

CANTERBURY TALES:
COMPOSED For the Entertainment of All
Ingenuous young Men and Maids.

Edited by Robert Simola

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A T T H E I R

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Whituntide, or any other Time, especially on the long winter Evening,
to keep Wits pleasant Stories, witty
Jests, and delightful Songs, very proper
for either City, Town, or Country.

By J. CHAUCER, Junior.



Printed and Sold in Aldermary Church-
Yard, London

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CANTERBURY Tales.

A Canterbury Carrier, driving his Waggon a-long the Road, called at a house to drink, knowing the Man's Wife to be very kind to her guests; and that he might have the more opportunity for his design, acquainted her husband his horses were warm with travelling, so desired him to drive a little way, while he refreshed himself, and he would soon overtake him, and rid him of his charge, to the which, the inn-keeper readily consented. During which time, the carrier addressed himself to his kind landlady, in a more than ordinary manner, insomuch that there was nothing he required but she willingly consented to. In the interim, came by a gentleman who desired to drink at the inn: but perceiving a window, the amorous passages of lusty lovers, resolved as he could make no sport to spoil none; so rode on, and overtook the inn-keeper driving the waggon, and thus accosted him, Oh! my friend, said he, at such an inn, naming the House where the inkeeper lived, I saw a woman, and one I took to be a waggoner, so fast linked, as if they never intended to part. By my faith, said the landlord, it is my wife, but I'll be even with the rogue; so driving the waggon to a deep flowy place, he overturns it, leaving the horses stuck fast in the mire, and returning homeward, he met the carrier, who asked him where his waggon and horses were? O said the landlord, they are safe enough from

running away, for in yonder slough the waggon is overturned, and your horses are sticking in the mud. And pray what was your reason for that? said the waggoner? And what was your reason of your too much familiarity with my wife, replied the innkeeper? Because says the other, sweet opportunities are not to be slipped. Then answered the Landlord, Sweet meat requires sour sauce. So home he went, telling his wife how cunningly he had been revenged upon her gallant.

An unlucky boy in Canterbury, got a great many a rams horns together in a basket, went up and down the streets in the winter-time; crying here is choice of new fruit; at length an ancient gentleman that was the husband of a beautiful young wife, asked to see them; which as soon as he had, replied, You fool, do you think I want horns? No said the boy, tho' you are provided, yet I may meet with some body that is not; at which several spectators laughed heartily.

A certain shoemaker of Canterbury by his extravagancy had wasted his whole stock; his creditors came so fast upon him, he was obliged to pack up his St. Hughs bones, and march off. Travelling towards London, near Rochester by the

side of a wood stood a gentleman's house, and hard by a couple of turkies who upon his approach, cried out; Cobble, cobble, cobble, to which he angrily answered, it was a lye for it was well known he was no cobbler, but a Shoemaker. Being terribly vexed, observing the coast to be quite clear, he whips up one of the turkies, clap'd it under his coat, and was marching off, but considered he had as good to take the other for company, which he did; but the gentleman see him through a window and followed and overtook him. Said he Friend, what business have you with that turkey? Sir, said he, he abused me in calling of me cobbler, when 'tis well known I am a shoemaker. Aye. but said the gentleman, what do you intend to do with the other? Why truly, sir, said he, I take him to bear witness of my abuse.

At a coffee-house in Canterbury some gentlemen were together, one was asking What news they heard from London? Why, replies another, there were forty thousand men rose yesterday morning; which made them all wonder, and ask the reason. Said he, Only to go to-bed when night came; which occasioned much laughter.

A woman sitting with fish in Canterbury Market, would have some saying to men when they came to buy any thing. As a man was cheapening her fish,

says she to him, As you intend to have some of my fish in your belly, I would fain have some of your flesh in my belly. No says he, I cannot spare my flesh to such an ugly puss.—No, no, says she, I don't mean as you mean; I mean your nose in my arse

