



And whiche they weren, and of what degree, 40  
And eek in what array that they were inne;  
And at a knyght than wol I first bigynne.

A KNYGHT ther was, and that a worthy man,  
That fro the tyme that he first bigan  
To riden out, he loved chivalrie, 45  
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisie.  
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,  
And therto hadde he riden, no man ferre,  
As wel in cristendom as in hethenesse,  
And evere honoured for his worthynesse. 50  
At Alisaundre he was, whan it was wonne.  
Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne  
Aboven alle nacions in Pruce;  
In Lettow hadde he reysed, and in Ruce,  
No Cristen man so ofte of his degree. 55  
In Gernade at the seege eek hadde he be  
Of Algezir, and riden in Belmarye.  
At Lyeys was he and at Satalye,  
Whan they were wonne; and in the Grete See  
At many a noble armee hadde he be. 60  
At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,  
And foughten for oure feith at Tramysse  
In lystes thries, and ay slayn his foo.  
This ilke worthy knyght hadde been also  
Somtyme with the lord of Palatye 65  
Agayn another hethen in Turkye.  
And everemoore he hadde a sovereyn prys;  
And though that he were worthy, he was wys,  
And of his port as meeke as is a mayde.  
He nevere yet no vileynye ne sayde 70  
In al his lyf unto no maner wight.  
He was a verray, parfit gentil knyght.  
But, for to tellen yow of his array,  
His hors were goode, but he was nat gay.  
Of fustian he wered a gypon 75  
Al bismotered with his habergeoun,  
For he was late ycome from his viage,  
And wente for to doon his pilgrymage.

With hym ther was his sone, a yong SQUIER,  
A lovyere and a lusty bachelor; 80  
With lokkes crulle, as they were leyd in presse.  
Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.  
Of his stature he was of evene lengthe,  
And wonderly delyvere, and of greet strengthe.  
And he hadde been somtyme in chyvachie 85

In Flaundres, in Artoys, and Pycardie,  
 And born hym weel, as of so litel space,  
 In hope to stonden in his lady grace.  
 Embrouded was he, as it were a meede,  
 Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and reede; 90  
 Syngynge he was, or floytynge, al the day,  
 He was as fressh as is the monthe of May.  
 Short was his gowne, with sleeves longe and wyde.  
 Wel koude he sitte on hors, and faire ryde.  
 He koude songes make, and wel endite, 95  
 Juste, and eek daunce, and weel purtreye and write.  
 So hoothe he lovede, that by nyghtertale  
 He slepte namoore than dooth a nyghtyngale.  
 Curteis he was, lowely, and servysable,  
 And carf biforn his fader at the table. 100

A YEMAN hadde he and servantz namo  
 At that tyme, for hym liste ride soo;  
 And he was clad in cote and hood of grene.  
 A sheef of pecok arwes, bright and kene  
 Under his belt he bar ful thriftily, 105  
 (Wel koude he dresse his takel yemanly:  
 Hise arwes drouped nocht with fetheres lowe)  
 And in his hand he baar a myghty bowe.  
 A not heed hadde he, with a broun visage,  
 Of woodecraft wel koude he al the usage. 110  
 Upon his arm he baar a gay bracer,  
 And by his syde a swerd and a bokeler,  
 And on that oother syde a gay daggere  
 Harneised wel and sharpe as point of spere.  
 A Cristopher on his brest of silver sheene. 115  
 An horn he bar, the bawdryk was of grene;  
 A forster was he, soothly, as I gesse.

Ther was also a Nonne, a PRIORESSE,  
 That of hir smylyng was ful symple and coy;  
 Hir gretteste ooth was but by Seinte Loy; 120  
 And she was cleped Madame Eglentyne.  
 Ful weel she soong the service dyvyne,  
 Entuned in hir nose ful semely,  
 And Frenssh she spak ful faire and fetisly,  
 After the scole of Stratford-atte-Bowe, 125  
 For Frenssh of Parys was to hir unknowe.  
 At mete wel ytaught was she with alle:  
 She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,  
 Ne wette hir fyngres in hir sauce depe;  
 Wel koude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe 130  
 That no drope ne fille upon hir brist.

