

Host:

Thou bel ami, thou Pardoner," he said,
"Tell us some mirth or japes right anon."

*good friend
jokes*

320 "It shall be done," quod he, "by Saint Ronion.

But first," quod he, "here at this ale stake,
I will both drink, and eaten of a cake."

tavern sign

And right anon these gentles 'gan to cry:

*gentlefolk
dirty stories*

"Nay, let him tell us of no ribaldry.

325 Tell us some moral thing, that we may lere
Some wit, and then will we gladly hear."

*learn
wisdom*

"I grant y-wis," quod he, "but I must think
Upon some honest thing while that I drink."

certainly

THE PROLOGUE

"Lordings," quod he, "in churches when I preach,
330 I pain me to have a haughty speech
And ring it out as round as goes a bell.

*ladies & gentlemen
take pains / impressive*

For I can all by rote that I tell.

know all by heart

My theme is always one, and ever was:

Radix malorum est cupiditas.

Greed is the root of all evils

His "credentials"

335 First I pronounce whence that I come

And then my bulls show I all and some.

papal letters

Our liege lord's seal on my patent —

on my letter

That show I first, my body to warrant.

to guarantee my person

That no man be so bold, nor priest nor clerk,

neither...nor

340 Me to disturb of Christ's holy work.

And after that then tell I forth my tales.

Bulls of popes and of cardinals,

Of patriarchs and bishops I show,

And in Latin I speak a words few

345 To saffron with my predication

To flavor my sermon

And for to stir them to devotion.

Among his "relics" is a bone that has miraculous powers when dipped in a well

Then show I forth my long crystal stones

glasses

Y-crammed full of clothes and of bones.

"Relics" be they, as weenen they each one.

they all think

350 Then have I in latoun a shoulder bone

in brass jar

Which that was of a holy Jew's sheep.³

`Good men, say I, take of my words keep:

take notice

If that this bone be washed in any well,

If cow or calf or sheep or ox swell

355 That any worm has eat or worm y-stung,

Take water of that well and wash his tongue,
 And it is whole anon. And furthermore,
 Of pocks and of scabs and every sore
 Shall every sheep be whole that of this well
 360 Drinketh a draught. Take keep eke what I tell: *Healed at once*
 If that the goodman that the beasts oweth *Heed also*
 Will, every week ere that the cock him croweth *the farmer who owns*
 Fasting, drinken of this well a draught, *before cockcrow*
 As thilke holy Jew our elders taught, *As that*
 365 His beasts and his store shall multiply.
 And sirs, also it healeth jealousy.
 For though a man be fall in jealous rage,
 Let maken with this water his potage, *his soup*
 And never shall he more his wife mistrust
 370 Though he the sooth of her default wost, *truth / knows*
 All had she taken priests two or three. *Even if*

A marvelous mitten

Here is a mitten, eke, that you may see. *a glove also*
 He that his hand will put in this mittén,
 He shall have multiplying of his grain
 375 When he has sown, be it wheat or oats —
 So that he offer pennies or else goats. *Provided / or silver*

Serious sinners will not be able to benefit

Good men and women, one thing warn I you:
 If any wight be in this church now *person*
 That has done sin horrible, that he *so that he*
 380 Dare not for shame of it y-shriven be, *confess it*
 Or any woman, be she young or old
 That has made her husband a cuckold — *has deceived her husband.*
 Such folk shall have no power nor no grace
 To offer to my relics in this place.
 385 And whoso findeth him out of such blame,
 He will come up and offer in God's name,
 And I assoil him by the authority *I'll absolve*
 Which that by bull y-granted was to me.' *by Pope's letter*

His skill and astuteness in preaching against avarice brings him profit, pride and pleasure

By this gaud have I won, year by year *this trick*
 390 A hundred marks since I was pardoner.
 I stand like a clerk in my pulpit, *a cleric*
 And when the lewd people is down y-set *ignorant congregation*
 I preach so as you have heard before
 And tell a hundred false japes more. *amusing lies*

