

THE  
**Carpenter of Oxford,**  
OR, THE  
**Miller's Tale,**  
FROM  
**CHAUCER.**

Attempted in Modern *English*,

---

By **SAMUEL COBB. M. A.**  
Late of *Trinity College, Cambridge.*

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Inscrib'd to **N. ROWE Esq;**

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To which are added,

**Two Imitations of CHAUCER,**

**I. SUSANNAH and the Two ELDERS.**  
**II. Earl ROBERT's MICE.**

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By **MATTHEW PRIOR, Esq;**

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*L O N D O N:*

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## The ARGUMENT.

**N**ICHOLAS a Scholar of *Oxford*, practiseth with ALISON the Carpenter's Wife of *Osney*, to deceive her Husband, but in the end is rewarded accordingly.



T H E  
 Miller's Tale,  
 F R O M  
 C H A U C E R.  
 To N. R O W E Esq;



H I L O M in *Oxford*, an old *Chuff* did dwell,  
 A Carpenter by Trade, as Stories tell.  
 Who by his Craft had heap'd up many  
 (a hoard,  
 And furnish'd Strangers both with Bed and Board.

B

With

## The Miller's TALE.

With him a Scholar lodg'd, of slender means,  
But notable for Sciences and Sense.

Yet, tho' he took Degrees in Arts, his Mind  
Was mostly to *Astrology* inclin'd.

A Lad in *Divination* skill'd and shrewd,  
Who by Interrogations could conclude,  
If Men should ask him at what certain Hours  
The droughty Earth would gape for cooling  
(Show'rs,  
When it should Rain, or Snow, what should befall  
Of Fifty Things ; I cannot reckon all.

This learned *Clerk* had got a mighty Fame  
For Modesty, and NICHOLAS his Name.  
Subtle he was, well taught in CUPID's Trade,  
But seem'd as Meek, and Bashful as a Maid.  
A Chamber in this Hostelry he kept,  
Alone he study'd, and alone he slept.

With

With sweet and fragrant Herbs the Room was  
( dreſt,

But He was ten times sweeter than the best.

His Books of various size, or great, or small,

His *Augrim* Stones to cast accounts withal;

His *Aſtrolabe* and *Almagiſt* \* apart,

With Twenty more hard Names of cunning Art;

On ſeveral Shelves were couched nigh his Bed,

And the Press cover'd with a folding Red.

Above an Inſtrument of Music lay,

On which sweet melody he us'd to play;

So wond'rous sweet, that all the Chamber rung,

And *Angelus ad Virginem* † he fung,

Then would he Chaunt in good King DAVID's  
(Note,

Full often blessed was his merry Throat.

---

\* The Name of a Book of *Aſtronomy*, written by *Ptolemy*.

† The Angels Salutation to the Virgin *Mary*.

And thus the *Clerk* in Books and Music spent  
His Time, and Exhibitions yearly rent.

This *Carpenter* had a new married Wife,  
Lov'd as his Eyes, and dearer than his Life.  
The buxom Lass had twice Nine Summers seen,  
And her brisk Blood ran high in ev'ry vein.  
The Dotard, jealous of so ripe an Age,  
Watch'd her, and lock'd her, like a Bird in Cage.  
For she was Wild, and in her lovely Prime;  
But He poor Man! walk'd down the *Hill of Time*.  
He knew the Temper of a Youthful Spouse,  
And oft was seen to rub his aking Brows.  
He knew his own weak side, and dreamt in Bed  
She had, or would, be planting on his Head.  
He knew not *CATO*, for his Wit was rude;  
That Men should Wed with their similitude.  
Like should with Like in Love and Years ingage,  
For *Youth* can never be a Rhyme to *Age*.  
Hence

## The Miller's TALE.

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Hence Jealousies create a Nuptial War,  
And the warm Seasons with the frigid Jar.  
But when the Trap's once down, he must endure  
His Fate, and *Patience is the only Cure.*  
Perhaps his Father and a hundred more  
Of honest Christians, were thus serv'd before:  
Fair was his charming Consort, and withall  
Slender her Waste, and like a *Weasel's* small.  
She had a Girdle barred all with Silk,  
And a clean Apron, white as Morrow Milk.  
White was her Smock, embroider'd all before  
Which on her Loins in many Plaits she wore.  
Broad was her silken Fillet, set full high,  
And oft she twinkled with a Liquorish Eye  
Her Brows were arched like a beaded Bow,  
Like *Marble* smooth, and blacker than a *Sloe*,  
She softer far than *Wool*, or fleecy *Snow.*

Were

Were you to search the Universal round,  
So gay a Wench was never to be found.  
With greater brightness did her Colour shine,  
Than a new *Noble* of the freshest Coin.  
Shrill was her Song, and loud her piercing Note,  
No *Swallow* on a Barn had such a Throat.  
To this she skipp'd and caper'd, like a *Lamb*,  
Or *Kid*, or *Calf*, when they pursue their Dam.  
Sweet as *Metheglin* was her *Honey Lip*,  
Or hoard of *Apples* which in *Hay* are kept.  
Wincing she was, as is a jolly *Colt*,  
Long as a Mast, and upright as a Bolt:  
Above her Ancles laced was her Shoe,  
She was a *Primrose*, and a *Pigfnye* too.  
And fit to lig by any Christian's side,  
Or a Lord's Mistress, or a Yeoman's Bride.