In curteisie was set ful muche hir list.  
 Hire over-lippe wyped she so clene  
 That in hir coppe ther was no ferthyng sene  
 Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte. 135  
 Ful semely after hir mete she raughte.  
 And sikerly, she was of greet desport,  
 And ful plesaunt, and amyable of port,  
 And peyned hir to countrefete cheere  
 Of court, and been estatlich of manere, 140  
 And to ben holden digne of reverence.  
 But, for to speken of hir conscience,  
 She was so charitable and so pitous  
 She wolde wepe, if that she saugh a mous  
 Kaught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde. 145  
 Of smale houndes hadde she, that she fedde  
 With rosted flessh, or milk and wastel-breed.  
 But soore weep she if oon of hem were deed,  
 Or if men smoot it with a yerde smerte;  
 And al was conscience, and tendre herte. 150  
 Ful semyly hir wympul pynched was,  
 Hire nose tretys, hir eyen greye as glas,  
 Hir mouth ful smal, and therto softe and reed;  
 But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed;  
 It was almoost a spanne brood, I trowe; 155  
 For, hardily, she was nat undergrowe.  
 Ful fetys was hir cloke, as I was war;  
 Of smal coral aboute hir arm she bar  
 A peire of bedes, gauded al with grene,  
 An theron heng a brooch of gold ful sheene, 160  
 On which ther was first write a crowned A,  
 And after Amor vincit omnia.

Another NONNE with hir hadde she,  
 That was hire chapeleyne, and preestes thre. 165

A MONK ther was, a fair for the maistrie,  
 An outridere, that lovede venerie,  
 A manly man, to been an abbot able.  
 Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in stable,  
 And whan he rood, men myghte his brydel heere  
 Gynglen in a whistlynge wynd als cleere 170  
 And eek as loude, as dooth the chapel belle.  
 Ther as this lord was keper of the celle,  
 The reule of Seint Maure, or of Seint Beneit,  
 By cause that it was old and somdel streit  
 This ilke Monk leet olde thynges pace, 175  
 And heeld after the newe world the space.  
 He yaf nat of that text a pulled hen,

That seith that hunters beth nat hooly men,  
 Ne that a monk, whan he is recchelees,  
 Is likned til a fissh that is waterlees,— 180  
 This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloystre  
 But thilke text heeld he nat worth an oystre;  
 And I seyde his opinioun was good.  
 What sholde he studie, and make hymselfen wood,  
 Upon a book in cloystre alwey to poure, 185  
 Or swynken with his handes and laboure,  
 As Austyn bit? How shal the world be served?  
 Lat Austyn have his swynk to him reserved!  
 Therfore he was a prikasour aright:  
 Grehoundes he hadde, as swift as fowel in flight; 190  
 Of prikyng and of huntyng for the hare  
 Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.  
 I seigh his sleves purfiled at the hond  
 With grys, and that the fyneste of a lond;  
 And, for to festne his hood under his chyn, 195  
 He hadde of gold ywroght a curious pyn;  
 A love-knotte in the gretter ende ther was.  
 His heed was balled, that shoon as any glas,  
 And eek his face, as it hadde been enoynt.  
 He was a lord ful fat and in good poynt, 200  
 Hise eyen stepe, and rolynge in his heed,  
 That stemed as a forneys of a leed;  
 His bootes souple, his hors in greet estaat.  
 Now certainly he was a fair prelaat;  
 He was nat pale as a forpynded goost. 205  
 A fat swan loved he best of any roost.  
 His palfrey was as broun as is a berye,

A FRERE ther was, a wantowne and a merye,  
 A lymytour, a ful solempne man.  
 In alle the ordres foure is noon that kan 210  
 So muchel of daliaunce and fair langage.  
 He hadde maad ful many a mariage  
 Of yonge wommen at his owene cost.  
 Unto his ordre he was a noble post,  
 And wel biloved and famulier was he 215  
 With frankeleyns overal in his contree,  
 And eek with worthy wommen of the toun;  
 For he hadde power of confessioun,  
 As seyde hymself, moore than a curat,  
 For of his ordre he was licenciat. 220  
 Ful swetely herde he confessioun,  
 And plesaunt was his absolucioun:  
 He was an esy man to yeve penaunce,  
 Ther as he wiste to have a good pitaunce.  
 For unto a povre ordre for to yive 225  
 Is signe that a man is wel yshryve;

For, if he yaf, he dorste make avaunt,  
 He wiste that a man was repentaunt;  
 For many a man so harde is of his herte,  
 He may nat wepe, al thogh hym soore smerte; 230  
 Therfore in stede of wepyng and preyer  
 Men moote yeve silver to the povre freres.  
 His typet was ay farsed ful of knyves  
 And pynnes, for to yeven yonge wyves.  
 And certainly he hadde a murye note: 235  
 Wel koude he synge, and pleyen on a rote;  
 Of yeddynges he baar outrely the pris.  
 His nekke whit was as the flour-de-lys;  
 Therto he strong was as a champioun.  
 He knew the tavernes wel in every toun 240  
 And everich hostiler and tappestere  
 Bet than a lazarus or a beggestere;  
 For unto swich a worthy man as he  
 Accorded nat, as by his facultee,  
 To have with sike lazarus aqueyntaunce. 245  
 It is nat honeste, it may nat avaunce,  
 For to deelen with no swich poraille,  
 But al with riche and selleres of vitaille.  
 And over al, ther as profit sholde arise,  
 Curteis he was, and lowely of servyse. 250  
 Ther nas no man nowher so vertuous.  
 He was the beste beggere in his hous;  
 (And yaf a certeyn ferme for the graunt  
 Noon of his brethren cam ther in his haunt;)  
 For thogh a wydwe hadde noght a sho, 255  
 So plesaunt was his "In principio"  
 Yet wolde he have a ferthyng, er he wente;  
 His purchas was wel bettre than his rente.  
 And rage he koude, as it were right a whelp.  
 In love-dayes ther koude he muchel help, 260  
 For there he was nat lyk a cloysterer  
 With a thredbare cope, as is a povre scoler,  
 But he was lyk a maister or a pope;  
 Of double worstede was his semycope,  
 That rounded as a belle out of the presse. 265  
 Somwhat he lipped for his wantownesse  
 To make his Englissh sweete upon his tonge;  
 And in his harpyng, whan that he hadde songe,  
 Hise eyen twynkled in his heed aryght  
 As doon the sterres in the frosty nyght. 270  
 This worthy lymytour was cleped Huberd.