395 Then pain I me to stretch forth the neck,
And east and west upon the people I beck
As does a dove sitting on a barn.

My hands and my tongue go so yern
That it is joy to see my busyness.

so fast

400 Of avarice and of such cursedness
Is all my preaching, for to make them free
To give their pence, and namely unto me.
For my intent is not but for to win,
And nothing for correction of sin.

pennies

405 I recke never, when that they be buried
Though that their souls go a black-berried.
For certes many a predication
Comes oftentime of evil intention
Some for pleasance of folk and flattery

*I don't care
picking blackberries
sermon*

410 To be advanced by hypocricy,
And some for vain glory, and some for hate.

to please & flatter people

His revenge on any enemy of pardoners

For when I dare no other way debate,
Then will I sting him with my tongue smart
In preaching, so that he shall not astart

respond, hit back

415 To be defamed falsely, if that he
Hath trespassed to my brethren or to me.
For though I tell not his proper name,
Men shall well knowen that it is the same
By signs and by other circumstances.

escape

*offended my colleagues
actual*

420 Thus quit I folk that do us displeasances.
Thus spit I out my venom under hue
Of holiness, to seemen holy and true.

color

*How to profit by preaching against greed, and taking offerings even
from the poorest*

But shortly mine intent I will devise:
I preach of nothing but for covetise.

*I'll tell
greed, avarice*

425 Therefore my theme is yet and ever was:
Radix malorum est cupiditas.

Thus can I preach against that same vice
Which that I use, and that is avarice.

which I practice

But though myself be guilty in that sin,
430 Yet can I maken other folk to twin
From avarice, and sore to repent,
But that is not my principal intent;
I preach nothing but for covetise.

to turn away

Of this matter it ought enough suffice.

435 Then tell I them examples many a one

Of old stories long time ago.
For lewd people loven tales old.
Such things can they well report and hold.
What? Trow you that whiles I may preach
440 And win gold and silver for I teach
That I will live in povertle wilfully?
Nay, nay, I thought it never truly.
For I will preach and beg in sundry lands.
I will not do no labor with my hands
445 Nor make baskets, and live thereby.
Because I will not beggen idly,
I will none of the apostles' counterfeit.
I will have money, wool, cheese and wheat,
All were it given of the poorest page
450 Or of the poorest widow in a villáge,
All should her children starve for famine.
Nay, I will drink liquor of the vine
And have a jolly wench in every town.

*ignorant laymen
retell & remember
Do you think ...
for teaching
poverty*

Even if given by

Even if

But he can tell a moral tale

But hearken, lordings, in conclusion,
455 Your liking is that I shall tell a tale.
Now have I drunk a draught of corny ale,
By God, I hope I shall you tell a thing
That shall by reason be at your liking,
For though myself be a full vicious man,
460 A moral tale yet I you tell can
Which I am wont to preach for to win.
Now hold your peace. My tale I will begin."

Ladies & gentlemen

THE PARDONER'S TALE

A story about three young men who gamble, drink, swear and frequent prostitutes

In Flanders whilom was a company
Of young folk that haunteden folly,
465 As riot, hazard, stews, and taverns
Where, as with harps, lutes and gitterns
They dance, and play at dice both day and night,
And eat also and drink over their might
Through which they do the devil sacrifice
470 Within that devil's temple in cursed wise
By superfluity abominable.
Their oaths be so great and so damnable
That it is grisly for to hear them swear.
Our blessed Lord's body they to-tear;
475 Them thought that Jews rent Him not enough.
And each of them at others' sin laugh.

*once upon a time
persisted in
gambling / brothels
guitars*

to excess

excess

*t ear apart
tore*

And right anon then come tumblesters
Fetis and small, and young fruitesters,
Singers with harps, bawds, waferers,
480 Which be the very devil's officers
To kindle and blow the fire of lechery
That is annexed unto gluttony.