Now,

Now, Sir, what think you, how the Case befell?  
This NICHOLAS, (for I the Truth will tell;) }  
Was a mere Wag, and on a certain Day, }  
When the Good Man, the Husband, was away, }  
Began to sport and wanton with his Dame, }  
(For Clerks are fly, and very full of Game) }  
And privily he caught her by *That same*. }  
My Lemman \* Dear (quoth he) I'm all on fire,  
And perish, if you grant not my desire.  
He claspt her round, and held her fast, and cry'd  
O let me, let me— never be deny'd.  
At this she wreath'd her Head and sprung aloof,  
Like a young frisking *Colt*, whose tender hoof  
N'e're felt the Farrier's hand, and never knew  
The Virgin Burden of an Iron Shoe.

---

\* Mistres.

Fye NICHOLAS, away your hands, quoth she,  
 Is this your breeding, and Civility ?  
 Foh ! Idle Sot ! what means th' unmanner'd  
(Clown)  
 To teize me thus, and toss me up and down ?  
 I vow I'll tell, and bawl it o'er the Town.  
 You're rude, and will you not be answer'd, No ?  
 I will not kiss you--prithee, let me go.

Here NICHOLAS, a young, designing Knave ;  
 Began to weep, and cant, and Pardon crave.  
 So fair he spoke, and importun'd so fast,  
 This seeming modest Spouse consents at last.  
 By Good St. THOMAS \* swore, her usual Oath,  
 That she would meet his Love-- tho' mighty loath.  
 ' If you, said she, convenient leisure wait ;  
 ' ( You know my Husband has a jealous Pate.

---

\* St. Thomas Becket.

‘ I will requite you; for if once the Beast  
‘ Should chance to find us out, and smell the Jest, }  
‘ I must be a Dead Woman at the least. }

Let that, quoth NICHOLAS, ne're vex your head  
He must be a meer learned Ass indeed,  
And very foolishly besets his Wile,  
Who cannot a dull Carpenter beguile.  
And thus they were accorded, thus they swore  
To wait the Time, as I have said before.  
And now, when NICHOLAS had wore away  
The pleasant time, in harmlesſ Amorous play.  
To his melodious *Pſalter* he flew,  
Play'd Tunes of Love, by which his Passion grew, }  
Then printed on her Lips a dear *Adieu*. }  
It happen'd thus, I cannot rightly tell,  
If it on *Easter* or on *Whitſon* fell ;  
That on a Holyday, this modest Dame  
To Church, with other honest Neighbours came.

In a good Fit to hear the Parson preach  
What the Divine Apostles us'd to teach.  
Bright was her Forehead, and no Summer's Day,  
Shone half so clear, so tempting, and so gay.

Now to this Parish did a *Clerk* belong,  
Who many a time had rais'd a Holy Song.  
His Name was **ABSALON**, a silly Man,  
Who curl'd his Hair, which strutted like a *Fan*.  
And from his jolly, pert, and empty head  
In Golden Ringlets on his Shoulders spread.  
His face was Red, his Eyes as Grey as *Goose*,  
With St. PAULS windows figur'd on his Shoes.  
Full properly he walk'd in Scarlet Hose,  
But light, and Silver colour'd were his Cloths,  
And Surplice white as blossoms on the *Rose*. }  
Thick Poynts and Tassels did the Coxcomb please,  
And fetously they dangled on his knees.

## The Miller's TALE.

11

He could let Blood, and shave your Beard or Head,  
But a mere *Barber Surgeon* by his Trade.  
Nay, he could Write and Read, and that is more,  
Than Twenty Parish Clerks could do before.  
Nay, he could write a Bond, and learnt from *France*,  
In Thirty motions how to Trip, and Dance.  
Could brisk and toss his twirling Legs in Air,  
Nice were his Feet, and trod it to a Hair.  
Songs would he Play, and not to hide his Wit  
Would squeak a *Treble* to his squawling *Kit* ;  
His Dress was finical, his Music queer,  
And pleas'd a Tapster's Eyes or Drawer's Ear.  
No Tavern, Brew-house, Ale house in the Town  
Was to the gentle *ABSALON* unknown :  
But he was very careful of his Wind,  
And never let it sally out behind ;  
To give the *Devil* his due, he had an Art  
By civil Speech to win a Lady's Heart.