A MERCHANT was ther with a forked berd,  
 In mottelee, and hye on horse he sat;  
 Upon his heed a Flaundryssh bever hat,  
 His bootes clasped faire and fetisly. 275

His resons he spak ful solempnely,  
 Sownyng alway th'encrees of his wynnyng.  
 He wolde the see were kept for any thyng  
 Bitwixe Middelburgh and Orewelle.  
 Wel koude he in eschaunge sheeldes selle. 280  
 This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette;  
 Ther wiste no wight that he was in dette,  
 So estatly was he of his governaunce  
 With his bargaynes and with his chevysaunce.  
 For sothe, he was a worthy man with-alle, 285  
 But, sooth to seyn, I noot how men hym calle.

A CLERK ther was of Oxenford also,  
 That unto logyk hadde longe ygo.  
 As leene was his hors as is a rake,  
 And he nas nat right fat, I undertake, 290  
 But looked holwe and therto sobrelly.  
 Ful thredbare was his overeste courtepy;  
 For he hadde geten hym yet no benefice,  
 Ne was so worldly for to have office.  
 For hym was levere have at his beddes heed 295  
 Twenty bookes, clad in blak or reed,  
 Of Aristotle and his philosophie,  
 Than robes riche, or fithelle, or gay sautrie.  
 But al be that he was a philosophre,  
 Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre; 300  
 But al that he myghte of his freendes hente,  
 On bookes and on lernyng he it spente,  
 And bisily gan for the soules preye  
 Of hem that yaf hym wherwith to scoleye.  
 Of studie took he moost cure and moost heede. 305  
 Noght o word spak he moore than was neede,  
 And that was seyde in forme and reverence,  
 And short and quyk, and ful of hy sentence;  
 Sownyng in moral vertu was his speche,  
 And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche. 310

A SERGEANT OF THE LAWE, war and wys,  
 That often hadde been at the Parvys,  
 Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.  
 Discreet he was, and of greet reverence-  
 He semed swich, hise wordes weren so wise. 315  
 Justice he was ful often in assise,  
 By patente, and by pleyn commissioun.  
 For his science, and for his heigh renoun,  
 Of fees and robes hadde he many oon.  
 So greet a purchasour was nowher noon: 320  
 Al was fee symple to hym in effect,

His purchasyng myghte nat been infect.  
 Nowher so bisy a man as he ther nas,  
 And yet he semed bisier than he was.  
 In termes hadde he caas and doomes alle 325  
 That from the tyme of Kyng William were falle.  
 Therto he koude endite and make a thyng,  
 Ther koude no wight pynche at his writyng;  
 And every statut koude he pleyn by rote.  
 He rood but hoomly in a medlee cote 330  
 Girt with a ceint of silk, with barres smale;  
 Of his array telle I no lenger tale.

A FRANKELEYN was in his compaignye.  
 Whit was his berd as is a dayesye;  
 Of his complexioun he was sangwyn. 335  
 Wel loved he by the morwe a sope in wyn,;  
 To lyven in delit was evere his wone,  
 For he was Epicurus owene sone,  
 That heeld opinioun that pleyn delit  
 Was verray felicitee parfit. 340  
 An housholdere, and that a greet, was he;  
 Seint Julian was he in his contree.  
 His breed, his ale, was always after oon,  
 A bettre envyned man was nowher noon.  
 Withoute bake mete was nevere his hous 345  
 Of fissh and flessch, and that so plentevous,  
 It snewed in his hous of mete and drynke,  
 Of alle deyntees that men koude thynke.  
 After the sondry sesons of the yeer,  
 So chaunged he his mete and his soper. 350  
 Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in muwe,  
 And many a breem and many a luce in stuwe.  
 Wo was his cook, but if his sauce were  
 Poynaunt and sharp, and redy al his geere.  
 His table dormant in his halle alway 355  
 Stood redy covered al the longe day.  
 At sessiouns ther was he lord and sire;  
 Ful ofte tyme he was knyght of the shire.  
 An anlaas and a gipser al of silk  
 Heeng at his girdel, whit as morne milk. 360  
 A shirreve hadde he been, and a countour.  
 Was nowher swich a worthy vavasour.