A certain Gentleman formerly of *Canterbury*, a little before his death, made his will, and bequeathed a considerable Portion to a niece; leaving his own brother as her guardian, and the young gentlewoman being near at age: this covetous old man fearing she would marry and lose all, resolves upon her destruction. The night was come, where this Guardian purposed to put his design into execution, when behold providence allotted a far better success to this virtuous and religious gentlewoman, for the same evening, a gentleman belated on the road, implores her favour for one nights lodging; which she granted, in consideration it was some distance from *Canterbury*, and no village near, it being dark and rainy, and he a stranger. All being in bed this wicked guardian with his accomplices, offers to break into the house; which the young Lady just hearing, runs to this strange gentleman's chamber begging her life of him, thinking he belonged to those without; but he protested by all that was sacred, he knew nothing of them but would spend the last drop of blood in her defence. In order to do which he

descends the stairs into the yard, where the rogues were breaking in and discharged his pistol; which happily shot one in the head; which so discouraged the rest, that they took to their heels and left the dead, dead body which proved to be the lady's uncle and guardian: This signal piece of service made the Lady so respect the gentleman, who was a younger brother and of small estate: that in a short time she made him her husband, living together in great prosperity and love, enjoying that which was so wickedly aimed at by her uncle.

Some company being at a tavern in Canterbury, one requested of another to pledge him, which he refused, saying, He resolved to leave off drinking, because it made him have a short memory, this made the other laugh and reply, He'd drink on still for it made him have a long memory, for since said he, I have used to drink hard, I'm a twelvemonth in remembering what I could call to mind a moment before; so I think I have a long memory.

A beautiful young gentlewoman of Canterbury, being wedded to an old man for his riches, he being as full of ice as she of fire, had a mind to see the difference between young and old flesh, shewed more than ordinary kindness for her serving man;

which she seeing, takes all opportunities to improve it; but she would not yield to his desires, unless he would contrive some way to cornuted him in his presence, and he not believe it; which set the young man to work, who told her he had hit of it, provided that she would pretend to long for the fruit of one of the highest trees in the garden, and leave him the management of the rest, which she did.—The old man calls his man to ascend the tree, to gather the fruit, who, as soon as he had got up, cried out, “O! master! master! leave off for shame; disengage yourself from my mistress, or some of the neighbours will see you.—The old man, amazed at this language, asked if the fellow was mad, and what he meant?—O sir, said the man, the tree is bewitched, or I cannot believe my own eyes, for I fancy I see you upon my mistress.—Come down, come down, said the master, and let me get up, and see if it seems so to me.—The young man comes down, and the old man goes up.—In the intrim he fell to work upon his mistress. The old man looks down, and seeing it, cries, In good faith it seems to me as it did to thee, for methinks I see thee as perfectly upon thy mistress as if it were so.—The old man descends, and thinks the tree bewitched, and orders it presently to be cut down, lest it should infect the rest—Thus was the old man fairly made a cuckold to his face, and would not believe it.

A tinker going through Canterbury, sounds briskly on his kettle, crying Have your any work for

a tinker? On which a shop-keeper living opposite the pillory, resolved to put a jest upon the tinker; so pointing to the pillory, bid him stop up those holes; to whom the tinker said, If you please to lend me your head and ears, I will find hammer and nails, and give you my labour into the bargain.

A young man by his extravagancy had spent all his estate, and keeping ill company, accustomed himself to get money by unlawful means. One morning going unto the cathedral to prayers, more to see for a booty than for any goodness, he happened to meet a country farmer, who had a purse with money it, which he perceiving, he soon made it his own, when meeting some of his companions, he told them of it, and invited them to a tavern, promising to treat them. Prayers being over, and the money missed, it made the loser to make a strict enquiry after it; which one hearing remembered the passages of our spark at the cathedral door, and acquainted him of it, advising him to take an officer and search for him at the tavern, and he need not question but find the money. When come where the company sat, and charging them stoutly with it, the sharper enquired the marks of the purses, and what sum was in it, pretending he had found it, to which the farmer answered, Just five pounds, at which he said it was so, but he had spent five shillings, and the rest he would return; but the loser would have his whole sum, or else he would have him before a magistrate; which our youngster seeing, and the money lying of

the table, he takes it and makes his escape. He had not ran far but an ass stood in his way, the offender taking hold of his tale pulled it off, when running on, he run over a woman big with-child, who thereby miscarried directly. Still running on, he ran against a ladder a plaisterer was upon at work, and flung the plaisterer on the officer, who had his arm broke, Seeing these mischiefs happen, and seaming he should commit more, suffered himself to be taken before a justice. The farmer made complaint for his five shillings The man for his ass's tail. The husband for the loss of his child. And the officer for his broken arm.—All which complaints being delivered against the delinquents, and seriously weighed by the magistrate, he considered that retaliation was the best method he could use. Therefore orders That since the loser would not bate five shillings spent, the offender should keep it till he could make up the sum, and then deliver it. As for the man whose ass's tail was pulled off, the offender should use the ass till it grew on again.—And for the woman who miscarried, the offender should take, keep, and lie with her, till such time she was as forward with child, as when she miscarried, and then deliver her to her husband. And lastly, for the officer whose arm was broke, he was ordered ascend the ladder, and the delinquent to stand under it, that the plasterer might throw it down and break the offenders arm—Thus was the order of the magistrace, but whether put into execution or no, we will leave the reader to imagine.

