

The Canterbury Tales : Prologue

Original in Middle English

WHAN that Aprille with his shoures soote	
The droghte of Marche hath perced to the roote,	
And bathed every veyne in swich licour,	
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;	
Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth	5
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth	
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne	
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne,	
And smale fowles maken melodye,	
That slepen al the night with open ye,	10
(So priketh hem nature in hir corages:	
Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages,	
And palmers for to seken straunge strondes,	
To ferne halwes, couthe in sondry londes;	
And specially, from every shires ende	15
Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende,	
The holy blisful martir for to seke,	
That hem hath holpen, whan that they were seke.	
Bifel that, in that sesoun on a day,	
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay	20
Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage	
To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,	