*dancing girls
slim / fruit sellers
pimps, wafer sellers
Who are ... agents*

He slips into a sermon against excess in eating or drinking

The Holy Writ take I to my witness
That lechery is in wine and drunkenness.
485 Lo, how that drunken Lot unkindly
Lay by his daughters two, unwittingly,
So drunk he was he n'ist what he wrought.
Herod (whoso well the stories sought)
When he of wine replete was at his feast,
490 Right at his own table he gave his hest
To slay the Baptist John full guiltless.
Seneca says a good word doubtless.
He says he can no difference find
Betwixt a man that is out of his mind
495 And a man which that is drunkelew,
But that woodness y-fallen in a shrew
Persévereth longer than does drunkenness.

*Bible
unnaturally
didn't know / did
full of wine
order
Roman philosopher
drunk
Except t. madness / wretch
Lasts*

Gluttony was the original sin in Eden

O gluttony! full of cursedness.
O cause first of our confusion!
500 O original of our damnation,
Till Christ had bought us with His blood again!
Lo how dear — shortly for to sayn —
A-bought was thilk cursed villainy.
Corrupt was all this world for gluttony.
505 Adam, our father, and his wife also
From Paradise, to labor and to woe
Were driven for that vice, it is no dread.
For while that Adam fasted, as I read,
He was in Paradise. And when that he
510 Ate of that fruit defended on a tree,
Anon he was outcast to woe and pain.

origin (in Eden).

no doubt

forbidden

Exclamatio !

O Gluttony! on thee well ought us 'plain.
Oh, wist a man how many maladies
Follow of excess and gluttonies,
515 He would be the more measuráble
Of his diet, sitting at his table.

*complain
Oh, if a man knew
moderate
meals*

Alas the short throat, the tender mouth
Maketh that east and west and north and south,
In earth, in air, in water, men to swink

520 To get a glutton dainty meat and drink.
Of this matter, O Paul, well canst thou treat:
"Meat unto womb, and womb eke unto meat
Shall God destroyen both," as Paulus saith.
Alas, a foul thing is it, by my faith

525 To say this word, and fouler is the deed
When man so drinketh of the white and red
That of his throat he maketh his privy
Through thilk cursed superfluity.

The Apostle weeping says full piteously:
530 "There walken many of which you told have I
(I say it now, weeping with piteous voice),
That they be enemies of Christ's cross,
Of which the end is death. Womb is their God."
O womb! O belly! O stinking cod!

535 Fulfilled of dung and of corruption.
At either end of thee foul is the sound.
How great labour and cost is thee to find!
These cooks! How they stamp and strain and grind
And turnen substance into accident 1

540 To fulfill all thy likerous talent.
Out of the hard bones knocken they
The marrow, for they cast naught away
That may go through the gullet soft and sweet.
Of spicery, of leaf and bark and root

545 Shall be his sauce y-maked by delight
To make him yet a newer appetite.
But certes he that haunteth such delices
Is dead while that he liveth in those vices.

Excessive drinking

A lecherous thing is wine. And drunkenness
550 Is full of striving and of wretchedness.

O drunken man, disfigured is thy face,
Sour is thy breath, foul art thou to embrace,
And through thy drunken nose seemeth the sound
As though thou saidest ay: "Samsoun! Samsoun!"
555 And yet, God wot, Samson drank never no wine.
Thou fallest as it were a sticked swine.

Thy tongue is lost, and all thine honest cure,
For drunkenness is very sepulture
Of man's wit, and his discretïon.