A beggar using always to go quite naked, was asked by a tender hearted charitable creature, how he could bear the cold in frosty weather.—O said he, I am face all over.

A plain country woman pressing hard to see the King, then upon his royal progress, and just coming out of the coach at Northampton, when she came close, and had well viewed his Majesty, By my trouth said she aloud, I have a handsomer man to my husband.—The king overhearing of her, turned about, saw, and came to her, saying, You may have a handsomer man than me to your husband, but pray do not speak so loud, for I am upon my preferment.

Another woman of the same cut and cunning, laboring hard to get through the crowd, to come near the King having cast her eyes round about his Majesty's person, and finding it to be but slender, and small of stature. O Lord, says she, speaking pretty high, what great things God can bring about small means.

A handsome young maid that waited on a physician's wife at Canterbury has a young man addressed himself to her, in hopes of gaining her love, and as she was but a servant, his visits were chiefly at night, when the rest of the family were I bed. Now it happened one night the young man was

not very well, and the maid out of her tender love, would go into her master's room, where the physic was, and fetch him something good; but he going with her, would be tasting several things till he took a dose of opium.—Now they being both returned, sitting a short time, the maid finds her love fallen asleep she jogs, but could not wake him, mistrusting what he had taken, and not knowing what to do, she puts him into a large chest that was in the room, as thinking he might probably recover by the morning. She goes to bed, and falls asleep, being late. Soon after a company of thieves beset the house, and all within being fast asleep, they broke in and bound all the family, taking a deal of gold, plate and linen; tied it up in a blanket and carrying it off, the blanket rent in the outer room, and all the booty fell out, but seeing the chest opened, and being deep, saw nothing at the bottom, in it they put the plate, linen, and money, and away they carry it to one of their homes, which was not very far off. The morning comes, the robbery is noised all over the city, and search made, but no discovery, the rogues having not time to divide the spoil, set it in one of their bed-chambers. Now the next morning our young lover awakes, struggles, and gets out of the chest, the woman only being in bed was frightened, out she gets, down stairs she runs crying Murder, which most of the neighbours hearing, ran directly to see what was the matter, and so discovered all the business, and upon further examination, our young lovers private enjoyment was made publickly known, the robbery very plain, and the perpetrators of it seized, sent to prison, and afterwards tried and executed.

There was a very grave old gentleman came into a tavern, where there were three young sparks drinking, to one of them saluted him with the name of Old Father Abraham, No said the other, It is old father Isaac.—No. said the other, It is old father Jacob.—No, replied the gentleman, I am neither, but Saul, the son of Kish, who came to seek his fathers three asses, and here I find them, and here I leave them.

A gentleman of Canterbury being to go to London, and having no opportunity of returning a great sum of money which he should have occasion for, takes it in gold, and sows it up in the waistband of his man's breeches, who was a lusty young fellow, but a coward fearing he might meet some opposition on the road, and that he should be soundly beat if the gold was not discovered, and no money sound about them he put five shillings into his own pocket, and gave his man twenty shillings in his, as it was his custom to order his man to pay upon the road, and give account thereof.—Now it happened when they were in a lonesome place, on a sudden started out of a wood three men, well mounted, two laying hold of the gentleman's horse's bridle, and one of the man's, with their pistols cocked, commanding them to stand. The gentleman deming them to be civil; but however, they were in earnest for the money. The gentleman

told them he had no more than to bear his charges to London, and putting his hand in his pocket, gave them all he had; and they going to his man, to see what he had, the gentleman calls unto him by his name, bidding him give those gentleman his money; which the fellow complied with, and they went away; but the fellow crying out aloud to his master, who was at a small distance from him, Must I give them the gold master? which they hearing, immediately returned, and search him, and took it away. The gentleman horribly vexed, said nothing; but before they went away he begged they would thrash him heartily; they being all alighted, belaboured him to purpose. In the mean time their horses grazing about, were not very near them.—The poor fellow feeling the severity of the hard blows, in a great rage drew his hanger, which he had by his side, and furiously lays about him, kills two of the rogues upon the spot, disables the other and takes the money back again with a larger sum from the said rogues, which his master gave him for his pains, though at the same time blamed him for his simplicity in speaking.

