HAVEPOETRY.COM

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

THE SQUIRE'S TALE

THE PROLOGUE.

"HEY! Godde's mercy!" said our Hoste tho,* *then
"Now such a wife I pray God keep me fro'.
Lo, suche sleightes and subtilities
In women be; for aye as busy as bees
Are they us silly men for to deceive,
And from the soothe* will they ever weive,** *truth **swerve, depart
As this Merchante's tale it proveth well.
But natheless, as true as any steel,
I have a wife, though that she poore be;
But of her tongue a labbing* shrew is she; *chattering
And yet* she hath a heap of vices mo'. *moreover
Thereof *no force;* let all such thinges go. *no matter*
But wit* ye what? in counsel** be it said, *know **secret, confidence
Me rueth sore I am unto her tied;
For, an'* I shoulde reckon every vice *if
Which that she hath, y-wis* I were too nice;** *certainly **foolish
And cause why, it should reported be
And told her by some of this company
(By whom, it needeth not for to declare,
Since women connen utter such chaffare <1>),
And eke my wit sufficeth not thereto
To tellen all; wherefore my tale is do.* *done
Squier, come near, if it your wille be,
And say somewhat of love, for certes ye
Conne thereon as much as any man." *know about it*
"Nay, Sir," quoth he; "but such thing as I can,
With hearty will, — for I will not rebel
Against your lust,* — a tale will I tell. *pleasure
Have me excused if I speak amiss;
My will is good; and lo, my tale is this."

Notes to the Prologue to the Squire's Tale

1. Women connen utter such chaffare: women are adepts at giving circulation to such wares. The Host evidently means that his wife would be sure to hear of his confessions from some female member of the company.

THE TALE.<1>

Pars Prima. *First part*
At Sarra, in the land of Tartary,

There dwelt a king that warrayed* Russie, <2> *made war on
Through which there died many a doughty man;
This noble king was called Cambuscan,<3>
Which in his time was of so great renown,
That there was nowhere in no regioun
So excellent a lord in alle thing:
Him lacked nought that longeth to a king,
As of the sect of which that he was born.
He kept his law to which he was y-sworn,
And thereto* he was hardy, wise, and rich, *moreover, besides
And piteous and just, always y-lich;* *alike, even-tempered
True of his word, benign and honourable;
Of his corage as any centre stable; *firm, immovable of spirit*
Young, fresh, and strong, in armes desirous
As any bachelor of all his house.
A fair person he was, and fortunate,
And kept alway so well his royal estate,
That there was nowhere such another man.
This noble king, this Tartar Cambuscan,
Hadde two sons by Elfeta his wife,
Of which the eldest highte Algarsife,
The other was y-called Camballo.
A daughter had this worthy king also,
That youngest was, and highte Canace:
But for to telle you all her beauty,
It lies not in my tongue, nor my conning;* *skill
I dare not undertake so high a thing:
Mine English eke is insufficient,
It muste be a rhetor* excellent, *orator
That couth his colours longing for that art, * see <4>*
If he should her describen any part;
I am none such, I must speak as I can.
And so befell, that when this Cambuscan
Had twenty winters borne his diadem,
As he was wont from year to year, I deem,
He let *the feast of his nativity* *his birthday party*
Do crye, throughout Sarra his city, *be proclaimed*
The last Idus of March, after the year.
Phoebus the sun full jolly was and clear,
For he was nigh his exaltation
In Marte's face, and in his mansion <5>
In Aries, the choleric hot sign:
Full lusty* was the weather and benign; *pleasant
For which the fowls against the sunne sheen,* *bright

What for the season and the younge green,
Full loude sange their affections:
Them seemed to have got protections
Against the sword of winter keen and cold.
This Cambuscan, of which I have you told,
In royal vesture, sat upon his dais,
With diadem, full high in his palace;
And held his feast so solemn and so rich,
That in this worlde was there none it lich.* *like
Of which if I should tell all the array,
Then would it occupy a summer's day;
And eke it needeth not for to devise* *describe
At every course the order of service.
I will not tellen of their strange sewes,* *dishes <6>
Nor of their swannes, nor their heronsews.* *young herons <7>
Eke in that land, as telle knightes old,
There is some meat that is full dainty hold,
That in this land men *reck of* it full small: *care for*
There is no man that may reporten all.
I will not tarry you, for it is prime,
And for it is no fruit, but loss of time;
Unto my purpose* I will have recourse. *story <8>
And so befell that, after the third course,
While that this king sat thus in his nobley,* *noble array
Hearing his ministreles their thinges play
Before him at his board deliciously,
In at the halle door all suddenly
There came a knight upon a steed of brass,
And in his hand a broad mirror of glass;
Upon his thumb he had of gold a ring,
And by his side a naked sword hanging:
And up he rode unto the highe board.
In all the hall was there not spoke a word,
For marvel of this knight; him to behold
Full busily they waited,* young and old. *watched
This strange knight, that came thus suddenly,
All armed, save his head, full richely,
Saluted king, and queen, and lordes all,
By order as they satten in the hall,
With so high reverence and observance,
As well in speech as in his countenance,
That Gawain <9> with his olde courtesy,
Though he were come again out of Faerie,
Him *coulde not amende with a word.* *could not better him

