**
 From Gotland to the Cape of Finisterre,
 409 **And every cryke in Britaigne and in Spayne.**
 And every inlet in Brittany and in Spain.
 410 **His barge ycleped was the Maudelayne.**
 His ship was called the Maudelayne.

411 **With us ther was a DOCTOUR OF PHISIK;**
 With us there was a DOCTOR OF MEDICINE
 412 **In al this world ne was ther noon hym lik,**
 In all this world there was no one like him,
 413 **To speke of phisik and of surgerye,**
 To speak of medicine and of surgery,
 414 **For he was grounded in astronomye.**
 For he was instructed in astronomy.
 415 **He kepte his pacient a ful greet deel**
 He took care of his patient very many times
 416 **In houres by his magyk natureel.**
 In (astronomically suitable) hours by (use of) his natural science.
 417 **Wel koude he fortunen the ascendent**
 He well knew how to calculate the planetary position
 418 **Of his ymages for his pacient.**
 Of his astronomical talismans for his patient.
 419 **He knew the cause of everich maladye,**
 He knew the cause of every malady,
 420 **Were it of hoot, or coold, or moyste, or drye,**
 Were it of hot, or cold, or moist, or dry elements,
 421 **And where they engendred, and of what humour.**
 And where they were engendered, and by what bodily fluid.
 422 **He was a verray, parfit praktisour:**
 He was a truly, perfect practitioner:
 423 **The cause yknowe, and of his harm the roote,**
 The cause known, and the source of his (patient's) harm,
 424 **Anon he yaf the sike man his boote.**
 Straightway he gave the sick man his remedy.
 425 **Ful redy hadde he his apothecaries**
 He had his apothecaries all ready
 426 **To sende hym drogges and his letuaries,**
 To send him drugs and his electuaries,

427 **For ech of hem made oother for to wynne --**
 For each of them made the other to profit --
 428 **Hir frendshipe nas nat newe to bigynne.**
 Their friendship was not recently begun.
 429 **Wel knew he the olde Esculapius,**
 He well knew the old Aesculapius,
 430 **And Deyscorides, and eek Rufus,**
 And Dioscorides, and also Rufus,
 431 **Olde Ypocras, Haly, and Galyen,**
 Old Hippocrates, Haly, and Galen,
 432 **Serapion, Razis, and Avycen,**
 Serapion, Rhazes, and Avicenna,
 433 **Averrois, Damascien, and Constantyn,**
 Averroes, John the Damascan, and Constantine,
 434 **Bernard, and Gatesden, and Gilbertyn.**
 Bernard, and Gaddesden, and Gilbertus.
 435 **Of his diete mesurable was he,**
 He was moderate in his diet,
 436 **For it was of no superfluitee,**
 For it was of no excess,
 437 **But of greet norissyng and digestible.**
 But greatly nourishing and digestible.
 438 **His studie was but litel on the Bible.**
 His study was but little on the Bible.
 439 **In sangwyn and in pers he clad was al,**
 He was clad all in red and in blue,
 440 **Lyned with taffata and with sendal.**
 Lined with taffeta and with silk.
 441 **And yet he was but esy of dispençe;**
 And yet he was moderate in spending;
 442 **He kepte that he wan in pestilence.**
 He kept what he earned in (times of) plague.
 443 **For gold in phisik is a cordial,**
 Since in medicine gold is a restorative for the heart,
 444 **Therefore he lovede gold in special.**
 Therefore he loved gold in particular.

Do you want to check your understanding of the text? If so take a [brief quiz](#).

445 **A good WIF was ther OF biside BATHE,**
 There was a good WIFE OF beside BATH,
 446 **But she was somdel deaf, and that was scathe.**
 But she was somewhat deaf, and that was a pity.
 447 **Of clooth-makyng she hadde swich an haunt**
 She had such a skill in cloth-making
 448 **She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt.**
 She surpassed them of Ypres and of Ghent.

449 **In al the parisshe wif ne was ther noon**
 In all the parish there was no wife
 450 **That to the offrynge bfore hire sholde goon;**
 Who should go to the Offering before her;
 451 **And if ther dide, certeyn so wrooth was she**
 And if there did, certainly she was so angry
 452 **That she was out of alle charitee.**
 That she was out of all charity (love for her neighbor).
 453 **Hir coverchiefs ful fyne weren of ground;**
 Her kerchiefs were very fine in texture;
 454 **I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound**
 I dare swear they weighed ten pound
 455 **That on a Sondag weren upon hir heed.**
 That on a Sunday were upon her head.
 456 **Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed,**
 Her stockings were of fine scarlet red,
 457 **Ful streite yteyd, and shoes ful moyste and newe.**
 Very closely laced, and shoes very supple and new.
 458 **Boold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe.**
 Bold was her face, and fair, and red of hue.
 459 **She was a worthy womman al hir lyve:**
 She was a worthy woman all her life:
 460 **Housbondes at chirche dore she hadde fyve,**
 She had (married) five husbands at the church door,
 461 **Withouten oother compaignye in youthe --**
 Not counting other company in youth --
 462 **But thereof nedeth nat to speke as nowthe.**
 But there is no need to speak of that right now.
 463 **And thries hadde she been at Jerusalem;**
 And she had been three times at Jerusalem;
 464 **She hadde passed many a straunge strem;**
 She had passed many a foreign sea;
 465 **At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne,**
 She had been at Rome, and at Boulogne,
 466 **In Galice at Seint-Jame, and at Coloigne.**
 In Galicia at Saint-James (of Compostella), and at Cologne.
 467 **She koude muchel of wandrynge by the weye.**
 She knew much about wandering by the way.
 468 **Gat-tothed was she, soothly for to seye.**
 She had teeth widely set apart, truly to say.
 469 **Upon an amblere esily she sat,**
 She sat easily upon a pacing horse,
 470 **Ywympled wel, and on hir heed an hat**
 Wearing a large wimple, and on her head a hat
 471 **As brood as is a bokeler or a targe;**
 As broad as a buckler or a shield;
 472 **A foot-mantel aboute hir hipes large,**
 An overskirt about her large hips,
 473 **And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe.**