An HABERDASSHERE and a CARPENTER,  
 A WEBBE, a DYERE, and a TAPYCER,-  
 And they were clothed alle in o lyveree 365  
 Of a solempne and a greet fraternitee.  
 Ful fressh and newe hir geere apiked was;



Hir knyves were chaped noght with bras,  
 But al with silver; wroght ful clene and weel,  
 Hire girdles and hir pouches everydeel. 370  
 Wel semed ech of hem a fair burgeys  
 To sitten in a yeldehalle on a deys.  
 Everich, for the wisdom that he kan,  
 Was shaply for to been an alderman.  
 375 For catel hadde they ynogh and rente,  
 And eek hir wyves wolde it wel assente;  
 And elles certeyn, were they to blame.  
 It is ful fair to been ycleped "madame,"  
 And goon to vigilies al bifore,  
 And have a mantel roialliche ybore. 380

A COOK they hadde with hem for the nones  
 To boille the chiknes with the marybones,  
 And poudre-marchant tart, and galyngale.  
 Wel koude he knowe a draughte of London ale.  
 He koude rooste, and sethe, and broille, and frye, 385  
 Maken mortreux, and wel bake a pye.  
 But greet harm was it, as it thoughte me,  
 That on his shyne a mormal hadde he.  
 For blankmanger, that made he with the beste.

A SHIPMAN was ther, wonynge fer by weste; 390  
 For aught I woot, he was of Dertemouthe.  
 He rood upon a rouncy, as he kouthe,  
 In a gowne of faldyng to the knee.  
 A daggere hangynge on a laas hadde he  
 Aboute his nekke, under his arm adoun. 395  
 The hote somer hadde maad his hewe al broun,  
 And certainly he was a good felawe.  
 Ful many a draughte of wyn had he ydrawe  
 Fro Burdeux-ward, whil that the chapman sleep.  
 Of nyce conscience took he no keep. 400  
 If that he faught, and hadde the hyer hond,  
 By water he sente hem hoom to every lond.  
 But of his craft, to rekene wel his tydes,  
 His stremes, and his daungers hym bisides,  
 His herberwe and his moone, his lodemenage, 405  
 Ther nas noon swich from Hulle to Cartage.  
 Hardy he was, and wys to undertake;  
 With many a tempest hadde his berd been shake.  
 He knew alle the havenes as they were,  
 From Gootlond to the Cape of Fynystere, 410  
 And every cryke in Britaigne and in Spayne.  
 His barge ycleped was the Maudelayne.

With us ther was a DOCTOUR OF PHISIK;  
 In al this world ne was ther noon hym lik,  
 To speke of phisik and of surgerye, 415  
 For he was grounded in astronomye.  
 He kepte his pacient a ful greet deel  
 In houres, by his magyk natureel.  
 Wel koude he fortunen the ascendent  
 Of his ymages for his pacient. 420  
 He knew the cause of everich maladye,  
 Were it of hoot, or coold, or moyste, or drye,  
 And where they engendred, and of what humour.  
 He was a verray parfit praktisour:  
 The cause yknowe, and of his harm the roote, 425  
 Anon he yaf the sike man his boote.  
 Ful redy hadde he hise apothecaries  
 To sende him drogges and his letuaries,  
 For ech of hem made oother for to wynne-  
 Hir frendshipe nas nat newe to bigynne. 430  
 Wel knew he the olde Esculapius,  
 And Deyscorides and eek Rufus,  
 Olde Ypocras, Haly, and Galyen,  
 Serapioun, Razis, and Avycen,  
 Averrois, Damascien, and Constantyn, 435  
 Bernard, and Gatesden, and Gilbertyn.  
 Of his diete mesurable was he,  
 For it was of no superfluitee,  
 But of greet norissyng, and digestible. 440  
 His studie was but litel on the Bible.  
 In sangwyn and in pers he clad was al,  
 Lyned with taffata and with sendal;  
 And yet he was but esy of dispence;  
 He kepte that he wan in pestilence.  
 For gold in phisik is a cordial, 445  
 Therefore he lovede gold in special.