A countryman near Cambridge was saying, he had been bargaining with two women for some commodities: But says he, I found them both to be cheating, impudent and vile scolding whores.—Well, says one, as you prate so much of whores, does your daughter go to market to-morrow,

A citizen's wife being once in a very musing vein, sat with her legs wide; her husband said, My dear, your cabinet stands open.—Say you so, cries she, why don't you lock it then? for none keeps the key but yourself.

A parcel of boys washing in Bow River each asking a piece of dirt to stop the hole of another's bum, a wench being amongst them: one of the boys cries out, Here is one that has two holes, give me two pieces of dirt.

A merry SONG, fit to be Sung at
CHRISTMAS:

Now this happy Christmas season,
I present you with delight,
Since it is no more than reason,
For to pass away each winter's night.
Here's many a pleasant tale,
While you drink your nappy ale,
And in merriment abound,
Here is pastime to be found.

Then take my word, for it is true,
'Tis full of mirth and laughter too,
For when we're all met together,
It will plainly make appear,
To forget the winter weather,
Let us taste our dainty chear.

Minced pye with roasted beef,
This will soon afford relief.
Christmas comes but once a year,
Therefore let it now appear,
That Christmas shall have its due,
In feasting and in laughter too.

I pray let me come to the table,
Mistress Goose shall not go free,
I am sturdy, stout, and able,
And will make her yield to me.

Tho' she both stout and brave,
Either leg or wing I'll have,

Fearing not her spice and salt,
Since we have the Juice of malt:
I never hear but to subdue
The force of Pig and Capon too.

Then farther for our recreation,

Men and maids at cards to play,
Reason will not this refuse,
So we do not this abuse:
Then we may enjoy content
All the day of merriment,
In telling man a pleasant Jest
Which is for merriment exprest.

A pleasant SONG to be Sung at
EASTER
Tune of King James's Jig.

Now the black gale of winter is past,
The spring is returning with Flora at last,
Each green hill with primrose and violets are spread,
The tender young branches now hold up their heads.
Whereon the green birds their anthems did sing.
Which makes all the groves and vallies to ring;
O this is the triumph they make in the spring,
Now this to each maiden much pleasure doth bring,
Now Easter with holidays here is come on.
And robin takes Susan, and William has Nan.
For their recreation a walk they do take,
And give them stew'd pruands, custards, and cake;
And while they do thus in their blessings appear,

Then Robin is kissing and courting his dear;
And giving her cheese-cake and choice of good cheer,
Sweet Susan could wish it would last all the year.
Quoth William to Nancy pray let me prevail,
To have your admittance to tell you tale;
'Twill make us merry to pass away time,
Quoth Nancy begin then, I count it no crime.
Then merrily passing the hours away,
With Susan and Nancy so bonny and gay.
But night soon approaching no longer they stay,
But promise to meet them again on May-day.

A delightful SONG in Honour of
WHITSUNTIDE.

Now Whitsun Holidays they are come,
Each lass enjoys her mate,
The youthful gallants all and some
Their loves they do relate:
To be entire, both chaste and pure,
With many sweet words beside,
Then strait they advance, and call for a dance
For the honour of Whitsuntide.

Sweet William taking jumping Joan,
They dance a turn or two,
While Sarah sighing makes great moan
Lest John should not prove true.
But after all the football play,
And something else beside;
And thus in sport time glides away,
For the honour of Whitsuntide.

It is a most gallant sight to see,
The damsels how they trip.
Along the green with a merry glee,
Sometimes their feet do slip.
But they value it not a rush,
In sport they will abide;
The bells will ring and the maidens sing
For the honour of Whitsuntide.

Now when this pleasure is at an end,
And night approaches near,
Then every young man takes his friend,
Whom he esteemeth dear,
And down they sit beneath a tree,
Tell many a tale beside,
With many a kiss what harms in this?
For the honour of Whitsuntide.

FINIS.