This *Assalon*, so jolly, spruce and gay,  
Went with the *Censer* on the Sabbath Day.  
He swung the Incense Pot with Comly Grace,  
But chiefly would he fume a Pretty Face.  
His wanton Eye, which every where he cast,  
Dwelt on the *Carpenter's* fine *Dame* at last.  
So sweet and proper was his lovely Wife  
That he could freely gaze away his Life.  
Were he a *Cat*, this pretty *Mouse* would feel  
Too soon his Talons, a delicious Meal.

And now had *CUPID* shot a piercing Dart,  
As wet the Feathers in his wounded Heart.  
No offering of the handsom Wives he took,  
He wanted nothing but a smiling look,  
The Parish Fees refus'd, and said, the Light  
Of the fair Moon shines brightest in the Night.

Soon

Soon as the *Cock* had bid the Morning rise,  
The smitten Lover to his *Fiddle* flies.  
A hideous Noise his squeaking *Trilles* make  
And all the drowsy Neighbourhood awake.  
At the lov'd House some Amorous Tunes he play'd,  
And thus with gentle Voice he sung, or said.  
*Now, dear Lady, if thy Will be,*  
*I pray you that you will pity me.*  
And Twenty such complaining Notes he sung,  
Alike the Music of his *Kjt*, and Tongue.  
At this the staring *Carpenter* awoke,  
And thus his Wife, fair *ALISON*, bespake.  
Art Thou asleep, or art Thou deaf, my Dear?  
And cannot *ABSALON* at window hear?  
How with his Serenade he charms us all,  
Chanting melodiously beneath our Wall?  
Yes, yes, I hear him, *ALISON* reply'd,  
Too well, God wot; and then she turn'd aside.

Thus

Thus went Affairs, till *AB SALON* alas!  
Was a lost Creature, a mere whining *Aſſ.*  
All Night he wakes, and sighs, and wears away  
On his broad Locks and Dress, the live-long Day.  
To such a height his coating fondness grew  
To kiss the ground, and wipe her very Shoe.  
Where're she went, he like a Slave purſu'd  
With spiced *Ale*, and sweet *Metheglin* woo'd.  
All Dainties he could rap and rend, he got,  
And ſent her *Tarts* and *Cuſtards* piping hot.  
He ſpar'd no Cost for an expensive Treat,  
Of *Mead* and *Cyder*, and all sorts of *Meat*.  
Throbbing he ſings with his lamenting Throat,  
And rivals *Philomela*'s mouraſul Note.  
With Rigour ſome, and ſome with gentle Arts  
Have found a paſſage to Young Ladies Hearts:  
Some Wealth has won, and ſome have had the Lot  
To fall inamour'd of a Treating Sot.

Some.

Sometimes he *Scaramouched* it on high  
And *Harlequin'd* it with Activity.  
Betrays the lightness of his Empty Head,  
And how he could cut *Capers* in a Bed.  
But neither this nor that the Damsel move,  
For *NICHOLAS* has swept the Stakes of Love.  
The *Parish Clerk* has nothing met but Scorn,  
And may go Fiddle now, or blow his Horn.  
Thus gentle *ABSALON* is made her Ape,  
And all his Paffion turn'd into a Jape.  
For *NICHOLAS* is always in her Eye:  
True, says the Proverb, that the *Nigh are Sly*.  
A distant Love may disappointment find,  
*For out of Sight* is ever *out of Mind*.  
The Scholar was at hand, as I have told,  
And gave the Parish Clerk *the Dog to hold*.

Now

Now NICHOLAS thy craft and cunning try,  
That ABSALON may *De Profundis* cry.

Now when this Carpenter was call'd away  
To Work at *Osney*, on a certain day ;  
The subtle Scholar, and his wanton Spouse  
Were decently contriving for his Brows :  
Agreed, that NICHOLAS should shape a wile,  
Her addle-pated Husband to beguile.  
And, if so be the game succeeded right,  
She then would sleep within his Arms all Night.  
For both were in this one Desire concern'd,  
Alike they Suffer'd, and alike they Burn'd.  
Strait a new Thought leapt cross the Scholar's head  
Who at that instant to his Chamber fled.  
But to relieve his Thirst and Hunger bore  
Of Meat and Liquor a substantial store,  
And victual'd it for one long Day or more.