A good WIF was ther, OF biside BATHE,  
 But she was somdel deaf, and that was scathe.  
 Of clooth-makyng she hadde swich an haunt,  
 She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt. 450  
 In al the parisshe wif ne was ther noon  
 That to the offrynge bifore hire sholde goon;  
 And if ther dide, certeyn so wrooth was she,  
 That she was out of alle charitee.  
 Hir coverchiefs ful fyne weren of ground; 455  
 I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound  
 That on a Sondag weren upon hir heed.  
 Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed,  
 Ful streite yteyd, and shoes ful moyste and newe.  
 Boold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe. 460  
 She was a worthy womman al hir lyve:

Housbondes at chirche dore she hadde fyve,  
 Withouthen oother compaignye in youthe, -  
 But therof nedeth nat to speke as nowthe.  
 And thries hadde she been at Jerusalem; 465  
 She hadde passed many a straunge strem;  
 At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne,  
 In Galice at Seint-Jame, and at Coloigne.  
 She koude muchel of wandrynge by the weye.  
 Gat-tothed was she, soothly for to seye. 470  
 Upon an amblere esily she sat,  
 Ywympled wel, and on hir heed an hat  
 As brood as is a bokeler or a targe;  
 A foot-mantel aboute hir hipes large,  
 And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe. 475  
 In felaweshipe wel koude she laughe and carpe.  
 Of remedies of love she knew per chaunce,  
 For she koude of that art the olde daunce.

A good man was ther of religioun,  
 And was a povre PERSON OF A TOUN, 480  
 But riche he was of hooly thoght and werk.  
 He was also a lerned man, a clerk,  
 That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche;  
 His parisshe devoutly wolde he teche.  
 Benynghe he was, and wonder diligent, 485  
 And in adversitee ful pacient,  
 And swich he was ypreved ofte sithes.  
 Ful looth were hym to cursen for his tithes,  
 But rather wolde he yeven, out of doute,  
 Unto his povre parisshe aboute 490  
 Of his offryng and eek of his substaunce.  
 He koude in litel thyng have suffisaunce.  
 Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer asonder,  
 But he ne lefte nat, for reyn ne thonder,  
 In siknesse nor in meschief to visite 495  
 The ferreste in his parisshe, muche and lite,  
 Upon his feet, and in his hand a staf.  
 This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf,  
 That first he wroghte, and afterward he taughte.  
 Out of the gosple he tho wordes caughte, 500  
 And this figure he added eek therto,  
 That if gold ruste, what shal iren do?  
 For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,  
 No wonder is a lewed man to ruste;  
 And shame it is, if a prest take keep, 505  
 A shiten shepherde and a clene sheep.  
 Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive,  
 By his clenness, how that his sheep sholde lyve.  
 He sette nat his benefice to hyre  
 And leet his sheep encombred in the myre 510

And ran to Londoun unto Seinte Poules  
 To seken hym a chaunterie for soules,  
 Or with a bretherhed to been witholde;  
 But dwelt at hoom, and kepte wel his folde,  
 So that the wolf ne made it nat myscarie; 515  
 He was a shepherde and noght a mercenarie.  
 And though he hooly were and vertuuous,  
 He was to synful men nat despitous,  
 Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne,  
 But in his techyng discreet and benygne; 520  
 To drawen folk to hevене by fairnesse,  
 By good ensample, this was his bisynesse.  
 But it were any persone obstinat,  
 What so he were, of heigh or lough estat,  
 Hym wolde he snybben sharply for the nonys. 525  
 A better preest I trowe, that nowher noon ys.  
 He waited after no pompe and reverence,  
 Ne maked him a spiced conscience,  
 But Cristes loore, and Hise apostles twelve  
 He taughte, but first he folwed it hymselfe. 530

With hym ther was a PLOWMAN, was his brother,  
 That hadde ylad of dong ful many a fother;  
 A trewe swynkere and a good was he,  
 Lyvyng in pees and parfit charitee.  
 God loved he best with al his hoole herte 535  
 At alle tymes, thogh him gamed or smerte,  
 And thanne his neighebor right as hym-selve.  
 He wolde thresshe, and therto dyke and delve,  
 For Cristes sake, for every povre wight  
 Withouten hire, if it lay in his myght. 540  
 Hise tithes payed he ful faire and wel,  
 Bothe of his propre swynk and his catel.  
 In a tabard he rood, upon a mere.

Ther was also a REVE and a MILLERE,  
 A SOMNOUR and a PARDONER also, 545  
 A MAUNCIPLE, and myself - ther were namo.

The MILLERE was a stout carl for the nones;  
 Ful byg he was of brawn and eek of bones-  
 That proved wel, for over al ther he cam  
 At wrastlyng he wolde have alwey the ram. 550  
 He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre,  
 Ther was no dore that he nolde heve of harre,  
 Or breke it at a rennyng with his heed.  
 His berd as any sowe or fox was reed,

And therto brood, as though it were a spade. 555  
 Upon the cop right of his nose he hade  
 A werte, and thereon stood a toft of herys,  
 Reed as the brustles of a sowes erys;  
 Hise nosethirles blake were and wyde.  
 A swerd and bokeler bar he by his syde. 560  
 His mouth as greet was as a greet forneys.  
 He was a janglere and a goliardeys,  
 And that was moost of synne and harlotries.  
 Wel koude he stelen corn, and tollen thries;  
 And yet he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee. 565  
 A whit cote and a blew hood wered he.  
 A baggepipe wel koude he blowe and sowne,  
 And therwithal he broghte us out of towne.