And on her feet a pair of sharp spurs.
 474 **In felaweshipe wel koude she laughe and carpe.**
 In fellowship she well knew how to laugh and chatter.
 475 **Of remedies of love she knew per chaunce,**
 She knew, as it happened, about remedies for love
 476 **For she koude of that art the olde daunce.**
 For she knew the old dance (tricks of the trade) of that art.

477 **A good man was ther of religioun,**
 A good man was there of religion,
 478 **And was a povre PERSON OF A TOWN,**
 And (he) was a poor PARSON OF A TOWN,
 479 **But riche he was of hooly thought and werk.**
 But he was rich in holy thought and work.
 480 **He was also a lerned man, a clerk,**
 He was also a learned man, a scholar,
 481 **That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche;**
 Who would preach Christ's gospel truly;
 482 **His parisshe devoutly wolde he teche.**
 He would devoutly teach his parishioners.
 483 **Benygne he was, and wonder diligent,**
 He was gracious, and wonderfully diligent,
 484 **And in adversitee ful pacient,**
 And very patient in adversity,
 485 **And swich he was ypreved ofte sithes.**
 And such he was proven many times.
 486 **Ful looth were hym to cursen for his tithes,**
 He was very reluctant to excommunicate for (nonpayment of) his tithes,
 487 **But rather wolde he yeven, out of doute,**
 But rather would he give, there is no doubt,
 488 **Unto his povre parisshe aboute**
 Unto his poor parishioners about
 489 **Of his offryng and eek of his substaunce.**
 Some of his offering (received at mass) and also some of his income.
 490 **He koude in litel thyng have suffisaunce.**
 He knew how to have sufficiency in few possessions.
 491 **Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer asonder,**
 His parish was wide, and houses far apart,
 492 **But he ne lefte nat, for reyn ne thonder,**
 But he did not omit, for rain nor thunder,
 493 **In siknesse nor in meschief to visite**
 In sickness or in trouble to visit
 494 **The ferreste in his parisshe, muche and lite,**
 Those living farthest away in his parish, high-ranking and low,
 495 **Upon his feet, and in his hand a staf.**
 Going by foot, and in his hand a staff.
 496 **This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf,**
 He gave this noble example to his sheep,
 497 **That first he wroghte, and afterward he taughte.**

That first he wrought, and afterward he taught.
 498 **Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte,**
 He took those words out of the gospel,
 499 **And this figure he added eek therto,**
 And this metaphor he added also to that,
 500 **That if gold ruste, what shal iren do?**
 That if gold rust, what must iron do?
 501 **For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,**
 For if a priest, on whom we trust, should be foul
 502 **No wonder is a lewed man to ruste;**
 It is no wonder for a layman to go bad;
 503 **And shame it is, if a prest take keep,**
 And it is a shame, if a priest is concerned:
 504 **A shiten shepherde and a clene sheep.**
 A shit-stained shepherd and a clean sheep.
 505 **Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive,**
 Well ought a priest to give an example,
 506 **By his clenness, how that his sheep sholde lyve.**
 By his purity, how his sheep should live.
 507 **He sette nat his benefice to hyre**
 He did not rent out his benefice (ecclesiastical living)
 508 **And leet his sheep encombred in the myre**
 And leave his sheep encumbered in the mire
 509 **And ran to Londoun unto Seinte Poules**
 And run to London unto Saint Paul's
 510 **To seken hym a chaunterie for soules,**
 To seek an appointment as a chantry priest (praying for a patron)
 511 **Or with a bretherhed to been withholde;**
 Or to be hired (as a chaplain) by a guild;
 512 **But dwelte at hoom, and kepte wel his folde,**
 But dwelt at home, and kept well his sheep fold (parish),
 513 **So that the wolf ne made it nat myscarie;**
 So that the wolf did not make it go wrong;
 514 **He was a shepherde and noght a mercenarie.**
 He was a shepherd and not a hireling.
 515 **And though he hooly were and vertuouse,**
 And though he was holy and virtuous,
 516 **He was to synful men nat despitous,**
 He was not scornful to sinful men,
 517 **Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne,**
 Nor domineering nor haughty in his speech,
 518 **But in his techyng discreet and benygne.**
 But in his teaching courteous and kind.
 519 **To drawen folk to hevene by fairnesse,**
 To draw folk to heaven by gentleness,
 520 **By good ensample, this was his bisynesse.**
 By good example, this was his business.
 521 **But it were any persone obstinat,**
 Unless it were an obstinate person,

522 **What so he were, of heigh or lough estat,**
 Whoever he was, of high or low rank,
 523 **Hym wolde he snybben sharply for the nonys.**
 He would rebuke him sharply at that time.
 524 **A bettre preest I trowe that nowher noon ys.**
 I believe that nowhere is there a better priest.
 525 **He waited after no pompe and reverence,**
 He expected no pomp and ceremony,
 526 **Ne maked him a spiced conscience,**
 Nor made himself an overly fastidious conscience,
 527 **But Cristes loore and his apostles twelve**
 But Christ's teaching and His twelve apostles
 528 **He taughte; but first he folwed it hymselfe.**
 He taught; but first he followed it himself.