ALCE, shou'd your Husband ask for Us (quoth he)  
Reply in scorn, what's NICHOLAS to me?  
Am I his Keeper? help your silly Head!  
Perhaps the Man is Mad, asleep, or dead.  
My Maid indeed has thump'd this hour or more,  
And knock'd, as if she'd thunder down the Door.  
But He, a moaping Drone, no Answer gave,  
Fast as a Church, and silent as the Grave.

Thus did one *Saturday* entire consume,  
Since NICHOLAS had lock'd him in his Room.  
Nor was he Idle; for no *Lent* he kept,  
But eat, like other Men, and drank and slept.  
Did what he list, till the next Sun was new,  
And went to rest, as common Mortals do.

This Carpenter was in a grievous pain  
Lest NICHOLAS should over work his Brain;  
By Study lose his Reason or his Life —  
Well, by St. THOMAS, I don't like it, Wife.

The World we live in is a ticklish place,  
And sudden Death has often stopt our Race.  
I saw a Corpse, as to the Church it past,  
And the poor Man at work but *Monday* last.  
Run, DICK, quoth he, run speedily up Stairs,  
Thump at the Door, and see how stand affairs.  
Up strait he runs, like any Tempest flies,  
And knocks, and bawls, and like a Madman cries.  
Hoh! Master NICHOLAS, what mean you thus  
To sleep all Night and Day, and frighten Us?  
He might as well have whistl'd to the Wind,  
As from good NICHOLAS an answer find.  
At last he spy'd a hole; full low, and deep,  
Where usually the Cat was wont to creep;  
Here was discover'd to his wondring sight,  
The Scholar gazing with his Eyes upright,  
As if intent upon the Stars and Moon:  
And down runs He, to tell his Master soon,

## The Miller's TALE.

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In what array he saw this Studious Man :

The Carpenter to cross himself began.

And cry'd, St. FRIDESWILD, help us one and all!

Little we know what fate shall us befall.

This Man with his Astronomy is got

Into some Frenzy, and stark Mad, God wot.

This comes of poring on his cunning Books,

## Of his Moon-snuffing, and Star-peeping Looks.

Why should a silly Earth-born Mortal pry

## On Heav'n, and search the Secrets of the Sky !

## Well fare those Men, who no more Learning need

Than what's contain'd in the Lord's Prayer and  
(Creed,

Scholars sufficient, if they can but Read!

## Thus far'd a Sage Philosopher \* of Old,

Who walking out, as 'tis in Story told

\* Thales

Was so much with Astronomy bewitch'd,  
That his Star-gazing Clerk-ship was *beditch'd*.  
Ill Luck attends the Man, who looks too high,  
And can a Star, but not a Marlpit spy.  
But, by St. THOMAS, this shall never pass;  
Too well I love this gentle NICHOLAS.  
I'll ferret him, unless the Devil's in it,  
From his brown fit of Study in a Minute.

ROBIN, let's try if that an Iron Pur  
And your strong back can make this Scholar stir.  
Now ROBIN was a Lad of brawn and bones,  
And by the hasp heav'd up the Door at once,  
Which in the Chamber fell with dreadful sound,  
As would a Man, like you or me, astound.  
But NICHOLAS, did nothing do but stare;  
And like a Statue gape upon the Air.

This

This *Carpenter* was in a piteous fear,  
Because he did not, or he would not hear.  
Thought some deep *Melancholy* had impair'd  
His Brain, and that of Mercy he despair'd,  
For which the Student in his Arms he took  
With might and main, and by the Shoulders shook.  
Cry'd, *NICHOLAS*, awake! what? not a Word?  
Look down, despair not-- think upon the *LORD*!  
Then the Night-Spell he mumbled to himself,  
Bless Thee from Fiends, and every wicked Elf!  
He crost the Threshold, where a Devil might creep,  
And each small Hole, thro' which an Imp might  
(peep.

With solemn *Pater Nosters* blest the Door,  
And *Ave Marys* after and before.

At this the *Clerk* sent forth a heavy sigh,  
With Tears, and woful tone began to cry—  
*And shall this World be lost so soon? Ah! why?*

}

What

What do I hear ? the Carpenter reply'd,  
What say'ſt Thou, NICHLAS ? ſure Thou art beside  
Thy ſelf: Serve GOD, as we poor Lab'lers do,  
And then no harm, nor danger will enſue.

Ah ! Friend, quoth NICHLAS, you little think  
What I can Tell ; but first let's have ſome Drink.  
Then, my dear Hoſt, Thou ſhalt in private learn  
Some certain things, which Thee and Me concern.  
It shall no Mortal but your ſelf avail ;  
Then fetch a *Wincheſter* of mighty Ale.