A gentil MAUNCIPLE was ther of a temple,  
 Of which achatours myghte take exemple 570  
 For to be wise in byynge of vitaille;  
 For wheither that he payde or took by taille,  
 Algate he wayted so in his achaat  
 That he was ay biforn, and in good staat.  
 Now is nat that of God a ful fair grace, 575  
 That swich a lewed mannes wit shal pace  
 The wisdom of an heep of lerned men?  
 Of maistres hadde he mo than thries ten,  
 That weren of lawe expert and curious,  
 Of whiche ther weren a duszeyne in that hous 580  
 Worthy to been stywardes of rente and lond  
 Of any lord that is in Engelond,  
 To maken hym lyve by his propre good,  
 In honour dettelees (but if he were wood),  
 Or lyve as scarsly as hym list desire, 585  
 And able for to helpen al a shire  
 In any caas that myghte falle or happe-  
 And yet this Manciple sette hir aller cappe.

The REVE was a sclendre colerik man.  
 His berd was shave as ny as ever he kan; 590  
 His heer was by his erys ful round yshorn;  
 His top was dokked lyk a preest biforn.  
 Ful longe were his legges, and ful lene,  
 Ylyk a staf, ther was no calf ysene.  
 Wel koude he kepe a gerner and a bynne; 595  
 Ther was noon auditour koude on him wynne.  
 Wel wiste he by the droghte and by the reyn,  
 The yeldynge of his seed and of his greyn.  
 His lordes sheep, his neet, his dayerye,  
 His swyn, his hors, his stoor, and his pultrye, 600

Was hoolly in this Reves governynge,  
 And by his covenant yaf the rekenynge,  
 Syn that his lord was twenty yeer of age,  
 Ther koude no man brynge hym in arrerage.  
 Ther nas baillif, ne hierde, nor oother hyne, 605  
 That he ne knew his sleighte and his covyne;  
 They were adrad of hym as of the deeth.  
 His wonyng was ful faire upon an heeth;  
 With grene trees shadwed was his place.  
 He koude better than his lord purchase. 610  
 Ful riche he was astored pryvely:  
 His lord wel koude he plesen subtilly,  
 To yeve and lene hym of his owene good,  
 And have a thank, and yet a cote and hood.  
 In youthe he hadde lerned a good myster; 615  
 He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter.  
 This Reve sat upon a ful good stot,  
 That was al pomely grey, and highte Scot.  
 A long surcote of pers upon he hade,  
 And by his syde he baar a rusty blade. 620  
 Of Northfolk was this Reve, of which I telle,  
 Bisyde a toun men clepen Baldeswelle.  
 Tukked he was as is a frere aboute,  
 And evere he rood the hyndreste of oure route.

A SOMONOUR was ther with us in that place, 625  
 That hadde a fyr-reed cherubynnes face,  
 For saucefleem he was, with eyen narwe.  
 As hoot he was and lecherous as a sparwe,  
 With scalled browes blake, and piled berd,  
 Of his visage children were aferd. 630  
 Ther nas quyk-silver, lytarge, ne brymston,  
 Boras, ceruce, ne oille of tartre noon,  
 Ne oynement, that wolde clense and byte,  
 That hym myghte helpen of his whelkes white,  
 Nor of the knobbes sittynge on his chekes. 635  
 Wel loved he garleek, oynons, and eek lekes,  
 And for to drynken strong wyn, reed as blood;  
 Thanne wolde he speke and crie as he were wood.  
 And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn,  
 Than wolde he speke no word but Latyn. 640  
 A fewe termes hadde he, two or thre,  
 That he had lerned out of som decree-  
 No wonder is, he herde it al the day,  
 And eek ye knowen wel how that a jay  
 Kan clepen "Watte" as wel as kan the pope. 645  
 But whoso koude in oother thyng hym grope,  
 Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophie;  
 Ay "Questio quid iuris" wolde he crie.  
 He was a gentil harlot and a kynde;

A better felawe sholde men noght fynde; 650  
 He wolde suffre, for a quart of wyn,  
 A good felawe to have his concubyn  
 A twelf-monthe, and excuse hym atte fulle;  
 Ful prively a fynch eek koude he pulle.  
 And if he foond owher a good felawe, 655  
 He wolde techen him to have noon awe,  
 In swich caas, of the ercedekenes curs,  
 But if a mannes soule were in his purs;  
 For in his purs he sholde ypunysshed be.  
 "Purs is the erchedekenes helle," seyde he. 660  
 But wel I woot he lyed right in dede;  
 Of cursyng oghte ech gilty man him drede,  
 For curs wol slee, right as assoillyng savith,  
 And also war him of a Significavit.  
 In daunger hadde he at his owene gise 665  
 The yonge girles of the diocise,  
 And knew hir conseil, and was al hir reed.  
 A gerland hadde he set upon his heed  
 As greet as it were for an ale-stake;  
 A bokeleer hadde he maad him of a cake. 670

