

**Gay, John. Poems on Several Occasions. Vol. 2. London:
J. Tonson and B. Lintot, 1731. Vol. 2 contains “An
Answer to the Sompner’s Prologue of Chaucer, A
Tale.” 41-44.**

An Answer to the Sompner's Prologue of Chaucer.

In imitation of Chaucer' style.

The Sompner leudly hath his Prologue told,
And saine on the Freers his tale japing and bold;
How that in Hell they searchen near and wide,
And ne one Freer in all thilke place espyde,
But lo! the devil turn'd his erse about,
And twenty thousand Freers wend in and out.
By which in *Jeoffrys* rhyming it appears,
The devils' belly is the hive of Freers.

Now listeneth lordings! forthwith ye shall hear,
What happened at the house of *Lancashire*,
A misere that had londs and tenement,
Who raketh from his villaines taxes and rent,
Owned a house which emptye long y-stood,
Full deeply sited in a derkning wood,
Murmring a shallow brook runneth along,
Mong the round stones it maken doleful song.

Now there spreaden a rumour that everich night
The rooms ihaunted been by many a sprite,
The miller avoucheth, and all there about,
That they full oft' hearen the helish rout;
Some saine they hear the jingling of chains,
And some hath yheard the psautries straines,
At midnight some the headless horse imeet,
And some espien a corse in a white sheet,
And oother things, faye, elfin and elfe,
And shapes that fear createn to it selfe.

Now it so hape, there was not ferre away,
Of grey Freers a fair and rich Abbaye,
When liven a Freer ycleped *Pere Thomas*,
Who daren alone in derke through church-yerds pass,

This Freer would lye in thilke house all night,
In hope he might espyen a dreadful sprite.
He taketh candle, beades, and holy watere,
And legends eke of Saintes, and bookes of prayere.
He entreth the room, and looketh round about,
And haspen the door to haspen the goblin out.
The candle hath he put close by the bed,
And in low tone his *ave marye* said.
With water now besprinkled hath the floore,
And maken cross on key-hole of the doore.
Ne was there not a mouse-hole of the doore.
But he y-crossed hath by God his grace:
He crossed hath this, and eke he crossed that,
With *benedicite* and God knows what.

Now he goeth to bed and lieth adown,
When the clock had just stricken the twelfth soun.
Bethinketh hem now what the cause had ibeen,
Why many sprites by mortals have been seen.
Hem remembreth how *Dan Plutarch* hath y-sed
That *Casar's* sprite came to *Brute* his bed;
Of chains that frighten erst *Artemidore*,
The tales of *Pline*, *Valere*, and many more.
Hem thinketh that some murdere here been done,
And he mought see some bloodye ghost anone,
Or that some orphlines writings here be stor'd.
Or pot of gold laine deep beneath a board:
Or thinketh hem, if he mought see no sprite,
The Abbaye mought buy this house cheape outright.

As hem thus thinketh, anone asleep he lies.

Up starten *Sathanas* with saucer eyes.
He turneth the Freer upon his face downright,
Displaying his nether cheeks ful broad and white.
Then quoth *Dan Sathanas* as he thwacked him sore,
Thou didst forget to guard thy postern door.
There is an hole which hath not crossed been:
Farewel, from whence I came, I creepen in.

Now plain it is ytellen in my verse,
If Devils in hell bear Freers in their erse,
On earth the Devil in Freers doth y-dwell;
were there no Freers, the Devils mought keep in hell.