And after this, before the highe board, by one word*
He with a manly voice said his message,
After the form used in his language,
Withoute vice* of syllable or letter. *fault
And, for his tale shoulde seem the better,
Accordant to his worde's was his cheer,* *demeanour
As teacheth art of speech them that it lear.* *learn
Albeit that I cannot sound his style,
Nor cannot climb over so high a stile,
Yet say I this, as to *commune intent,* *general sense or meaning*
Thus much amounteth all that ever he meant, *this is the sum of*
If it so be that I have it in mind.
He said; "The king of Araby and Ind,
My liege lord, on this solemne day
Saluteth you as he best can and may,
And sendeth you, in honour of your feast,
By me, that am all ready at your hest,* *command
This steed of brass, that easily and well
Can in the space of one day naturel
(This is to say, in four-and-twenty hours),
Whereso you list, in drought or else in show'rs,
Beare your body into every place
To which your hearte willeth for to pace,* *pass, go
Withoute wem* of you, through foul or fair. *hurt, injury
Or if you list to fly as high in air
As doth an eagle, when him list to soar,
This same steed shall bear you evermore
Withoute harm, till ye be where *you lest* *it pleases you*
(Though that ye sleepen on his back, or rest),
And turn again, with writhing* of a pin. *twisting
He that it wrought, he coude* many a gin;** *knew **contrivance <10>
He waited* in any a constellation, *observed
Ere he had done this operation,
And knew full many a seal <11> and many a bond
This mirror eke, that I have in mine hond,
Hath such a might, that men may in it see
When there shall fall any adversity
Unto your realm, or to yourself also,
And openly who is your friend or foe.
And over all this, if any lady bright
Hath set her heart on any manner wight,
If he be false, she shall his treason see,
His newe love, and all his subtlety,
So openly that there shall nothing hide.

Wherefore, against this lusty summer-tide,
This mirror, and this ring that ye may see,
He hath sent to my lady Canace,
Your excellente daughter that is here.
The virtue of this ring, if ye will hear,
Is this, that if her list it for to wear
Upon her thumb, or in her purse it bear,
There is no fowl that flyeth under heaven,
That she shall not well understand his steven,* *speech, sound
And know his meaning openly and plain,
And answer him in his language again:
And every grass that groweth upon root
She shall eke know, to whom it will do boot,* *remedy
All be his woundes ne'er so deep and wide.
This naked sword, that hangeth by my side,
Such virtue hath, that what man that it smite,
Throughout his armour it will carve and bite,
Were it as thick as is a branched oak:
And what man is y-wounded with the stroke
Shall ne'er be whole, till that you list, of grace,
To stroke him with the flat in thilke* place *the same
Where he is hurt; this is as much to sayn,
Ye muste with the flatte sword again
Stroke him upon the wound, and it will close.
This is the very sooth, withoute glose;* *deceit
It faileth not, while it is in your hold."
And when this knight had thus his tale told,
He rode out of the hall, and down he light.
His steede, which that shone as sunne bright,
Stood in the court as still as any stone.
The knight is to his chamber led anon,
And is unarmed, and to meat y-set.* *seated
These presents be full richely y-fet,* — *fetched
This is to say, the sword and the mirrour, —
And borne anon into the highe tow'r,
With certain officers ordain'd therefor;
And unto Canace the ring is bore
Solemnely, where she sat at the table;
But sickerly, withouten any fable,
The horse of brass, that may not be remued.* *removed <12>
It stood as it were to the ground y-glued;
There may no man out of the place it drive
For no engine of windlass or polive; * *pulley
And cause why, for they *can not the craft;* *know not the cunning