And now when both had drank an equal ſhare,  
Cries NICHLAS, fit down, and draw your Chair.  
But first, ſweet Landlord, you muſt take an Oath,  
To no Man living to betray the 'Troth.

For, trust me, what I'm going to relate  
Is *Revelation*, and as ſure as Fate.

And if you tell, this Vengeance will enſue,  
No Hare in *March*, will be ſo Mad as You.

Nay,

Nay, quoth mine Host, I am no Blab, not I,  
And hang me, if you catch me in a Lye.  
I would not tell, tho' 'twere to save my Life,  
To Chick or Child, to Man, or Maid, or Wife.

Now, JOHN, quoth NICHOLAS, I will not hide  
What by my Art I have of late descry'd ;  
How, as I por'd upon fair CYNTHIA'S Light,  
Should fall, on *Monday* next, at Quarter Night,  
A Rain, so sudden and so long to boot,  
That NOAH'S Flood was but a Spoonful to't.  
This World within the Compas of an hour  
Shall all be drown'd, so hideous is the shower, }  
As will the Cattle, and Mankind devour. }  
Cries then this silly Man, Alas, my Wife !  
My bosom-comfort, and my better Life !  
And must She drown, and perish with the rest ?  
My ALISON, the darling of my Breast ?

At

At this well nigh he swoon'd, o'erwhelm'd with  
(grief,  
Fetch'd a deep sigh, And is there no Relief ;  
No Remedy, he cry'd, no succour left ?  
Are we alas ! of every Hope bereft ?  
No, by no means, quoth this designing Clerk,  
Be of good heart, and by Instruction Work.  
For if by NICHOLAS you will be led,  
And build no Castles in your own wild Head,  
None so secure : for SOLOMON says true,  
*Work all by Councel, and you cannot rue.*  
If you'l be govern'd, and be rul'd by me,  
I'll undertake to save Thy Wife and Thee.  
By my own Art against the Flood prevail,  
And make no use of either Mast or Sail.  
Have you not heard, how, when the World was  
(naught,  
NOAH by Heavenly Inspiration taught ——

(Ay

(Ay, ay, quoth JOHN, I've in my Bible found  
That once upon a time the World was drown'd.)  
Hast thou not heard how NOAH was concern'd  
For his dear Wife, and how his Bowels yearn'd.  
Till he had built and furnish'd out a Bark,  
And lodg'd her with her Children in the Ark.  
Now Expedition, is the Soul and Life  
Of Busines; if you love your Self or Wife,  
Run, Fly--- for in this Case it is a Crime  
To loyter, or to lose an Inch of Time.  
For ALISON, your self, and me provide  
Three kneading Troughs, to Sail upon the Tide.  
But take most special care, that they be large,  
In which a Man may swim, as in a Barge.  
Let them be victuall'd well, and see you lay  
Sufficient stores against a rainy Day.  
Enough to serve You twenty hours, and more,  
For then the Flood will swage, and not before.

But one thing let me whisper in your Ear,  
Let not thy sturdy Servant ROBIN hear,  
Nor bonny GILLIAN know what I relate ;  
I must not utter the Decrees of Fate.  
Ask me not Reasons why I cannot save  
Your trusty Serving-Maid, and honest Knave.  
Suffice it thee ; unless Thy Wits be mad,  
To have as great a Grace, as NOAH had.  
Do you make haste, and mind the grand Affair ;  
To save your Wife shall be my proper care.  
But when these kneading Tubs are ready made  
Which may secure us, when the Floods invade ;  
See, that you hang them in the roof full high,  
That none our Providential Plot descry.  
And when Thou hast convey'd sufficient store  
Of Meats and Drink, as I have said before,  
And put a sharpened Ax in every Boat,  
To cut the Cord, and set us all afloat ;

Then

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Then thro' the *Gable* of the House, which lies  
Above the Stable, and the Garden spies,  
Break out a hole, so very large and wide,  
Thro' which our Tubs may Sail upon the Tide.

Then wilt thou so much Mirth and Pleasure take  
In swimming, as the white Duck and the Drake.  
Then will I cry, Hoh ! ALISON, and JOHN,  
Be merry, for the Flood will pass anon.  
Then wilt Thou answer, Master NICHOLAY,  
Good morrow, for I see it is broad Day.  
Then shall we reign, as Emperors for Life,  
O'er all the World, like NOAH, and his Wife.  
But one thing I almost forgot to tell  
Which now comes in my head, (and mark me well)  
That on that very Night we go aboard,  
All must be hush'd, and whisper not a word.  
But all the time employ our holy mind  
In earnest Prayers ; For thus has Heav'n injoynd.

You and your Wife must take a separate place,  
Nor is there any Sin in such a Case.

To morrow Night, when Men are fast asleep,  
We to our Kneading Tubs will flyly creep.