560 In whom that drink has dominatïon
He can no counsel keep, it is no dread.
Now keep you from the white and from the red,

*to work
food
St. Paul
belly
I Cor. vi, 13.*

*(wines)
toilet
this cursed excess
Phil iii, 18-19.
of whom*

*Belly,
bag*

to feed

gluttonous desire

he who indulges

*continually
God knows
stuck pig
self respect
tomb
man's intelligence*

*no doubt
(wines)*

And namely from the white wine of Leap	
That is to sell in Fish Street or in Cheap.	<i>(in Spain)</i>
565 This wine of Spain creepeth subtly	<i>for sale in Cheapside</i>
In other wines growing fast by	
Of which there riseth such fumosity,	<i>fumes</i>
That when a man has drunken draughts three	
And weeneth that he be at home in Cheap,	<i>and thinks</i>
570 He is in Spain, right at the town of Leap,	
Not at the Rochelle nor at Bordeaux town,	<i>(French wine towns)</i>
And then will he say: `Samsoun! Samsoun!'	
But hearken, lordings, one word, I you pray	
That all the sovereign acts, dare I say,	<i>greatest</i>
575 Of victories in the Old Testament,	
Through very God that is omnipotent,	<i>true God</i>
Were done in abstinence and in prayer.	
Looketh the Bible, and there you may it lere.	<i>learn</i>

Some brief examples from the classics and Scripture

Look Attila, the great conqueroúr,	
580 Died in his sleep with shame and dishonoúr	
Bleeding at his nose in drunkenness.	
A capitain should live in soberness.	<i>a general</i>
And over all this aviseth you right well	<i>consider</i>
What was commanded unto Lemuel	
585 (Not Samuel, but Lemuel, say I.	
Readeth the Bible, and find it expressly)	
Of wine-giving to them that have justice. ²	
No more of this for it may well suffice.	

Gambling

And now that I have spoke of gluttony,	
590 Now will I you defenden hazardry.	<i>forbid gambling</i>
Hazard is very mother of leasings	<i>Gambling / of lies</i>
And of deceit and cursed forswearings,	<i>perjuries</i>
Blasphemy of Christ, manslaughter, and waste also	
Of chattel and of time; and furthermore	<i>of goods</i>
595 It is reproof and contrary of honour	
For to be held a common hazarder.	<i>gambler</i>
And ever the higher he is of estate	<i>rank</i>
The more is he holden desolate.	<i>held in contempt</i>
If that a prince uses hazardry,	<i>gambling</i>
600 In all governance and policy	
He is, as by common opinïon,	
Y-held the less in reputation.	

Some examples from history

Stilbon, that was a wise ambassador,
Was sent to Corinth in full great honour
605 From Lacedaemon, to make their alliance,
And when he came, him happened par chance
That all the greatest that were of that land
Playing at the hazard he them found.
For which, as soon as that it might be,
610 He stole him home again to his country
And said: "There will I not lose my name,
Nor will not take on me so great defame
You for to ally unto no hazarders.
Sendeth other wise ambassadors,
615 For, by my truth, me were lever die
Than I you should to hazarders ally.
For you that be so glorious in honours
Shall not allyen you with hazarders
As by my will, nor as by my treaty."
620 This wise philosopher, thus said he.
Look eke that to the King Demetrius
The King of Parthia, as the book says us,
Sent him a pair of dice of gold in scorn,
For he had used hazard therebeforn
625 For which he held his glory or his renown
At no value or reputation.
Lords may finden other manner play
Honest enough to drive the day away.
Swearing
Now will I speak of oaths false and great
630 A word or two, as old books treat.
Great swearing is a thing abominable,
And false swearing is yet more reprovable.
The high God forbade swearing at all.
Witness on Matthew. But in special
635 Of swearing says the holy Jeremy:
"Thou shalt swear sooth thine oaths and not lie,
And swear in doom and eke in rightwiseness."
But idle swearing is a cursedness.
Behold and see, that in the first table
640 Of High God's hests honourable
How that the second hest of Him is this:
"Take not My name in idle or amiss."
Lo, rather, he forbiddeth such swearing
Than homicide or many a cursed thing.
645 I say that as by order thus it standeth.
This knoweth that his hests understandeth
How that the second hest of God is that.
And furthermore, I will thee tell all plat,
That vengeance shall not parten from his house
650 That of his oaths is too outragèous.