And therefore in the place they have it laft, of the mechanism*
Till that the knight hath taught them the mannere
To voide* him, as ye shall after hear. *remove
Great was the press, that swarmed to and fro
To gauren* on this horse that stoode so: *gaze
For it so high was, and so broad and long,
So well proportioned for to be strong,
Right as it were a steed of Lombardy;
Therewith so horsely, and so quick of eye,
As it a gentle Poileis <13> courser were:
For certes, from his tail unto his ear
Nature nor art ne could him not amend
In no degree, as all the people wend.* *weened, thought
But evermore their moste wonder was
How that it coulde go, and was of brass;
It was of Faerie, as the people seem'd.
Diverse folk diversely they deem'd;
As many heads, as many wittes been.
They murmured, as doth a swarm of been,* *bees
And made skills* after their fantasies, *reasons
Rehearsing of the olde poetries,
And said that it was like the Pegasee,* *Pegasus
The horse that hadde winges for to flee;* *fly
Or else it was the Greeke's horse Sinon,<14>
That broughte Troye to destruction,
As men may in the olde gestes* read. *tales of adventures
Mine heart," quoth one, "is evermore in dread;
I trow some men of armes be therein,
That shape* them this city for to win: *design, prepare
It were right good that all such thing were know."
Another rowned* to his fellow low, *whispered
And said, "He lies; for it is rather like
An apparence made by some magic,
As jugglers playen at these feastes great."
Of sundry doubts they jangle thus and treat.
As lewed* people deeme commonly *ignorant
Of thinges that be made more subtilly
Than they can in their lewdness comprehend;
They *deeme gladly to the badder end.* *are ready to think
And some of them wonder'd on the mirrour, the worst*
That borne was up into the master* tow'r, *chief <15>
How men might in it suche thinges see.
Another answer'd and said, it might well be
Naturally by compositions

Of angles, and of sly reflections;
And saide that in Rome was such a one.
They speak of Alhazen and Vitellon,<16>
And Aristotle, that wrote in their lives
Of quainte* mirrors, and of prospectives, *curious
As knowe they that have their bookes heard.
And other folk have wonder'd on the swerd,* *sword
That woulde pierce throughout every thing;
And fell in speech of Telephus the king,
And of Achilles for his quainte spear, <17>
For he could with it bothe heal and dere,* *wound
Right in such wise as men may with the swerd
Of which right now ye have yourselves heard.
They spake of sundry hard'ning of metal,
And spake of medicines therewithal,
And how, and when, it shoulde harden'd be,
Which is unknowen algate* unto me. *however
Then spake they of Canacee's ring,
And saiden all, that such a wondrous thing
Of craft of rings heard they never none,
Save that he, Moses, and King Solomon,
Hadden *a name of conning* in such art. *a reputation for
Thus said the people, and drew them apart. knowledge*
Put natheless some saide that it was
Wonder to maken of fern ashes glass,
And yet is glass nought like ashes of fern;
But for they have y-knowen it so ferne** *because **before <18>
Therefore ceaseth their jangling and their wonder.
As sore wonder some on cause of thunder,
On ebb and flood, on gossamer and mist,
And on all things, till that the cause is wist.* *known
Thus jangle they, and deemen and devise,
Till that the king gan from his board arise.
Phoebus had left the angle meridional,
And yet ascending was the beast royal,
The gentle Lion, with his Aldrian, <19>
When that this Tartar king, this Cambuscan,
Rose from the board, there as he sat full high
Before him went the loude minstrelsy,
Till he came to his chamber of parements,<20>
There as they sounded diverse instruments,
That it was like a heaven for to hear.
Now danced lusty Venus' children dear:
For in the Fish* their lady sat full *Pisces