There will we sit, each in his Ship apart,  
And wait the Deluge with a patient heart.

Go now ; I have no longer time to spare  
In Sermoning, use Expeditious care.

Your apprehension needs no more advice:  
*One single Word's sufficient for the Wife.*

And none, Dear Landlord, can your Wit inform;  
Go, save our Lives from this impending storm.

Away hies JOHN, with melancholy look,  
And sigh'd, and groan'd, at every step he took.  
To ALISON he does his fate deplore,  
And tells a Secret which she knew before.

But

But yet she trembl'd, like an *Aspin* leaf,  
And seem'd to perish with dissembled grief.  
Crying, Alas! What shall I do?— begone..  
Help us to 'scape, or we are all undone.  
I am thy true and very wedded Wife,  
Go, dear, dear Spouse, and help to save my Life.

*What strong impressions does Affection give ?*  
*By fancy Men have often ceas'd to live.*  
*How're absurd things in themselves appear,*  
*Weak Minds are apt to credit, what they fear.*

This silly Carpenter is almost *Wood*,  
And thinks of nothing else, but *NOAH*'s Flood.  
Believes he sees it, and begins to quake,  
And all for *ALISON*, his Hony's sake.  
He's over-run with Sorrows and with fear,  
And sends forth many a Groan, and many a Tear.

A Kneading Trough, a Tub, and \* Kemeling  
 He gets by Stealth, and sends them to his Inn.  
 He makes Three Ladders, whence he climbs aloof,  
 And privately he hangs them in the Roof.  
 But first he victual'd them, both Trough, and Tub,  
 With Bread and Chese, and Bottles fill'd with  
 (mighty Bub.  
 Enough o'Conscience to relieve their Fast,  
 And be sufficient for a Day's Repast.

But e're this Preparation had been made,  
 He sent to LONDON both his Man and Maid,  
 On certain matters, which concern'd his Trade. }  
 }

And now came on the fatal *Monday* Night,  
 Barr'd are the Doors, out goes the Candle light.  
 And when all things in readiness were set,  
 These Three their Ladders take, and up they get.

---

\* Brewer's Vesse'

Now

Now *Pater-Noster*, \* *clum*, said ALISON,  
And *clum*, quoth NICHOLAS, and *clum*, quoth JOHN.  
This Carpenter his *Orisons* did say,  
*For Men in fear are very apt to pray.*  
Silent he waited, when the Skies would pour  
This unaccountable, and dismal Shower.

And now at † *Curfew* time, dead Sleep began  
To fall upon this easi<sup>y</sup>, simple Man.  
Who, after so much care and business past,  
And spent with sad concern, was quickly fast.

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\* A Note of Silence.

† *Curfew*, WILLIAM the Conqueror, in the first Year of his Reign, commanded that in every Town and Village a Bell should be rung every Night, at Eight of the Clock, and that all People should then put out their Fire and Caddle and go to Bed. The Ringing of this Bell, was called *Curfew*, that is, Cover Fire.

Soft down the Ladder stole this Loving Pair,  
Good NICHOLAS, and ALISON the Fair ;  
Then without speaking to the Bed they creep  
Of JOHN, poor Cuckold ! who was fast asleep.  
There all the Night they revel, sport, and toy,  
And act the merry Scene of Amorous Joy ;  
Till that the Bell of *Lauds* began to ring,  
And the fat Fryars in the Chancel sing.

The Parish Clerk, this Amorous ABSALON,  
Who over Head and Ears in Love is gone,  
At *Osney* happen'd with a Jovial Crew  
To spend the *Monday*, as they us'd to do ;  
There pulls a certain Fryar by the Sleeve,  
With Pardon begg'd, and Father, By your leave,  
When saw you JOHN the Carpenter, he cries, }  
Last *Saturday*, the Cloisterer replies, }  
Since when I have not seen him with these Eyes ; }

Perhaps

Perhaps Abroad he's playing fast and loose ;  
 Or fetching Timber for the Abbot's Use,  
 And lodges at the *Graunge* a Day or two,  
 Or else at Home — I know no more than you.

This made NAB's boiling Blood with Pleasure  
 (start,

The News rejoyc'd the Cockles of his Heart.  
 Now is my time, thinks he ; the Moon is bright,  
 Nor care I, if I travel all the Night ;  
 For at his Door, since Day began to spring,  
 I've seen, like him, no kind of Man or thing.

It is resolv'd ; to ALISON I'll go,  
 When the first Morning Cock begins to crow ;  
 And to her Window privately repair,  
 Then knock, and tell her my tormenting Care.  
 I'll open all my Breast, and ease my Heart,  
 For 'tis too much to bear Love's stinging Smart.