529 **With hym ther was a PLOWMAN, was his brother,**
 With him there was a PLOWMAN, who was his brother,
 530 **That hadde ylad of dong ful many a fother;**
 Who had hauled very many a cartload of dung;
 531 **A trewe swynkere and a good was he,**
 He was a true and good worker,
 532 **Lyvyng in pees and parfit charitee.**
 Living in peace and perfect love.
 533 **God loved he best with al his hoole herte**
 He loved God best with all his whole heart
 534 **At alle tymes, thogh him gamed or smerte,**
 At all times, whether it pleased or pained him,
 535 **And thanne his neighebor right as hymselfe.**
 And then (he loved) his neighbor exactly as himself.
 536 **He wolde thresshe, and therto dyke and delve,**
 He would thresh, and moreover make ditches and dig,
 537 **For Cristes sake, for every povre wight,**
 For Christ's sake, for every poor person,
 538 **Withouten hire, if it lay in his myght.**
 Without payment, if it lay in his power.
 539 **His tithes payde he ful faire and wel,**
 He paid his tithes completely and well,
 540 **Bothe of his propre swynk and his catel.**
 Both of his own labor and of his possessions.
 541 **In a tabard he rood upon a mere.**
 He rode in a tabard (sleeveless jacket) upon a mare.

542 **Ther was also a REVE, and a MILLERE,**
 There was also a REEVE, and a MILLER,
 543 **A SOMNOUR, and a PARDONER also,**
 A SUMMONER, and a PARDONER also,
 544 **A MAUNCIPLE, and myself -- ther were namo.**
 A MANCIPLE, and myself -- there were no more.

545 **The MILLERE was a stout carl for the nones;**
 The MILLER was a stout fellow indeed;
 546 **Ful byg he was of brawn, and eek of bones.**
 He was very strong of muscle, and also of bones.
 547 **That proved wel, for over al ther he cam,**
 That was well proven, for wherever he came,
 548 **At wrastlyng he wolde have alwey the ram.**
 At wrestling he would always take the the prize.
 549 **He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre;**
 He was stoutly built, broad, a large-framed fellow;
 550 **Ther was no dore that he nolde heve of harre,**
 There was no door that he would not heave off its hinges,
 551 **Or breke it at a rennyng with his heed.**
 Or break it by running at it with his head.
 552 **His berd as any sowe or fox was reed,**
 His beard was red as any sow or fox,
 553 **And therto brood, as though it were a spade.**
 And moreover broad, as though it were a spade.
 554 **Upon the cop right of his nose he hade**
 Upon the exact top of his nose he had
 555 **A werte, and theron stood a toft of herys,**
 A wart, and thereon stood a tuft of hairs,
 556 **Reed as the brustles of a sowes erys;**
 Red as the bristles of a sow's ears;
 557 **His nosethirles blake were and wyde.**
 His nostrils were black and wide.
 558 **A swerd and a bokeler bar he by his syde.**
 He wore a sword and a buckler by his side.
 559 **His mouth as greet was as a greet forneys.**
 His mouth was as large as a large furnace.
 560 **He was a janglere and a goliardeys,**
 He was a loudmouth and a buffoon,
 561 **And that was moost of synne and harlotries.**
 And that was mostly of sin and deeds of harlotry.
 562 **Wel koude he stelen corn and tollen thries;**
 He well knew how to steal corn and take payment three times;
 563 **And yet he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee.**
 And yet he had a thumb of gold, indeed.
 564 **A whit cote and a blew hood wered he.**
 He wore a white coat and a blue hood.
 565 **A baggepipe wel koude he blowe and sowne,**
 He well knew how to blow and play a bag-pipe,
 566 **And therwithal he broghte us out of towne.**
 And with that he brought us out of town.

 567 **A gentil MAUNCIPLE was ther of a temple,**
 There was a fine MANCIPLE of a temple (law school),
 568 **Of which achatours myghte take exemple**
 Of whom buyers of provisions might take example

569 **For to be wise in byynge of vitaille;**
 For how to be wise in buying of victuals;
 570 **For wheither that he payde or took by taille,**
 For whether he paid (cash) or took (goods) on credit,
 571 **Algate he wayted so in his achaat**
 Always he watched so (carefully for his opportunity) in his purchases
 572 **That he was ay biforn and in good staat.**
 That he was always ahead and in good state.
 573 **Now is nat that of God a ful fair grace**
 Now is not that a very fair grace of God
 574 **That swich a lewed mannes wit shal pace**
 That such an unlearned man's wit shall surpass
 575 **The wisdom of an heep of lerned men?**
 The wisdom of a heap of learned men?
 576 **Of maistres hadde he mo than thries ten,**
 He had more than three times ten masters,
 577 **That weren of lawe expert and curious,**
 Who were expert and skillful in law,
 578 **Of which ther were a duszeyne in that hous**
 Of whom there were a dozen in that house
 579 **Worthy to been stywardes of rente and lond**
 Worthy to be stewards of rent and land
 580 **Of any lord that is in Engeland,**
 Of any lord that is in England,
 581 **To make hym lyve by his propre good**
 To make him live by his own wealth
 582 **In honour dettelees (but if he were wood),**
 In honor and debtless (unless he were crazy),
 583 **Or lyve as scarsly as hym list desire;**
 Or live as economically as it pleased him to desire;
 584 **And able for to helpen al a shire**
 And (they would be) able to help all a shire
 585 **In any caas that myghte falle or happe.**
 In any emergency that might occur or happen.
 586 **And yet this Manciple sette hir aller cappe.**
 And yet this Manciple fooled them all.