And looked on them with a friendly eye. <21>
This noble king is set upon his throne;
This strange knight is fetched to him full sone,* *soon
And on the dance he goes with Canace.
Here is the revel and the jollity,
That is not able a dull man to devise:* *describe
He must have knowen love and his service,
And been a feastly* man, as fresh as May, *merry, gay
That shoulde you devise such array.
Who coulde telle you the form of dances
So uncouth,* and so freshe countenances** *unfamliar **gestures
Such subtle lookings and dissimulances,
For dread of jealous men's apperceivings?
No man but Launcelot,<22> and he is dead.
Therefore I pass o'er all this lustihead* *pleasantness
I say no more, but in this jolliness
I leave them, till to supper men them dress.
The steward bids the spices for to hie* *haste
And eke the wine, in all this melody;
The ushers and the squiers be y-gone,
The spices and the wine is come anon;
They eat and drink, and when this hath an end,
Unto the temple, as reason was, they wend;
The service done, they suppen all by day
What needeth you rehearse their array?
Each man wot well, that at a kinge's feast
Is plenty, to the most*, and to the least, *highest
And dainties more than be in my knowing.
At after supper went this noble king
To see the horse of brass, with all a rout
Of lordes and of ladies him about.
Such wond'ring was there on this horse of brass,
That, since the great siege of Troye was,
There as men wonder'd on a horse also,
Ne'er was there such a wond'ring as was tho.* *there
But finally the king asked the knight
The virtue of this courser, and the might,
And prayed him to tell his governance.* *mode of managing him
The horse anon began to trip and dance,
When that the knight laid hand upon his rein,
And saide, "Sir, there is no more to sayn,
But when you list to riden anywhere,
Ye muste trill* a pin, stands in his ear, *turn <23>
Which I shall telle you betwixt us two;

Ye muste name him to what place also,
Or to what country that you list to ride.
And when ye come where you list abide,
Bid him descend, and trill another pin
(For therein lies th' effect of all the gin*), *contrivance <10>
And he will down descend and do your will,
And in that place he will abide still;
Though all the world had the contrary swore,
He shall not thence be throwen nor be bore.
Or, if you list to bid him thennes gon,
Trill this pin, and he will vanish anon
Out of the sight of every manner wight,
And come again, be it by day or night,
When that you list to clepe* him again *call
In such a guise, as I shall to you sayn
Betwixte you and me, and that full soon.
Ride <24> when you list, there is no more to do'n.'
Informed when the king was of the knight,
And had conceived in his wit aright
The manner and the form of all this thing,
Full glad and blithe, this noble doughty king
Repaired to his revel as beforn.
The bridle is into the tower borne,
And kept among his jewels lefe* and dear; *cherished
The horse vanish'd, I n'ot* in what mannere, *know not
Out of their sight; ye get no more of me:
But thus I leave in lust and jollity
This Cambuscan his lordes feastying,* *entertaining <25>
Until well nigh the day began to spring.
Pars Secunda. *Second Part*
The norice* of digestion, the sleep, *nurse
Gan on them wink, and bade them take keep,* *heed
That muche mirth and labour will have rest.
And with a gaping* mouth he all them kest,** *yawning **kissed
And said, that it was time to lie down,
For blood was in his dominatioun: <26>
"Cherish the blood, nature's friend," quoth he.
They thanked him gaping, by two and three;
And every wight gan draw him to his rest;
As sleep them bade, they took it for the best.
Their dreames shall not now be told for me;
Full are their heades of fumosity,<27>
That caused dreams *of which there is no charge:* *of no significance*
They slepte; till that, it was *prime large,* *late morning*

The moste part, but* it was Canace; *except
She was full measurable,* as women be: *moderate
For of her father had she ta'en her leave
To go to rest, soon after it was eve;
Her liste not appalled* for to be; *to look pale
Nor on the morrow *unfeastly for to see;* *to look sad, depressed*
And slept her firste sleep; and then awoke.
For such a joy she in her hearte took
Both of her quainte a ring and her mirrour,.
That twenty times she changed her colour;
And in her sleep, right for th' impression
Of her mirror, she had a vision.
Wherefore, ere that the sunne gan up glide,
She call'd upon her mistress'* her beside, *governesses
And saide, that her liste for to rise.
These olde women, that be gladly wise
As are her mistresses answer'd anon,
And said; "Madame, whither will ye gon
Thus early? for the folk be all in rest."
"I will," quoth she, "arise; for me lest
No longer for to sleep, and walk about."
Her mistresses call'd women a great rout,
And up they rose, well a ten or twelve;
Up rose freshe Canace herselve,
As ruddy and bright as is the yonnge sun
That in the Ram is four degrees y-run;
No higher was he, when she ready was;
And forth she walked easily a pace,
Array'd after the lusty* season swoot,** *pleasant **sweet
Lightely for to play, and walk on foot,
Nought but with five or six of her meinie;
And in a trench* forth in the park went she. *sunken path
The vapour, which up from the earthe glode,* *glided
Made the sun to seem ruddy and broad:
But, natheless, it was so fair a sight
That it made all their heartes for to light,* *be lightened, glad
What for the season and the morrowning,
And for the fowles that she hearde sing.
For right anon she wiste* what they meant *knew
Right by their song, and knew all their intent.
The knotte,* why that every tale is told, *nucleus, chief matter
If it be tarried* till the list* be cold *delayed **inclination
Of them that have it hearken'd *after yore,* *for a long time*
The savour passeth ever longer more;