From Sparta

gambling

gamblers

*I had rather
gamblers*

*ally yourselves
diplomacy*

also

other kinds of

*Matt. V: 33-34
Jerem. IV: 2*

commandments

in vain

*that = he who
commandment
very plainly*

"By God's precious heart and by His nails
And by the blood of Christ that is in Hailes,
Seven is my chance, and thine is cinque and tray.
By God's arms, if thou falsely play,
655 This dagger shall throughout thine heart go."
This fruit comes of the bitched bones two:
Forswearing, ire, falseness, homicide.
Now, for the love of Christ that for us died,
Leaveth your oaths, both great and small.

*Hales Abbey
my throw / 5 & 3*

*cursed dice
Perjury, anger ...*

Leave off

*Back to the story of the three gambling and swearing young drunks.
One of their comrades has died of the plague*

660 But, sirs, now will I tell forth my tale.
These rioters three, of which I tell,
Long erst ere prime rang of any bell
Were set them in a tavern for to drink,
And as they sat, they heard a bell clink
665 Before a corpse was carried to his grave
That one of them 'gan callen to his knave:
"Go bet," quod he "and ask readily
What corpse is this that passes here forby,
And look that thou report his name well."
670 "Sir," quod this boy, "it needeth never a deal.
It was me told ere you came here two hours.
He was, pardee, an old fellow of yours,
And suddenly he was y-slain tonight
Fordrunk as he sat on his bench upright.
675 There came a privy thief men clepeth Death
That in this country all the people slayeth
And with his spear he smote his heart in two
And went his way withouten words mo'.
He has a thousand slain this pestilence,
680 And, master, ere you come in his preséncé
Methinketh that it were necessary
For to beware of such an adversary.
Be ready for to meet him evermore.
Thus taught me my dame. I say no more."
685 "By Saint Mary," said this taverner,
"The child says sooth; for he has slain this year
Hence over a mile within a great villáge
Both man and woman, child and hind and page.
I trow his habitation be there.
690 To be advised great wisdom it were,
Ere that he did a man a dishonour."

*his servant boy
Go at once / quickly
in front*

there is no need

*by God
last night
blind drunk
stealthy thief called*

*more
(during) this plague*

mother

truth

laborer & servant

*it would be
Before*

The young men drunkenly vow eternal brotherhood in the quest to find Death

"Yea? God's arms!" quod this rioter.

this brawler

"Is it such peril with him for to meet?
I shall him seek by way and eke by street,
695 I make a vow, by God's digne bones.
Hearken, fellows. We three be allones.
Let each of us hold up his hand to other
And each of us become the others' brother,
And we will slay this false traitor Death.
700 He shall be slain, he that so many slayeth,
By God's dignity, ere it be night."
Together have these three their troths plight
To live and die each of them with other
As though he were his own y-born brother.
705 And up they start all drunken in this rage
And forth they go towards that villáge
Of which the taverner had spoke before,
And many a grisly oath then have they swore,
And Christ's blessed body they to-rent.
710 Death shall be dead, if that they may him hent.

*by lane & also
holy
all one, united*

word pledged

*they tore
catch him*

They meet a mysterious old man

When they had gone not fully half a mile
Right as they would have trodden o'er a stile,
An old man and a poor with them met.
This old man full meekly them greet
715 And said thus: "Now, lords, God you see."
The proudest of these rioters three
Answered again: "What, churl, with sorry grace.
Why art thou all forwrapped save thy face?
Why livest thou so long in so great age?"
720 This old man 'gan to look in his viságe,
And said thus: "For I ne cannot find
A man, though that I walked into Inde,
Neither in city nor in no villáge
That would change his youth for mine age,
725 And therefore must I have mine age still
As long time as it is God's will.