587 **The REVE was a sclendre colerik man.**
 The REEVE was a slender choleric man.
 588 **His berd was shave as ny as ever he kan;**
 His beard was shaved as close as ever he can;
 589 **His heer was by his erylful round yshorn;**
 His hair was closely cropped by his ears;
 590 **His top was dokked lyk a preest biforn.**
 The top of his head in front was cut short like a priest's.
 591 **Ful longe were his legges and ful lene,**
 His legs were very long and very lean,
 592 **Ylyk a staf; ther was no calf ysene.**
 Like a stick; there was no calf to be seen.

593 **Wel koude he kepe a gerner and a bynne;**
 He well knew how to keep a granary and a storage bin;
 594 **Ther was noon auditour koude on him wynne.**
 There was no auditor who could earn anything (by catching him).
 595 **Wel wiste he by the droghte and by the reyn**
 He well knew by the drought and by the rain
 596 **The yeldyng of his seed and of his greyn.**
 (What would be) the yield of his seed and of his grain.
 597 **His lordes sheep, his neet, his dayerye,**
 His lord's sheep, his cattle, his herd of dairy cows,
 598 **His swyn, his hors, his stoor, and his pultrye**
 His swine, his horses, his livestock, and his poultry
 599 **Was hoolly in this Reves governynge,**
 Was wholly in this Reeve's control,
 600 **And by his covenant yaf the rekenynge,**
 And in accord with his contract he gave the reckoning,
 601 **Syn that his lord was twenty yeer of age.**
 Since his lord was twenty years of age.
 602 **Ther koude no man brynge hym in arrerage.**
 There was no man who could find him in arrears.
 603 **Ther nas baillif, ne hierde, nor oother hyne,**
 There was no farm manager, nor herdsman, nor other servant,
 604 **That he ne knew his sleighte and his covyne;**
 Whose trickery and treachery he did not know;
 605 **They were adrad of hym as of the deeth.**
 They were afraid of him as of the plague.
 606 **His wonyng was ful faire upon an heeth;**
 His dwelling was very nicely situated upon an heath;
 607 **With grene trees yshadwed was his place.**
 His place was shaded by green trees.
 608 **He koude better than his lord purchace.**
 He could buy property better than his lord could.
 609 **Ful riche he was astored pryvely.**
 He was secretly very richly provided.
 610 **His lord wel koude he plesen subtilly,**
 He well knew how to please his lord subtly,
 611 **To yeve and lene hym of his owene good,**
 By giving and lending him some of his lord's own possessions,
 612 **And have a thank, and yet a cote and hood.**
 And have thanks, and also a coat and hood (as a reward).
 613 **In youthe he hadde lerned a good myster:**
 In youth he had learned a good craft:
 614 **He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter.**
 He was a very good craftsman, a carpenter.
 615 **This Reve sat upon a ful good stot**
 This Reeve sat upon a very good horse
 616 **That was al pomely grey and highte Scot.**
 That was all dapple gray and was called Scot.
 617 **A long surcote of pers upon he hade,**

He had on a long outer coat of dark blue,
 618 **And by his syde he baar a rusty blade.**
 And by his side he wore a rusty sword.
 619 **Of Northfolk was this Reve of which I telle,**
 Of Northfolk was this Reeve of whom I tell,
 620 **Biside a toun men clepen Baldeswelle.**
 Near to a town men call Bawdeswelle.
 621 **Tukked he was as is a frere aboute,**
 He had his coat hitched up and belted, like a friar,
 622 **And evere he rood the hyndreste of oure route.**
 And ever he rode as the last of our company.

623 **A SOMONOUR was ther with us in that place,**
 There was a SUMMONER with us in that place,
 624 **That hadde a fyr-reed cherubynnes face,**
 Who had a fire-red cherubim's face,
 625 **For saucefleem he was, with eyen narwe.**
 For it was pimpled and discolored, with swollen eyelids.
 626 **As hoot he was and lecherous as a sparwe,**
 He was as hot and lecherous as a sparrow,
 627 **With scalled browes blake and piled berd.**
 With black, scabby brows and a beard with hair fallen out.
 628 **Of his visage children were aferd.**
 Children were afraid of his face.
 629 **Ther nas quyk-silver, lytarge, ne brymstoon,**
 There was no mercury, lead monoxide, nor sulphur,
 630 **Boras, ceruce, ne oille of tartre noon,**
 Borax, white lead, nor any oil of tarter,
 631 **Ne oynement that wolde clense and byte,**
 Nor ointment that would cleanse and burn,
 632 **That hym myghte helpen of his whelkes white,**
 That could cure him of his white pustules,
 633 **Nor of the knobbes sittynge on his chekes.**
 Nor of the knobs sitting on his cheeks.
 634 **Wel loved he garleek, oynons, and eek lekes,**
 He well loved garlic, onions, and also leeks,
 635 **And for to drynken strong wyn, reed as blood;**
 And to drink strong wine, red as blood;
 636 **Thanne wolde he speke and crie as he were wood.**
 Then he would speak and cry out as if he were crazy.
 637 **And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn,**
 And when he had drunk deeply of the wine,
 638 **Thanne wolde he speke no word but Latyn.**
 Then he would speak no word but Latin.
 639 **A fewe termes hadde he, two or thre,**
 He had a few legal terms, two or three,
 640 **That he had lerned out of som decree --**
 That he had learned out of some text of ecclesiastical law --
 641 **No wonder is, he herde it al the day;**