For fulsomness of the prolixity:
And by that same reason thinketh me.
I shoulde unto the knotte condescend,
And maken of her walking soon an end.
Amid a tree fordry*, as white as chalk, *thoroughly dried up
There sat a falcon o'er her head full high,
That with a piteous voice so gan to cry;
That all the wood resounded of her cry,
And beat she had herself so piteously
With both her winges, till the redde blood
Ran endelong* the tree, there as she stood *from top to bottom
And ever-in-one* alway she cried and shright;** *incessantly **shrieked
And with her beak herselfe she so pight,* *wounded
That there is no tiger, nor cruel beast,
That dwelleth either in wood or in forest;
But would have wept, if that he weepe could,
For sorrow of her; she shriek'd alway so loud.
For there was never yet no man alive,
If that he could a falcon well descrive;* *describe
That heard of such another of fairness
As well of plumage, as of gentleness;
Of shape, of all that mighte reckon'd be.
A falcon peregrine seemed she,
Of fremde* land; and ever as she stood *foreign <28>
She swooned now and now for lack of blood;
Till well-nigh is she fallen from the tree.
This faire kinge's daughter Canace,
That on her finger bare the quainte ring,
Through which she understood well every thing
That any fowl may in his leden* sayn, **language <29>
And could him answer in his leden again;
Hath understoode what this falcon said,
And well-nigh for the ruth* almost she died;. *pity
And to the tree she went, full hastily,
And on this falcon looked piteously;
And held her lap abroad; for well she wist
The falcon muste falle from the twist* *twig, bough
When that she swooned next, for lack of blood.
A longe while to waite her she stood;
Till at the last she apake in this mannere
Unto the hawk, as ye shall after hear:
"What is the cause, if it be for to tell,
That ye be in this furial* pain of hell?" *raging, furious
Quoth Canace unto this hawk above;

"Is this for sorrow of of death; or loss of love?
For; as I trow,* these be the causes two; *believe
That cause most a gentle hearte woe:
Of other harm it needeth not to speak.
For ye yourself upon yourself awreak;* *inflict
Which proveth well, that either ire or dread* *fear
Must be occasion of your cruel deed,
Since that I see none other wight you chase:
For love of God, as *do yourselfe grace;* *have mercy on
Or what may be your help? for, west nor east, yourself*
I never saw ere now no bird nor beast
That fared with himself so piteously
Ye slay me with your sorrow verily;
I have of you so great compassioun.
For Godde's love come from the tree adown
And, as I am a kinge's daughter true,
If that I verily the causes knew
Of your disease,* if it lay in my might, *distress
I would amend it, ere that it were night,
So wisly help me the great God of kind.** *surely **nature
And herbes shall I right enoughe find,
To heale with your hurtes hastily."
Then shriek'd this falcon yet more piteously
Than ever she did, and fell to ground anon,
And lay aswoon, as dead as lies a stone,
Till Canace had in her lap her take,
Unto that time she gan of swoon awake:
And, after that she out of swoon abraid,* *awoke
Right in her hawke's leden thus she said:
"That pity runneth soon in gentle heart
(Feeling his simil'tude in paines smart),
Is proved every day, as men may see,
As well *by work as by authority;* *by experience as by doctrine*
For gentle hearte kitheth* gentleness. *sheweth
I see well, that ye have on my distress
Compassion, my faire Canace,
Of very womanly benignity
That nature in your princples hath set.
But for no hope for to fare the bet,* *better
But for t' obey unto your hearte free,
And for to make others aware by me,
As by the whelp chastis'd* is the lion, *instructed, corrected
Right for that cause and that conclusion,
While that I have a leisure and a space,