*over a set of steps
a poor old man
greeted
God protect you
brawlers*

wrapped up

*Because I
even if I w. to India*

He laments his inability to die

Nor Death, alas, ne will not have my life.
Thus walk I like a restless caitiff,
And on the ground, which is my mothers's gate,
730 I knock with my staff both early and late,
And say: `Leve Mother, let me in.
Lo how I vanish, flesh and blood and skin.
Alas, when shall my bones be at rest?
Mother with you would I change my chest
735 That in my chamber long time hath be,

wretch

Dear

Yea, for a haircloth to wrap me.'
But yet to me she will not do that grace,
For which full pale and welked is my face.

wrinkled

He rebukes them for their lack of respect

But, sirs, to you it is no courtesy
740 To speaken to an old man villainy
But he trespass in word or else in deed.
In Holy Writ you may yourself well read
`Against an old man, hoar upon his head
You shall arise.'¹ Wherefore I give you redde:
745 Ne do unto an old man no harm now
No more than that you would men did to you
In age, if that you so long abide.
And God be with you, where you go or ride.
I must go thither as I have to go."

*discourtesy
Unless he offend
Lev. ix, 32*

stand / advice

*last that long
wherever
to where*

They abuse him again, and he tells them what they want to know

750 "Nay, old churl, by God thou shalt not so,"
Said this other hazarder anon.

"Thou partest not so lightly, by Saint John.
Thou spoke right now of thilk traitor Death
That in this country all our friends slayeth.

of this same

755 Have here my troth as thou art his espy.
Tell where he is or thou shalt it aby,
By God and by the Holy Sacrament,
For soothly, thou art one of his assent *truly*
To slay us young folk, thou false thief."

*Have ... troth = I swear / spy
suffer for*

760 "Now, sirs," quod he, "if that you be so lief
To find Death, turn up this crooked way,
For in that grove I left him, by my fay,
Under a tree. And there he will abide.

*so eager
winding path
faith
stay*

Not for your boast he will him nothing hide.

765 See you that oak? Right there you shall him find.

God save you, that bought again mankind,
And you amend." Thus said this old man.

improve you

In search of Death the young men find a pleasant surprise

And ever each of these rioters ran
Till he came to that tree. And there they found

every one

770 Of florins fine of gold y-coined round
Well nigh an eight bushels, as them thought.

*coins
nearly / it seemed to them*

No longer then after Death they sought,
But each of them so glad was of the sight
For that the florins be so fair and bright

775 That down they set them by this precious hoard.

The worst of them, he spoke the first word:
"Brethren," quod he, "take keep what that I say.
My wit is great, though that I bound and play.
This treasure has Fortune unto us given
780 In mirth and jollity our life to liven.
And lightly as it comes, so will we spend.
Hey, God's precious dignity! Who wend
Today that we should have so fair a grace?

My wisdom / joke

*Who (would have) thought?
good fortune*

They plan to move their find secretly

But might this gold be carried from this place
785 Home to mine house — or else unto yours,
For well you wot that all this gold is ours —
Then weer we in high felicity.
But truly, by day it may not be.
Men would say that we were thieves strong
790 And for our own treasure do us hung.
This treasure must y-carried be by night
As wisely and as slily as it might.

*you know
happiness*

have us hanged

They agree to draw lots to decide who should go to town

Therefore I rede that cut among us all
Be drawn, and let's see where the cut will fall,
795 And he that has the cut, with heart blithe
Shall run to the town and that full swithe,
And bring us bread and wine full privily,
And two of us shall keepen subtly
This treasure well, and if he will not tarry,
800 When it is night, we will this treasure carry
By one assent where as us thinketh best."
That one of them the cut brought in his fist
And bade them draw and look where it would fall,
And it fell on the youngest of them all,
805 And forth toward the town he went anon.

*I advise / lots
lot
light heart
quickly
secretly
discreetly*

*By agreement
lots*

The two guardians of the find plot against the absent one

And all so soon as that he was gone
That one of them spoke thus unto the other:
"Thou knowest well thou art my sworn brother.
Thy profit will I tell to thee anon.
810 Thou wost well that our fellow is a-gone,
And here is gold and that full great plenty,
That shall departed be among us three.
But, natheless, if I can shape it so
That it departed were among us two,
815 Had I not done a friend's turn to thee?"