That is no wonder, he heard it all the day;
 642 **And eek ye knowen wel how that a jay**
 And also you know well how a jay
 643 **Kan clepen "Watte" as wel as kan the pope.**
 Can call out "Walter" as well as the pope can.
 644 **But whoso koude in oother thyng hym grope,**
 But whoever knew how to examine him in other matters,
 645 **Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophie;**
 (Would find that) he had used up all his learning;
 646 **Ay "Questio quid iuris" wolde he crie.**
 Always "The question is, what point of the law applies?" he would cry.
 647 **He was a gentil harlot and a kynde;**
 He was a fine rascal and a kind one;
 648 **A better felawe sholde men noght fynde.**
 One could not find a better fellow.
 649 **He wolde suffre for a quart of wyn**
 For a quart of wine he would allow
 650 **A good felawe to have his concubyn**
 A good fellow to have his concubine
 651 **A twelf month, and excuse hym atte fulle;**
 For twelve months, and excuse him completely;
 652 **Ful prively a fynch eek koude he pulle.**
 Secretly he also knew how to pull off a clever trick.
 653 **And if he foond owher a good felawe,**
 And if he found anywhere a good fellow,
 654 **He wolde techen him to have noon awe**
 He would teach him to have no awe
 655 **In swich caas of the ercedekenes curs,**
 Of the archdeacon's curse (of excommunication) in such a case,
 656 **But if a mannes soule were in his purs;**
 Unless a man's soul were in his purse;
 657 **For in his purs he sholde ypunysshed be.**
 For in his purse he would be punished.
 658 **"Purs is the ercedekenes helle," seyde he.**
 "Purse is the archdeacon's hell," he said.
 659 **But wel I woot he lyed right in dede;**
 But well I know he lied right certainly;
 660 **Of cursyng oghte ech gilty man him drede,**
 Each guilty man ought to be afraid of excommunication,
 661 **For curs wol slee right as assoillyng savith,**
 For excommunication will slay just as forgiveness saves,
 662 **And also war hym of a Significavit.**
 And let him also beware of a Significavit (order for imprisonment).
 663 **In daunger hadde he at his owene gise**
 In his control he had as he pleased
 664 **The yonge girles of the diocise,**
 The young people of the diocese,
 665 **And knew hir conseil, and was al hir reed.**
 And knew their secrets, and was the adviser of them all.

666 **A gerland hadde he set upon his heed,**
 He had set a garland upon his heed,
 667 **As greet as it were for an ale-stake.**
 As large as if it were for the sign of a tavern
 668 **A bokeleer hadde he maad hym of a cake.**
 He had made himself a shield of a cake.

669 **With hym ther rood a gentil PARDONER**
 With him there rode a fine PARDONER
 670 **Of Rouncivale, his freend and his compeer,**
 Of Rouncivale, his friend and his companion,
 671 **That streight was comen fro the court of Rome.**
 Who had come straight from the court of Rome.
 672 **Ful loude he soong "Com hider, love, to me!"**
 Very loud he sang "Come hither, love, to me!"
 673 **This Somonour bar to hym a stif burdoun;**
 This Summoner harmonized with him in a strong bass;
 674 **Was nevere trompe of half so greet a soun.**
 There was never a trumpet of half so great a sound.
 675 **This Pardoner hadde heer as yellow as wex,**
 This Pardoner had hair as yellow as wax,
 676 **But smothe it heeng as dooth a strike of flex;**
 But smooth it hung as does a clump of flax;
 677 **By ounces henge his lokkes that he hadde,**
 By small strands hung such locks as he had,
 678 **And therwith he his shuldres overspradde;**
 And he spread them over his shoulders;
 679 **But thynne it lay, by colpons oon and oon.**
 But thin it lay, by strands one by one.
 680 **But hood, for jolitee, wered he noon,**
 But to make an attractive appearance, he wore no hood,
 681 **For it was trussed up in his walet.**
 For it was trussed up in his knapsack.
 682 **Hym thoughte he rood al of the newe jet;**
 It seemed to him that he rode in the very latest style;
 683 **Dischevelee, save his cappe, he rood al bare.**
 With hair unbound, save for his cap, he rode all bare-headed.
 684 **Swiche glarynge eyen hadde he as an hare.**
 He had glaring eyes such as has a hare.
 685 **A vernycle hadde he sowed upon his cappe.**
 He had sewn a Veronica upon his cap.
 686 **His walet, biforn hym in his lappe,**
 Before him in his lap, (he had) his knapsack,
 687 **Bretful of pardoun comen from Rome al hoot.**
 Brimful of pardons come all fresh from Rome.
 688 **A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot.**
 He had a voice as small as a goat has.
 689 **No berd hadde he, ne nevere sholde have;**
 He had no beard, nor never would have;

690 **As smothe it was as it were late shave.**
 It (his face) was as smooth as if it were recently shaven.