Mine harm I will confessen ere I pace."* *depart
And ever while the one her sorrow told,
The other wept, *as she to water wo'ld,* *as if she would dissolve
Till that the falcon bade her to be still, into water*
And with a sigh right thus she said *her till:* *to her*
"Where I was bred (alas that ilke* day!) *same
And foster'd in a rock of marble gray
So tenderly, that nothing ailed me,
I wiste* not what was adversity, *knew
Till I could flee* full high under the sky. *fly
Then dwell'd a tercelet <30> me faste by,
That seem'd a well of alle gentleness;
All were he full of treason and falseness, *although he was*
It was so wrapped *under humble cheer,* *under an aspect
And under hue of truth, in such mannere, of humility*
Under pleasance, and under busy pain,
That no wight weened that he coulde feign,
So deep in grain he dyed his colours.
Right as a serpent hides him under flow'rs,
Till he may see his time for to bite,
Right so this god of love's hypocrite
Did so his ceremonies and obeisances,
And kept in semblance all his observances,
That *sounden unto* gentleness of love. *are consonant to*
As on a tomb is all the fair above,
And under is the corpse, which that ye wet,
Such was this hypocrite, both cold and hot;
And in this wise he served his intent,
That, save the fiend, none wiste what he meant:
Till he so long had weeped and complain'd,
And many a year his service to me feign'd,
Till that mine heart, too piteous and too nice,* *foolish, simple
All innocent of his crowned malice,
Forfeared of his death, as thoughte me, *greatly afraid lest
Upon his oathes and his surety he should die*
Granted him love, on this conditioun,
That evermore mine honour and renown
Were saved, bothe *privy and apert;* *privately and in public*
This is to say, that, after his desert,
I gave him all my heart and all my thought
(God wot, and he, that *other wayes nought*), *in no other way*
And took his heart in change of mine for aye.
But sooth is said, gone since many a day,
A true wight and a thiefe *think not one.* *do not think alike*

And when he saw the thing so far y-gone,
That I had granted him fully my love,
In such a wise as I have said above,
And given him my true heart as free
As he swore that he gave his heart to me,
Anon this tiger, full of doubleness,
Fell on his knees with so great humbleness,
With so high reverence, as by his cheer,* *mien
So like a gentle lover in mannere,
So ravish'd, as it seemed, for the joy,
That never Jason, nor Paris of Troy, —
Jason? certes, nor ever other man,
Since Lamech <31> was, that alderfirst* began *first of all
To love two, as write folk beforn,
Nor ever since the firste man was born,
Coulde no man, by twenty thousand
Counterfeit the sophimes* of his art; *sophistries, beguilements
Where doubleness of feigning should approach,
Nor worthy were t'unbuckle his galoche,* *shoe <32>
Nor could so thank a wight, as he did me.
His manner was a heaven for to see
To any woman, were she ne'er so wise;
So painted he and kempt,* *at point devise,* *combed, studied
As well his wordes as his countenance. *with perfect precision*
And I so lov'd him for his obeisance,
And for the truth I deemed in his heart,
That, if so were that any thing him smart,* *pained
All were it ne'er so lite,* and I it wist, *little
Methought I felt death at my hearte twist.
And shortly, so farforth this thing is went,* *gone
That my will was his wille's instrument;
That is to say, my will obey'd his will
In alle thing, as far as reason fill,* *fell; allowed
Keeping the boundes of my worship ever;
And never had I thing *so lefe, or lever,* *so dear, or dearer*
As him, God wot, nor never shall no mo'.
"This lasted longer than a year or two,
That I supposed of him naught but good.
But finally, thus at the last it stood,
That fortune woulde that he muste twin* *depart, separate
Out of that place which that I was in.
Whe'er* me was woe, it is no question; *whether
I cannot make of it description.
For one thing dare I telle boldely,

I know what is the pain of death thereby;
Such harm I felt, for he might not byleve.* *stay <33>
So on a day of me he took his leave,
So sorrowful eke, that I ween'd verily,
That he had felt as muche harm as I,
When that I heard him speak, and saw his hue.
But natheless, I thought he was so true,
And eke that he repaire should again
Within a little while, sooth to sayn,
And reason would eke that he muste go
For his honour, as often happ'neth so,
That I made virtue of necessity,
And took it well, since that it muste be.
As I best might, I hid from him my sorrow,
And took him by the hand, Saint John to borrow,* *witness, pledge
And said him thus; 'Lo, I am youres all;
Be such as I have been to you, and shall.'
What he answer'd, it needs not to rehearse;
Who can say bet* than he, who can do worse? *better
When he had all well said, then had he done.
Therefore behoveth him a full long spoon,
That shall eat with a fiend; thus heard I say.
So at the last he muste forth his way,
And forth he flew, till he came where him lest.
When it came him to purpose for to rest,
I trow that he had thilke text in mind,
That alle thing repairing to his kind
Gladdeth himself; <34> thus say men, as I guess;
Men love of [proper] kind newfangleness, *see note <35>*
As birdes do, that men in cages feed.
For though thou night and day take of them heed,
And strew their cage fair and soft as silk,
And give them sugar, honey, bread, and milk,
Yet, *right anon as that his door is up,* *immediately on his
He with his feet will spurne down his cup, door being opened*
And to the wood he will, and wormes eat;
So newefangle be they of their meat,
And love novelties, of proper kind;
No gentleness of bloode may them bind.
So far'd this tercelet, alas the day!
Though he were gentle born, and fresh, and gay,
And goodly for to see, and humble, and free,
He saw upon a time a kite flee,* *fly
And suddenly he loved this kite so,