Some little Comfort sure I shall not mis,  
 At least she'll grant the Favour of a Kiss ;  
 My Mouth has itch'd all Day, from whence it seems  
 That I shall kiss : Besides my pleasant Dreams  
 Of Feasts and Banquets, whence a Man may gues  
 That I may haply meet with some success :  
 But for an Hour or two before I go,  
 I'll first refresh me with a Nap, or so.

Now the first Cock had wak'd from his Repose  
 The jolly ABSALON, and up he rose.  
 But first he dresses finical and gay,  
 And looks like any *Beau*, at Church or Play,  
 And brisk as Bridegroom on a Wedding Day. }  
 Nicely he combs the Ringlets of his Hair,  
 And wash'd with Rose-water, looks fresh and fair ;  
 Then with his Finger he her Window twang'd,  
 Whisper'd a gentle Tone, and thus harangu'd.

*Sweet*

*Sweet ALISON, my Honey-comb, my Dear,  
My Bird, my Cinnamon, your Lover hear.  
Awake, and speak one Word before I part,  
But one kind Word, the Balsam to my Heart.  
Little you think alas! the mighty Woe,  
Which for the Love of Thee I undergo.  
For Thee I swelter, and for Thee I sweat,  
And mourn as Lamb-kins for the Mother's Teat.  
Nor false my Grief, nor does the Turtle Dove  
Lament more truly, or more truly love.  
I cannot eat nor drink, and all for Thee ——  
Get from my Window, you Jack Fool, said she ;  
I love another of a different Hew  
From such a silly Dunder-head as you.  
If you stand talking at that foolish Rate,  
My Chamber-pot shall be about your Pate.  
Begone you empty Sot, and let me Sleep ——  
At this poor ABSALON began to weep,*

And his hard Fate with Sighs and Groans deplore,  
*Was ever faithful Love thus serv'd before?*  
 Since then, my Sweet, *what I desire 'sin vain,*  
*Let me bnt one small Boon, a Kiss, obtain.*

And will you then be gone, nor loyter here,  
 Quoth ALISON? *Ay certainly, my Dear!*

Make ready then —— Now, NICHOLAS, lye still,  
 'Tis such a Jest that you shall laugh you fill.

Ravish'd with Joy, NAR fell upon his Knees,  
 The happiest Man alive in all Degrees ;  
 In Silent Raptures he began to cry,  
*No Lord in Europe is so bleſk as I.*

*I may expect more Favours ; for a Kiss*  
*Is an assurance of a further Blisſ.*

The Window now unclasp'd, with slender-Voice,  
 Cries ALISON, be quick, and make no Noise ;

I would not for the World our Neighbours hear,  
For they're made up of Jealousy and Fear.

Then silken Handkerchief from Pocket came,  
To wipe his Mouth full clean to kiss the Dame.  
Dark was the Night, as any Cole or Pitch,  
When at the Window she clapt out her Breech  
The *Parisb Clerk* ne're doubted what to do.  
But ask'd no Questions, and in haft fell to.  
On her blind Side full favourly he prest  
A loving Kiss, e'er he smelt out the Jeſt.  
A back he starts, for he knew well enough,  
That Women's Lips are smooth, but these were  
(rough.)  
*What have I done, quoth he? and rav'd and star'd,*  
*Ah me! I've kifſ a Woman with a Beard.*  
He curſt the Hour, and rail'd against the Stars,  
That he was born to kis my Lady's —————

*Tebca*

\* *Tebea, she cry'd, and clapt the Window close,*  
 While ABSALON with Grief and Anger goes  
 To meditate Revenge ; and to requite  
 The foul Affront, he would not sleep that Night.  
 And now with Dust, with Sand, with Straw,  
 (with Chips,

He scrubs and rubs the Kisses from his Lips.

Oft would he say, *alas ! O basest Evil !*

*Than met with this Disgrace so damn'd uncivil,*

*I rather had went headlong to the Devil.*

*To kiss a Woman's —— ? oh ! it can't be born !*

*But by my Soul I'll be aveng'd by Morn.*

}

*Hot Love, the Proverb says, grows quickly cool,*  
 And ABSALON's no more an Am'rous Fool :  
 For since his Purpose was so foully crost,  
 He gains his Quiet, tho his Love is lost :

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\* A Note of Laughter.

