

1380

CANTERBURY TALES

EPILOGUE TO THE MERCHANT'S TALE

Geoffrey Chaucer

Chaucer, Geoffrey (1343-1400) - English poet, known as the most important writer of Middle English. His Canterbury Tales (~1380) are told by traveling pilgrims who meet at a tavern and have a storytelling contest to pass the time.

Each tale is preceded by an introductory prologue. The Epilogue to the Merchant's Tale - The narrator is very upset over the craftiness of May and the slyness of women.

EPILOGUE TO THE MERCHANT'S TALE

Eh! By God's mercy!" cried our host. Said he:
 "Now such a wife I pray God keep from me!
 Behold what tricks, and lo, what subtleties
 In women are. For always busy as bees
 Are they, us simple men thus to deceive,
 And from the truth they turn aside and leave;
 By this same merchant's tale it's proved, I feel,
 But, beyond doubt, as true as any steel
 I have a wife, though poor enough she be;
 But of her tongue a babbling shrew is she,
 And she's a lot of other vices too.
 No matter, though, with this we've naught to do.
 But know you what? In secret, be it said,
 I am sore sorry that to her I'm wed.
 For if I should up-reckon every vice
 The woman has, I'd be a fool too nice,
 And why? Because it should reported be
 And told her by some of this company;
 Who'd be the ones, I need not now declare,
 Since women know the traffic in such ware;
 Besides, my wit suffices not thereto
 To tell it all; wherefore my tale is through."

HERE ENDS THE EPILOGUE