That all his love is clean from me y-go:
And hath his trothe falsed in this wise.
Thus hath the kite my love in her service,
And I am lorn* withoute remedy." *lost, undone
And with that word this falcon gan to cry,
And swooned eft* in Canacee's barme** *again **lap
Great was the sorrow, for that hawke's harm,
That Canace and all her women made;
They wist not how they might the falcon glade.* *gladden
But Canace home bare her in her lap,
And softely in plasters gan her wrap,
There as she with her beak had hurt herselve.
Now cannot Canace but herbes delve
Out of the ground, and make salves new
Of herbes precious and fine of hue,
To heale with this hawk; from day to night
She did her business, and all her might.
And by her bedde's head she made a mew,* *bird cage
And cover'd it with velouettes* blue,<36> *velvets
In sign of truth that is in woman seen;
And all without the mew is painted green,
In which were painted all these false fowls,
As be these tidifes,* tercelets, and owls; *titmice
And pies, on them for to cry and chide,
Right for despite were painted them beside.
Thus leave I Canace her hawk keeping.
I will no more as now speak of her ring,
Till it come eft* to purpose for to sayn *again
How that this falcon got her love again
Repentant, as the story telleth us,
By mediation of Camballus,
The kinge's son of which that I you told.
But henceforth I will my process hold
To speak of aventures, and of battailes,
That yet was never heard so great marvailles.
First I will telle you of Cambuscan,
That in his time many a city wan;
And after will I speak of Algarsife,
How he won Theodora to his wife,
For whom full oft in great peril he was,
N'had he been holpen by the horse of brass. *had he not*
And after will I speak of Camballo, <37>
That fought in listes with the brethren two
For Canace, ere that he might her win;

And where I left I will again begin.
. . . . <38>
Notes to the Squire's Tale
1. The Squire's Tale has not been found under any other form among the literary remains of the Middle Ages; and it is unknown from what original it was derived, if from any. The Tale is unfinished, not because the conclusion has been lost, but because the author left it so.
2. The Russians and Tartars waged constant hostilities between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries.
3. In the best manuscripts the name is "Cambynskan," and thus, no doubt, it should strictly be read. But it is a most pardonable offence against literal accuracy to use the word which Milton has made classical, in "Il Penseroso," speaking of
"him that left half-told
The story of Cambuscan bold,
Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
And who had Canace to wife,
That owned the virtuous Ring and Glass,
And of the wondrous Horse of Brass,
On which the Tartar King did ride"
Surely the admiration of Milton might well seem to the spirit of Chaucer to condone a much greater transgression on his domain than this verbal change — which to both eye and ear is an unquestionable improvement on the uncouth original.
4. Couth his colours longing for that art: well skilled in using the colours — the word-painting — belonging to his art.
5. Aries was the mansion of Mars — to whom "his" applies. Leo was the mansion of the Sun.
6. Sewes: Dishes, or soups. The precise force of the word is uncertain; but it may be connected with "seethe," to boil, and it seems to describe a dish in which the flesh was served up amid a kind of broth or gravy. The "sewer," taster or assayer of the viands served at great tables, probably derived his name from the verb to "say" or "assay;" though Tyrwhitt would connect the two words, by taking both from the French, "asseoir," to place — making the arrangement of the table the leading duty of the "sewer," rather than the testing of the food.
7. Heronsews: young herons; French, "heronneaux."
8. Purpose: story, discourse; French, "propos."
9. Gawain was celebrated in mediaeval romance as the most courteous among King Arthur's knights.
10. Gin: contrivance; trick; snare. Compare Italian, "inganno," deception; and our own "engine."
11. Mr Wright remarks that "the making and arrangement of seals was one of the important operations of mediaeval magic."
12. Remued: removed; French, "remuer," to stir.
13. Polies: Apulian. The horses of Apulia — in old French "Poille," in Italian "Puglia" — were held in high value.

