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|    5    10    15       | Whan that Aprill with his shoures soote The droghte of March hath perced to the roote, And bathed every veyne in swich licour Of which vertu engendred is the flour, Whan Zephirus eek with his sweete breeth Inspired hath in every holt and heeth The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne Hath in the Ram his halve cours yronne, And smale foweles maken melodye, That slepen al the nyght with open ye (so priketh hem Nature in hir corages), Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages, And palmeres for to seken straunge strondes, To ferne halwes, kowthe in sondry londes; And specially from every shires ende Of Engelond to Caunterbury they wende, The hooly blisful martir for to seke, That hem hath holpen whan that they were seeke.  |
| 20    25    30     35            | Bifil that in that seson on a day, In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay Redy to wenden on my pilgrymage To Caunterbury with ful devout corage, At nyght was come into that hostelrye Wel nyne and twenty in a compaignye, Of sondry folk, by aventure yfalle In felaweshipe, and pilgrimes were they alle, That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde. The chambres and the stables weren wyde, And wel we weren esed atte beste. And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste, So hadde I spoken with hem everichon That I was of hir felaweshipe anon, And made forward erly for to ryse, To take oure wey ther as I yow devyse.

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|     40    45    50    55    60    65     70    75    80    85    90     95   100     105110115120125130 | But nathelees, whil I have tyme and space, Er that I ferther in this tale pace, Me thynketh it acordaunt to resoun To telle yow al the condicioun Of ech of hem, so as it semed me, And whiche they weren, and of what degree, 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, 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. 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. 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. At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene, And foughten for oure feith at Tramyssene In lystes thries, and ay slayn his foo. This ilke worthy knyght hadde been also Somtyme with the lord of Palatye 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 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 Al bismotered with his habergeon, 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 bacheler, 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 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. Syngynge he was, or floytynge, al the day; He was as fressh as is the month of May. Short was his gowne, with sleves longe and wyde. Wel koude he sitte on hors and faire ryde. He koude songes make and wel endite, Juste and eek daunce, and weel purtreye and write. So hoote he lovede that by nyghtertale. He sleep namoore than dooth a nyghtyngale. Curteis he was, lowely, and servysable, And carf biforn his fader at the table. A yeman hadde he and servantz namo At that tyme, for hym liste ride so, 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, (wel koude he dresse his takel yemanly: His arwes drouped noght with fetheres lowe) And in his hand he baar a myghty bowe. A not heed hadde he, with a broun visage. Of wodecraft wel koude he al the usage. 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 sharp as point of spere; A Cristopher on his brest of silver sheene. 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; Hire gretteste ooth was but by Seinte Loy; 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, For Frenssh of Parys was to hire 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 That no drope ne fille upon hire brest. In curteisie was set ful muchel hir lest. |
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