691 **I trowe he were a geldyng or a mare.**
 I believe he was a eunuch or a homosexual.

692 **But of his craft, fro Berwyk into Ware**
 But as to his craft, from Berwick to Ware

693 **Ne was ther swich another pardonor.**
 There was no other pardonor like him.

694 **For in his male he hadde a pilwe-beer,**
 For in his pouch he had a pillow-case,

695 **Which that he seyde was Oure Lady veyl;**
 Which he said was Our Lady's veil;

696 **He seyde he hadde a gobet of the seyl**
 He said he had a piece of the sail

697 **That Seint Peter hadde, whan that he wente**
 That Saint Peter had, when he went

698 **Upon the see, til Jhesu Crist hym hente.**
 Upon the sea, until Jesus Christ took him.

699 **He hadde a croys of latoun ful of stones,**
 He had a cross of latten (brass-like alloy) covered with stones,

700 **And in a glas he hadde pigges bones.**
 And in a glass container he had pigs' bones.

701 **But with thise relikes, whan that he fond**
 But with these relics, when he found

702 **A povre person dwellynge upon lond,**
 A poor parson dwelling in the countryside,

703 **Upon a day he gat hym moore moneye**
 In one day he got himself more money

704 **Than that the person gat in monthes tweye;**
 Than the parson got in two months;

705 **And thus, with feyned flaterye and japes,**
 And thus, with feigned flattery and tricks,

706 **He made the person and the peple his apes.**
 He made fools of the parson and the people.

707 **But trewely to tellen atte laste,**
 But truly to tell at the last,

708 **He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste.**
 He was in church a noble ecclesiast.

709 **Wel koude he rede a lessoun or a storie,**
 He well knew how to read a lesson or a story,

710 **But alderbest he song an offertorie;**
 But best of all he sang an Offertory;

711 **For wel he wiste, whan that song was songe,**
 For he knew well, when that song was sung,

712 **He moste preche and wel affile his tonge**
 He must preach and well smooth his speech

713 **To wynne silver, as he ful wel koude;**
 To win silver, as he very well knew how;

714 **Therefore he song the murierly and loude.**
 Therefore he sang the more merrily and loud.

715 **Now have I toold you soothly, in a clause,**
 Now have I told you truly, briefly,

716 **Th' estaat, th' array, the nombre, and eek the cause**
 The rank, the dress, the number, and also the cause

717 **Why that assembled was this compaignye**
 Why this company was assembled

718 **In Southwerk at this gentil hostelrye**
 In Southwark at this fine hostelry

719 **That highte the Tabard, faste by the Belle.**
 That is called the Tabard, close by the Bell.

720 **But now is tyme to yow for to telle**
 But now it is time to tell to you

721 **How that we baren us that ilke nyght,**
 How we conducted ourselves that same night,

722 **Whan we were in that hostelrie alyght;**
 When we had arrived in that hostelry;

723 **And after wol I telle of our viage**
 And after that I will tell of our journey

724 **And al the remenaunt of oure pilgrimage.**
 And all the rest of our pilgrimage.

725 **But first I pray yow, of youre curteisye,**
 But first I pray yow, of your courtesy,

726 **That ye n' arette it nat my vileynye,**
 That you do not attribute it to my rudeness,

727 **Thogh that I pleynty speke in this mateere,**
 Though I speak plainly in this matter,

728 **To telle yow hir wordes and hir cheere,**
 To tell you their words and their behavior,

729 **Ne thogh I speke hir wordes proprely.**
 Nor though I speak their words accurately.

730 **For this ye knowen al so wel as I:**
 For this you know as well as I:

731 **Whoso shal telle a tale after a man,**
 Whoever must repeat a story after someone,

732 **He moot reherce as ny as evere he kan**
 He must repeat as closely as ever he knows how

733 **Everich a word, if it be in his charge,**
 Every single word, if it be in his power,

734 **Al speke he never so rudeliche and large,**
 Although he may speak ever so rudely and freely,

735 **Or ellis he moot telle his tale untrewe,**
 Or else he must tell his tale inaccurately,

736 **Or feyne thyng, or fynde wordes newe.**
 Or make up things, or find new words.

737 **He may nat spare, althogh he were his brother;**
 He may not refrain from (telling the truth), although he were his brother;

738 **He moot as wel seye o word as another.**
 He must as well say one word as another.
 739 **Crist spak hymself ful brode in hooly writ,**
 Christ himself spoke very plainly in holy writ,
 740 **And wel ye woot no vileynye is it.**
 And you know well it is no rudeness.
 741 **Eek Plato seith, whoso kan hym rede,**
 Also Plato says, whosoever knows how to read him,
 742 **The wordes moote be cosyn to the dede.**
 The words must be closely related to the deed.
 743 **Also I prey yow to foryeve it me,**
 Also I pray you to forgive it to me,
 744 **Al have I nat set folk in hir degree**
 Although I have not set folk in order of their rank
 745 **Heere in this tale, as that they sholde stonde.**
 Here in this tale, as they should stand.
 746 **My wit is short, ye may wel understonde.**
 My wit is short, you can well understand.