Thou knowest

divided

That other answered: "I n'ot how that may be.
He wot how that the gold is with us tway.
What shall we do? What shall we to him say?"
"Shall it be counsel?" said the first shrew,
820 "And I shall tellen thee— in words few —
What we shall do and bring it well about."
"I grant," quod that other, "out of doubt
That by my troth I will thee not bewray."

*I do not know
He knows / us two*

secret / rascal

*I agree certainly
betray*

The plan: treachery during a wrestling bout

"Now," quod the first, "thou wost well we be tway
825 And two of us shall stronger be than one.
Look when that he is set, thou right anon
Arise, as though thou wouldest with him play,
And I shall rive him through the sides tway,
While that thou strugglest with him as in game,
830 And with thy dagger look thou do the same,
And then shall all this gold departed be,
My dear friend, betwixt thee and me.
Then may we both our lusts all fulfill
And play at dice right at our own will."
835 And thus accorded been these shrews tway
To slay the third, as you have heard me say.

you know / two

*wrestle
stab*

divided

desires

two scoundrels

The third has a similar plan for the other two

This youngest, which that went unto the town,
Full oft in heart he rolleth up and down
The beauty of these florins new and bright.
840 "O lord," quod he, "if so were that I might
Have all this treasure to myself alone,
There is no man that lives under the throne
Of God that should live so merry as I."
And at the last, the Fiend, our Enemy,
845 Put in his thought that he should poison buy
With which he might slay his fellows tway.
For why? The Fiend found him in such living
That he had leave him to sorrow bring.
For this was utterly his full intent
850 To slay them both, and never to repent.

the Devil

lifestyle

He goes to the druggist to buy poison for "rats"

And forth he goes — no longer would he tarry —
Into the town unto a 'pothecary
And prayed him that he him would sell
Some poison, that he might his rats quell.
855 And eke there was a polecat in his haw

druggist

*kill his rats
also / yard*

That, as he said, his capons had y-slaw,
And fain he would wreak him, if he might
On vermin that destroyed him by night.
The 'pothecary answered: "And thou shalt have
860 A thing that, all so God my soul save,
In all this world there is no creäture
That ate or drunk has of this confiture
Not but the montance of a corn of wheat
That he ne shall his life anon forlete.
865 Yea, starve he shall, and that in less while
Than thou wilt go a pace not but a mile,
The poison is so strong and violent."

*killed his chickens
And gladly get revenge
On pests
The druggist
all ... save = I swear

concoction
the size of a grain
promptly lose
shall die
a distance of only*

He borrows bottles and buys wine

This cursed man has in his hand y-hent
This poison in a box; and sith he ran
870 Into the next street unto a man,
And borrowed of him large bottles three,
And in the two his poison poured he.
The third he kept clean for his own drink,
For all the night he shope him for to swink
875 In carrying off the gold out of that place.
And when this rioter (With sorry grace!)
Had filled with wine his great bottles three,
To his fellows again repaireth he.

*taken
and then

intended to work

returns*

The denouement

What needeth it to sermon of it more? 1
880 For right as they had cast his death before *had planned*
Right so they have him slain and that anon. *promptly*
And when that this was done, thus spoke that one:
"Now let us sit and drink and make us merry,
And afterwards we will his body bury."
885 And with that word it happened him "par cas" *by chance*
To take the bottle where the poison was,
And drank, and gave his fellow drink also,
For which anon they starven both two. *both died*
But certes I suppose that Avicen *certainly / Avicenna*
890 Wrote never in no Canon nor in no fen
More wonder signs of empoisoning *symptoms*
Than had these wretches two ere their ending.
Thus ended be these homicides two *murderers*
And eke the false empoisoner also.