With hym ther rood a gentil PARDONER  
 Of Rouncivale, his freend and his compeer,  
 That streight was comen fro the court of Rome.  
 Ful loude he soong "Com hider, love, to me!"  
 This Somonour bar to hym a stif burdoun; 675  
 Was nevere trompe of half so greet a soun.  
 This Pardonner hadde heer as yelow as wex,  
 But smothe it heeng as dooth a strike of flex;  
 By ounces henge his lokkes that he hadde,  
 And therwith he hise shuldres overspradde; 680  
 But thynne it lay by colpons oon and oon.  
 But hood, for jolitee, wered he noon,  
 For it was trussed up in his walet.  
 Hym thoughte he rood al of the newe jet;  
 Dischevelee, save his cappe, he rood al bare. 685  
 Swiche glarynge eyen hadde he as an hare.  
 A vernycle hadde he sowed upon his cappe.  
 His walet lay biforn hym in his lappe  
 Bretful of pardoun come from Rome al hoot.  
 A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot, 690  
 No berd hadde he, ne nevere sholde have;  
 As smothe it was as it were late shave,  
 I trowe he were a geldyng or a mare.  
 But of his craft, from Berwyk into Ware,  
 Ne was ther swich another pardonner; 695  
 For in his male he hadde a pilwe-beer,  
 Which that he seyde was Oure Lady veyl:  
 He seyde he hadde a gobet of the seyl

That Seint Peter hadde, whan that he wente  
 Upon the see, til Jesu Crist hym hente. 700  
 He hadde a croys of latoun ful of stones,  
 And in a glas he hadde pigges bones.  
 But with thise relikes, whan that he fond  
 A povre persoun dwellyng upon lond,  
 Upon a day he gat hym moore moneye 705  
 Than that the person gat in monthes tweye;  
 And thus, with feyned flaterye and japes,  
 He made the persoun and the peple his apes.  
 But trewely to tellen atte laste,  
 He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste. 710  
 Wel koude he rede a lessoun or a storie,  
 But alderbest he song an offertorie;  
 For wel he wiste, whan that song was songe,  
 He moste preche, and wel affile his tonge  
 To wynne silver, as he ful wel koude; 715  
 Therefore he song the murierly and loude.

Now have I toold you shortly in a clause,  
 Th'estaat, th'array, the nombre, and eek the cause  
 Why that assembled was this compaignye  
 In Southwerk, at this gentil hostelrye 720  
 That highte the Tabard, faste by the Belle.  
 But now is tyme to yow for to telle  
 How that we baren us that ilke nyght,  
 Whan we were in that hostelrie alyght;  
 And after wol I telle of our viage 725  
 And all the remenaunt of oure pilgrimage.  
 But first I pray yow, of youre curteisye,  
 That ye n'arette it nat my vileynye,  
 Thogh that I pleynty speke in this mateere,  
 To telle yow hir wordes and hir cheere, 730  
 Ne thogh I speke hir wordes proprely.  
 For this ye knowen also wel as I,  
 Whoso shal telle a tale after a man,  
 He moot reherce as ny as evere he kan  
 Everich a word, if it be in his charge, 735  
 Al speke he never so rudeliche or large,  
 Or ellis he moot telle his tale untrewe,  
 Or feyne thyng, or fynde wordes newe.  
 He may nat spare, al thogh he were his brother;  
 He moot as wel seye o word as another. 740  
 Crist spak hymself ful brode in hooly writ,  
 And, wel ye woot, no vileynye is it.  
 Eek Plato seith, whoso kan hym rede,  
 The wordes moote be cosyn to the dede.  
 Also I prey yow to foryeve it me, 745  
 Al have I nat set folk in hir degree



Heere in this tale, as that they sholde stonde.  
My wit is short, ye may wel understonde.