747 **Greet chiere made oure Hoost us everichon,**
 Our Host made great hospitality to everyone of us,
 748 **And to the soper sette he us anon.**
 And to the supper he set us straightway.
 749 **He served us with vitaille at the beste;**
 He served us with victuals of the best sort;
 750 **Strong was the wyn, and wel to drynke us leste.**
 The wine was strong, and it well pleased us to drink.
 751 **A semely man OURE HOOSTE was withalle**
 OUR HOST was an impressive man indeed
 752 **For to been a marchal in an halle.**
 (Qualified) to be a master of ceremonies in a hall.
 753 **A large man he was with eyen stepe --**
 He was a large man with prominent eyes --
 754 **A fairer burgeys was ther noon in Chepe --**
 There was no better business man in Cheapside --
 755 **Boold of his speche, and wys, and wel ytaught,**
 Bold of his speech, and wise, and well mannered,
 756 **And of manhod hym lakkede right naught.**
 And he lacked nothing at all of the qualities proper to a man.
 757 **Eek therto he was right a myrie man;**
 Also moreover he was a right merry man;
 758 **And after soper pleyen he bigan,**
 And after supper he began to be merry,
 759 **And spak of myrthe amonges othere thynges,**
 And spoke of mirth among other things,
 760 **Whan that we hadde maad oure rekenynges,**
 When we had paid our bills,
 761 **And seyde thus: "Now, lordynges, trewely,**
 And said thus: "Now, gentlemen, truly,

762 **Ye been to me right welcome, hertely;**
 You are right heartily welcome to me;
 763 **For by my trouthe, if that I shal nat lye,**
 For by my word, if I shall not lie (I must say),
 764 **I saugh nat this yeer so myrie a compaignye**
 I saw not this year so merry a company
 765 **Atones in this herberwe as is now.**
 At one time in this lodging as is (here) now.
 766 **Fayn wolde I doon yow myrthe, wiste I how.**
 I would gladly make you happy, if I knew how.
 767 **And of a myrthe I am right now bythoght,**
 And I have just now thought of an amusement,
 768 **To doon yow ese, and it shal coste noght.**
 To give you pleasure, and it shall cost nothing.

769 **"Ye goon to Caunterbury -- God yow speede,**
 "You go to Canterbury -- God give you success,
 770 **The blisful martir quite yow youre meede!**
 May the blessed martyr give you your reward!
 771 **And wel I woot, as ye goon by the weye,**
 And well I know, as you go by the way,
 772 **Ye shapen yow to talen and to pleye;**
 You intend to tell tales and to amuse yourselves;
 773 **For trewely, confort ne myrthe is noon**
 For truly, it is no comfort nor mirth
 774 **To ride by the weye doumb as a stoon;**
 To ride by the way dumb as a stone;
 775 **And therefore wol I maken yow disport,**
 And therefore I will make a game for you,
 776 **As I seyde erst, and doon yow som confort.**
 As I said before, and provide you some pleasure.
 777 **And if yow liketh alle by oon assent**
 And if pleases you all unanimously
 778 **For to stonden at my juggement,**
 To be subject to my judgment,
 779 **And for to werken as I shal yow seye,**
 And to do as I shall tell you,
 780 **Tomorwe, whan ye riden by the weye,**
 Tomorrow, when you ride by the way,
 781 **Now, by my fader soule that is deed,**
 Now, by the soul of my father who is dead,
 782 **But ye be myrie, I wol yeve yow myn heed!**
 Unless you be merry, I will give you my head!
 783 **Hoold up youre hondes, withouten moore speche."**
 Hold up your hands, without more speech."

784 **Oure conseil was nat longe for to seche.**
 Our decision was not long to seek out.

785 **Us thoughte it was noght worth to make it wys,**
 It seemed to us it was not worthwhile to deliberate on it,
 786 **And graunted hym withouten moore avys,**
 And (we) granted his request without more discussion,
 787 **And bad him seye his voirdit as hym leste.**
 And asked him to say his decision as it pleased him.
 788 **"Lordynges," quod he, "now herkneth for the beste;**
 "Gentlemen," said he, "now listen for the best course of action;
 789 **But taak it nought, I prey yow, in desdeyn.**
 But, I pray yow, do not take it in disdain (scorn it).
 790 **This is the poynt, to speken short and pleyn,**
 This is the point, to speak briefly and clearly,
 791 **That ech of yow, to shorte with oure weye,**
 That each of yow, to make our way seem short by this means,
 792 **In this viage shal telle tales tweye**
 Must tell two tales in this journey
 793 **To Caunterbury-ward, I mene it so,**
 On the way to Canterbury, that is what I mean,
 794 **And homward he shal tellen othere two,**
 And on the homeward trip he shall tell two others,
 795 **Of aventures that whilom han bifalle.**
 About adventures that in old times have happened.
 796 **And which of yow that bereth hym best of alle --**
 And whoever of you who does best of all --
 797 **That is to seyn, that telleth in this caas**
 That is to say, who tells in this case
 798 **Tales of best sentence and moost solaas --**
 Tales of best moral meaning and most pleasure --
 799 **Shal have a soper at oure aller cost**
 Shall have a supper at the cost of us all
 800 **Heere in this place, sittynge by this post,**
 Here in this place, sitting by this post,
 801 **Whan that we come agayn fro Caunterbury.**
 When we come back from Canterbury.
 802 **And for to make yow the moore mury,**
 And to make you the more merry,
 803 **I wol myselven goodly with yow ryde,**
 I will myself gladly ride with you,
 804 **Right at myn owene cost, and be youre gyde;**
 Entirely at my own cost, and be your guide;
 805 **And whoso wole my juggement withseye**
 And whosoever will not accept my judgment
 806 **Shal paye al that we spenden by the weye.**
 Shall pay all that we spend by the way.
 807 **And if ye vouche sauf that it be so,**
 And if you grant that it be so,
 808 **Tel me anon, withouten wordes mo,**
 Tell me straightway, without more words,

809 **And I wol erly shape me therfore."**
 And I will get ready early for this."