14. The Greeke's horse Sinon: the wooden horse of the Greek Sinon, introduced into Troy by the stratagem of its maker.
15. Master tower: chief tower; as, in the Knight's Tale, the principal street is called the "master street." See note 86 to the Knight's Tale.
16. Alhazen and Vitellon: two writers on optics — the first supposed to have lived about 1100, the other about 1270. Tyrwhitt says that their works were printed at Basle in 1572, under the title "Alhazeni et Vitellonis Opticae."
17. Telephus, a son of Hercules, reigned over Mysia when the Greeks came to besiege Troy, and he sought to prevent their landing. But, by the art of Dionysus, he was made to stumble over a vine, and Achilles wounded him with his spear. The oracle informed Telephus that the hurt could be healed only by him, or by the weapon, that inflicted it; and the king, seeking the Grecian camp, was healed by Achilles with the rust of the charmed spear.
18. Ferne: before; a corruption of "forne," from Anglo-Saxon, "foran."
19. Aldrian: or Aldebaran; a star in the neck of the constellation Leo.
20. Chamber of parements: Presence-chamber, or chamber of state, full of splendid furniture and ornaments. The same expression is used in French and Italian.
21. In Pisces, Venus was said to be at her exaltation or greatest power. A planet, according to the old astrologers, was in "exaltation" when in the sign of the Zodiac in which it exerted its strongest influence; the opposite sign, in which it was weakest, was called its "dejection."
22. Launcelot: Arthur's famous knight, so accomplished and courtly, that he was held the very pink of chivalry.
23. Trill: turn; akin to "thirl", "drill."
24. Ride: another reading is "bide," alight or remain.
25. Feastying: entertaining; French, "festoyer," to feast.
26. The old physicians held that blood dominated in the human body late at night and in the early morning. Galen says that the domination lasts for seven hours.
27. Fumosity: fumes of wine rising from the stomach to the head.
28. Fremde: foreign, strange; German, "fremd" in the northern dialects, "frem," or "fremmed," is used in the same sense.
29. Leden: Language, dialect; from Anglo-Saxon, "leden" or "laeden," a corruption from "Latin."
30. Tercelet: the "tassel," or male of any species of hawk; so called, according to Cotgrave, because he is one third ("tiers") smaller than the female.
31. "And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one Adah, and the name of the other Zillah" (Gen. iv. 19).
32. Galoche: shoe; it seems to have been used in France, of a "sabot," or wooden shoe. The reader cannot fail to recall the same illustration in John i. 27, where the Baptist says of Christ: "He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me; whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose."
33. Byleve; stay; another form is "bleve;" from Anglo-Saxon, "belitan," to remain. Compare German, "bleiben."
34. This sentiment, as well as the illustration of the bird which follows, is taken from

the third book of Boethius, "De Consolatione Philosophiae," metrum 2. It has thus been rendered in Chaucer's translation: "All things seek aye to their proper course, and all things rejoice on their returning again to their nature."

35. Men love of proper kind newfangleness: Men, by their own — their very — nature, are fond of novelty, and prone to inconstancy.

36. Blue was the colour of truth, as green was that of inconstancy. In John Stowe's additions to Chaucer's works, printed in 1561, there is "A balade whiche Chaucer made against women inconstaunt," of which the refrain is, "In stead of blue, thus may ye wear all green."

37. Unless we suppose this to be a namesake of the Camballo who was Canace's brother — which is not at all probable — we must agree with Tyrwhitt that there is a mistake here; which no doubt Chaucer would have rectified, if the tale had not been "left half-told," One manuscript reads "Caballo;" and though not much authority need be given to a difference that may be due to mere omission of the mark of contraction over the "a," there is enough in the text to show that another person than the king's younger son is intended. The Squire promises to tell the adventures that befell each member of Cambuscan's family; and in thorough consistency with this plan, and with the canons of chivalric story, would be "the marriage of Canace to some knight who was first obliged to fight for her with her two brethren; a method of courtship," adds Tyrwhitt, "very consonant to the spirit of ancient chivalry."

38. (Trancriber's note) In some manuscripts the following two lines, being the beginning of the third part, are found: -

Apollo whirleth up his chair so high,
Till that Mercurius' house, the sly…