Greet chiere made oure Hoost us everichon,  
And to the soper sette he us anon. 750  
He served us with vitaille at the beste;  
Strong was the wyn, and wel to drynke us leste.  
A semely man OURE HOOSTE was withalle  
For to been a marchal in an halle.  
A large man he was, with eyen stepe— 755  
A fairer burgeys was ther noon in Chepe—  
Boold of his speche, and wys, and well ytaught,  
And of manhod hym lakkede right naught.  
Eek therto he was right a myrie man,  
And after soper pleyen he bigan, 760  
And spak of myrthe amonges othere thynges,  
Whan that we hadde maad our rekenynges,  
And seyde thus: “Now lordynges, trewely,  
Ye been to me right welcome hertely;  
For by my trouthe, if that I shal nat lye, 765  
I saugh nat this yeer so myrie a compaignye  
Atones in this herberwe, as is now.  
Fayn wolde I doon yow myrthe, wiste I how.  
And of a myrthe I am right now bythoght,  
To doon yow ese, and it shal coste noght. 770

Ye goon to Caunterbury - God yow speede,  
The blisful martir quite yow youre meede!  
And wel I woot, as ye goon by the weye,  
Ye shapen yow to talen and to pleye,  
For trewely, confort ne myrthe is noon 775  
To ride by the weye doumb as stoon;  
And therefore wol I maken yow disport,  
As I seyde erst, and doon yow som confort.  
And if yow liketh alle by oon assent  
For to stonden at my juggement, 780  
And for to werken as I shal yow seye,  
To-morwe, whan ye riden by the weye,  
Now, by my fader soule that is deed,  
But ye be myrie, I wol yeve yow myn heed!  
Hoold up youre hond, withouten moore speche.” 785

Oure conseil was nat longe for to seche.  
Us thoughte it was noght worth to make it wys,  
And graunted hym, withouten moore avys,  
And bad him seye his voidit, as hym leste.  
“Lordynges,” quod he, “now herkneth for the beste; 790

But taak it nought, I prey yow, in desdeyn.  
 This is the poynt, to speken short and pleyn,  
 That ech of yow, to shorte with oure weye,  
 In this viage shal telle tales tweye  
 To Caunterbury-ward I mene it so, 795  
 And homward he shal tellen othere two,  
 Of aventures that whilom han bifalle.  
 And which of yow that bereth hym best of alle,  
 That is to seyn, that telleth in this caas  
 Tales of best sentence and moost solaas, 800  
 Shal have a soper at oure aller cost  
 Heere in this place, sittynge by this post,  
 Whan that we come agayn fro Caunterbury.  
 And for to make yow the moore mury,  
 805 I wol myselven goodly with yow ryde  
 Right at myn owene cost, and be youre gyde;  
 And who so wole my juggement withseye  
 Shal paye al that we spenden by the weye.  
 And if ye vouche sauf that it be so,  
 Tel me anon, withouten wordes mo, 810  
 And I wol erly shape me therfore.”

This thyng was graunted, and oure othes swore  
 With ful glad herte, and preyden hym also  
 That he wolde vouche sauf for to do so,  
 And that he wolde been oure governour, 815  
 And of our tales juge and reportour,  
 And sette a soper at a certeyn pris,  
 And we wol reuled been at his devys  
 In heigh and lough; and thus by oon assent  
 We been acorded to his juggement. 820  
 And therupon the wyn was fet anon;  
 We dronken, and to reste wente echon,  
 Withouten any lenger taryynge.

Amorwe, whan that day bigan to sprynge,  
 Up roos oure Hoost, and was oure aller cok, 825  
 And gadrede us to gidre alle in a flok,  
 And forth we riden, a litel moore than paas  
 Unto the wateryng of Seint Thomas;  
 And there oure Hoost bigan his hors areste  
 And seyde, “Lordynges, herkneth if yow leste. 830  
 Ye woot youre foreward, and I it yow recorde.  
 If even-song and morwe-song accorde,  
 Lat se now who shal telle the firste tale.  
 As evere mote I drynke wyn or ale,  
 Whoso be rebel to my juggement 835  
 Shal paye for al that by the wey is spent.

Now draweth cut, er that we ferrer twynne,  
 He which that hath the shorteste shal bigynne.  
 Sire Knyght,” quod he, “my mayster and my lord,  
 Now draweth cut, for that is myn accord. 840  
 Cometh neer,” quod he, “my lady Prioressse,  
 And ye, Sir Clerk, lat be youre shamefastnesse,  
 Ne studieth noght; ley hond to, every man!”  
 Anon to drawen every wight bigan,  
 And shortly for to tellen as it was, 845  
 Were it by aventure, or sort, or cas,  
 The sothe is this, the cut fil to the Knyght,  
 Of which ful blithe and glad was every wyght.  
 And telle he moste his tale, as was resoun,  
 By foreward and by composicioun,— 850  
 As ye han herd, what nedeth wordes mo?  
 And whan this goode man saugh that it was so,  
 As he that wys was and obedient  
 To kepe his foreward by his free assent,  
 He seyde, “Syn I shal bigynne the game, 855  
 What, welcome be the cut, a Goddes name!  
 Now lat us ryde, and herkneth what I seye.”  
 And with that word we ryden forth oure weye,  
 And he bigan with right a myrie cheere  
 His tale anon, and seyde as ye may heere. 860