810 **This thyng was graunted, and oure othes swore**
 This thing was granted, and our oaths sworn

811 **With ful glad herte, and preyden hym also**
 With very glad hearts, and (we) prayed him also

812 **That he wolde vouche sauf for to do so,**
 That he would consent to do so,

813 **And that he wolde been oure governour,**
 And that he would be our governor,

814 **And of oure tales juge and reportour,**
 And judge and score keeper of our tales,

815 **And sette a soper at a certeyn pris,**
 And set a supper at a certain price,

816 **And we wol reuled been at his devys**
 And we will be ruled as he wishes

817 **In heigh and lough; and thus by oon assent**
 In every respect; and thus unanimously

818 **We been acorded to his juggement.**
 We are accorded to his judgment.

819 **And therupon the wyn was fet anon;**
 And thereupon the wine was fetched immediately;

820 **We dronken, and to reste wente echon,**
 We drank, and each one went to rest,

821 **Withouten any lenger taryynge.**
 Without any longer tarrying.

822 **Amorwe, whan that day bigan to sprynge,**
 In the morning, when day began to spring,

823 **Up roos oure Hoost, and was oure aller cok,**
 Our Host arose, and was the rooster of us all (awakened us).

824 **And gadrede us togidre alle in a flock,**
 And gathered us together all in a flock,

825 **And forth we riden a litel moore than paas**
 And forth we rode at little more than a walk

826 **Unto the Wateryng of Seint Thomas;**
 Unto the Watering of Saint Thomas;

827 **And there oure Hoost bigan his hors areste**
 And there our Host stopped his horse

828 **And seyde, "Lordynges, herkneth, if yow leste.**
 And said, "Gentlemen, listen, if you please.

829 **Ye woot youre foreward, and I it yow recorde.**
 You know your agreement, and I remind you of it.

830 **If even-song and morwe-song accorde,**
 If what you said last night agrees with what you say this morning,

831 **Lat se now who shal telle the firste tale.**
 Let's see now who shall tell the first tale.

832 **As evere mote I drynke wyn or ale,**
 As ever I may drink wine or ale,
 833 **Whoso be rebel to my juggement**
 Whosoever may be rebel to my judgment
 834 **Shal paye for al that by the wey is spent.**
 Shall pay for all that is spent by the way.
 835 **Now draweth cut, er that we ferrer twynne;**
 Now draw straws, before we depart further (from London);
 836 **He which that hath the shorteste shal bigynne.**
 He who has the shortest shall begin.
 837 **Sire Knyght," quod he, "my mayster and my lord,**
 Sir Knight," said he, "my master and my lord,
 838 **Now draweth cut, for that is myn accord.**
 Now draw a straw, for that is my decision.
 839 **Cometh neer," quod he, "my lady Prioress.**
 Come nearer," he said, "my lady Prioress.
 840 **And ye, sire Clerk, lat be youre shamefastnesse,**
 And you, sir Clerk, let be your modesty,
 841 **Ne studieth noght; ley hond to, every man!"**
 And study not; lay hand to (draw a straw), every man!"
 842 **Anon to drawen every wight bigan,**
 Every person began straightway to draw,
 843 **And shortly for to tellen as it was,**
 And shortly to tell as it was,
 844 **Were it by aventure, or sort, or cas,**
 Were it by chance, or destiny, or luck,
 845 **The sothe is this: the cut fil to the Knyght,**
 The truth is this: the draw fell to the Knight,
 846 **Of which ful blithe and glad was every wyght,**
 For which everyone was very happy and glad,
 847 **And telle he moste his tale, as was resoun,**
 And he must tell his tale, as was reasonable,
 848 **By foreward and by composicioun,**
 By our previous promise and by formal agreement,
 849 **As ye han herd; what nedeth wordes mo?**
 As you have heard; what more words are needed?
 850 **And whan this goode man saugh that it was so,**
 And when this good man saw that it was so,
 851 **As he that wys was and obedient**
 Like one who was wise and obedient
 852 **To kepe his foreward by his free assent,**
 To keep his agreement by his free assent,
 853 **He seyde, "Syn I shal bigynne the game,**
 He said, "Since I must begin the game,
 854 **What, welcome be the cut, a Goddes name!**
 What! Welcome be the draw, in God's name!
 855 **Now lat us ryde, and herkneth what I seye."**
 Now let us ride, and listen to what I say."
 856 **And with that word we ryden forth oure weye,**

And with that word we rode forth on our way,
857 **And he bigan with right a myrie cheere**
And he began with a truly merry demeanor
858 **His tale anon, and seyde as ye may heere.**
To tell his tale straightway, and said as you may hear.