And

And, cur'd of his Distemper, can defy  
All whining Coxcomb's with a scornful Eye :  
But for meer Anger, as he pass'd the Street,  
He wept, as does a School-boy, when he's beat.  
In a soft, doleful Pace at last he came  
To an old *Vulcan*, JARVIS was his Name ;  
Who late and early at the Forge turmoyl'd,  
In hammering Iron Bars, and Plough-shares, toil'd.  
Hither repair'd, by One or Two a Clock,  
Poor ABSALON, and gave an easy knock.  
*Who's there that knocks so late, Sir JARVIS cries ?*  
"Tis I, the pensive ABSALON replies,  
Open the Door. What ABSALON, quoth He ?  
The Parish Clerk. *Ab ! Benedicite.*  
*Where hast thou been ? some pretty Girl, I wot,*  
*Has led you out so late upon the trot.*  
*Some merry meeting on the Wenching score,*  
*You know my Meaning, — but I'll say no more.*

This

This ABSALON another Distaff drew,  
And had more Toweto spin than JARVIS knew:  
He minded not a *Bean* of all he said,  
For other Things employ'd his careful Head.  
At last he Silence breaks, *Dear Friend*, he cries,  
*Lend's that hot Pur, which in the Chimney lies;*  
*I have occasion for't, no Questions ask,*  
*To bring it back again shall be my Task.*

With all my Heart, quoth JARVIS, were it  
(Gold,  
Or splendid Nobles in a Purse untold,  
With all my Heart, as I'm an honest Smitb,  
I'll lend it Thee; but what wilt do therewith?  
For that, quoth ABSALON, nor care, nor sorrow,  
I'll give a good Account of it to Morrow.  
Then up the Culter in his Hand he caught,  
Tripp'd out with silent Pace, and wicked Thought.

Red

## The Miller's TALE,

41

Red-hot it was, as any burning coal,  
With which to JOHN the Carpenter's he stole.  
There first he cough'd, and as his usual wont,  
Up to the Window came, and tapp'd upon't.  
Who's there, quoth ALISON ? some Midnight  
(Rook,  
Some Thief, I warrant, with a hanging look.  
Ah ! God forbid, quoth this dissembling Elf,  
"Tis ABSALON, my Life ! my better self !  
A rich Gold Ring I've to my Darling brought,  
By a known Graver exquisitely wrought.  
Beside, a Posie, most divinely writ  
By a fam'd Poet, and notorious Wit.  
My Mother gave it me ('tis wond'rous fine)  
She clapp'd it on my Finger, I on thine,  
If thou wilt deign the favour of a Kiss —  
Now NICHOLAS by chance rose up to Piss,

G

## Thinking

Thinking to better, and improve the jest,  
He should salute his Breech, before the rest.  
With eager haste, and secret joy he went,  
And his Posteriors out at Window sent.

At this the Scholar let a rousing Fart.  
So loud the Noise, as frightful was the stroke,  
As Thunder, when it splits the sturdy Oak.  
The Clerk was ready, and with hearty gust  
The red hot Iron in his Buttocks thrust.  
Streight off the Skin, like shrivel'd Parchment,  
(flew,  
His Breech as raw as Saint BARTHOLOMEW.  
The Culter had so spoil'd his hinder part.

In

## The Miller's TALE.

43

In a mad fit about the room he ran,  
*Help, Water, Water, for a dying Man.*

Then NICHOLAS, to play the Counterfeit,  
With ALISON, cries *Murder* in the Street.

In came the Neighbours pouring, like the  
(Tide,

To know the reason why was *Murder* cry'd.

There they beheld poor JOHN, a gasping Man,  
Shut were his Eyes, his Face was pale and wan.

Batter'd his Sides, and broken was his Arm.,

But stand it out he must to his own harm.

For when he aim'd to speak in his defence,

They bore him down, and baffl'd all his Sense.

They told the People that the Man was Wood,  
And dream't of nothing else, but NOAH's *Flood*.

His heated fancy of this *Deluge* rung,

That to the Roof three kneading Troughs he  
(hung.

With

With which in danger he design'd to swim,  
And we, forsooth, must carry on the whim:  
He begg'd, and pray'd, and so we humour'd  
( him. } }

At hearing this, the sneering Neighbours gave  
An universal shout, and hideous Laugh.  
Now on the Roof, and now on JOHN they gape,  
And all his Earnest turn into a jape.  
He swore against the Scholar and his Wife,  
And never look'd so foolish in his Life.  
Whate're he speaks, the People never mind,  
His Oaths are nothing, and his Words are Wind.  
Thus all consent to scoff each serious Word,  
And JOHN remain'd a Cuckold on Record.

Thus

Thus Doors of Brass, and Bars of Steel are vain,  
And watchful Jealousie, and carking Pain  
Is fruitless all, when a good-natur'd Spouse  
Designs Preferment for her Husband's Brows.  
Thus ALISON her Cuckold does defye,  
And ABSALON has kis'd her nether Eye;  
While NICHOLAS is scalded in the Breech,  
My Tale is done, God save us all, and each!

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F I N I S.