*Back to the sermon briefly, and to the confidence game
on the Pardoner's church audience*

895 Oh cursed sin of all cursedness!
 Oh traitors' homicide! Oh wickedness!
 Oh gluttony, luxury and hazardry! *lust & gambling*
 Thou bláspheMER of Christ with villainy
 And oaths great of usage and of pride!
 900 Alas, mankind! How may it betide, *How is it?*
 That to thy Créator which that thee wrought *who made you*
 And with His precious heart's blood thee bought,
 Thou art so false, and so unkind, alas?
 Now, good men, God forgive you your trespass, *sin*
 905 And ware you from the sin of avarice. *beware of*
 My holy pardon may you all warice, *save*
 So that you offer nobles or sterlings *gold or silver*
 Or else silver brooches, spoons, rings
 Boweth your head under this holy bull.²
 910 Come up, you wives, offer of your wool.
 Your names I enter here in my roll anon.
 Into the bliss of heaven shall you gon. *go*
 I you assoil by mine high power, *absolve*
 You that will offer, as clean and eke as clear *and also*
 915 As you were born.

The Pardoner once more directly addresses his fellow pilgrims

"And lo, sirs, thus I preach.
 And Jesus Christ, that is our soul's leech, *physician*
 So grant you His pardon to receive,
 For that is best, I will you not deceive.
 But, sirs, one word forgot I in my tale:
 920 I have relics and pardon in my mail *bag*
 As fair as any man in Engeland,
 Which were me given by the Pope's hand.
 If any of you will of devotiön
 Offer, and have mine absolutiön,
 925 Come forth anon and kneeleth here adown 1
 And meekly receiveth my pardon,
 Or else taketh pardon as you wend *travel*
 All new and fresh at every mile's end,
 So that you offer always new and new *Provided / afresh*
 930 Nobles or pence which that be good and true. *Gold coins or pennies*

He assures the pilgrims they are lucky to have him

It is an honour to ever each that is here *to everyone*
 That you may have a suffisant pardoner *competent*
 T'assoil you in country as you ride, *To absolve*
 For áventures which that may betide. *accidents*
 935 Peráventure, there may fall one or two *Perhaps*
 Down off his horse, and break his neck in two.

Look which a surety it is to you all
That I am in your fellowship y-fall
That may assoil you, both more and less, *absolve*
940 When that the soul shall from the body pass.

*His joke at the Host's expense evokes a counter-joke
about the Pardoner's "relics" and his sexuality*

I rede that our Host here shall begin *I suggest*
For he is most enveloped in sin.
Come forth, Sir Host, and offer first anon
And thou shalt kiss the relics every one,
945 Yea, for a groat. Unbuckle anon thy purse." *groat=4 pennies*
"Nay, nay," quod he. "Then have I Christ's curse.
Let be," quod he, "it shall not be, so theeche. *I promise you*
Thou wouldest make me kiss thine old breech, *underpants*
And swear it were a relic of a saint,
950 Though it were with thy fundament depaint. *stained*
But by that cross which that St. Helen found,
I wish I had thy collions in my hand *testicles*
Instead of relics or of sanctuary. *or relic box*
Let cut them off; I will thee help them carry. *Have them cut off*
955 They shall be shrined in a hog's turd."

The Host is surprised at the Pardoner's response

This Pardoner answered not a word.
So wroth he was, no word ne would he say. *So angry*
"Now," quod our Host, "I will no longer play *joke*
With thee, nor with no other angry man."

The Knight, a man of war, intervenes to restore the peace

960 But right anon the worthy Knight began
When that he saw that all the people laugh:
"No more of this, for it is right enough.
Sir Pardoner, be glad and merry of cheer,
And you, Sir Host, that be to me so dear,
965 I pray you that you kiss the Pardoner.
And Pardoner, I pray thee, draw thee near,
And as we diden, let us laugh and play."
Anon they kissed and riden forth their way.