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The Sacramento Tales

California's recall — like you've never seen it before.

[In the course of some renovation work at England's Canterbury Cathedral, a wall broke open to reveal a hollow cavity, in which was found a parchment manuscript, since dated to the later 14th century. It appears to be the work of the English poet Geoffrey Chaucer. However, the text is much faded and barely legible in places, so that the work of deciphering this manuscript is proceeding very slowly. The first few pages have now been transcribed, and their content is given below. Not all of the references can be understood at this distance in time, but the manuscript appears to concern a miscellaneous party of pilgrims who have come together with the common desire to reach a holy shrine at a place named "Sacramento." The front page of the manuscript, though much defaced by damp, seems to bear the title "The Sacramento Tales."]

Whan that Septembre with his shoures sote
 Summers droghte hath percéd to the rote,
 And bathéd Napas vynes with swich licour
 As makéth Gallo Brothers shayre price soare;
 Whan al vacacioun tyme is used and gonne
 And beaches emptye lye beneath the sonne,
 Whan freeways clogge with workers offys-bounde
 Whyl scole-buses mak roade rage all arounde.
 Whan harlots on the Strippe crye to be payd
 By Englishe heart-throbbes crusyng for rough trayd
 (Whom Nature hath anon depryved of braynes!)
 Than longen folk to run polityckal campayngs
 And pollsters for to scanne ye publick moode
 By telephoun and questionnaire intrude.
 And specially, from every countys ende
 Of Golden State, to Sacramento wende,
 The Governour's fyn castel for to wyn
 And dwel with powre and glorie ful therein.

INCUMBENT was ther, guilty (so they seye)
 Of budgets fals. And he was clepéd Gray.
 His teethe bryght capt, his heer lyk helmet fixt
 Grande master was he of lowe politycks.
 Non intrest grupe had he disdaynd to schmuse,
 Ne ATLA, CALPERS, Latynos, ne Jewes.
 At fund-raisynge ther wiste no wight so wyse,
 The governourshippe than becam his pryse,
 And hem that to him had obeysance mayd

Saw al hir outlays manyfold repayd.
 He seith not ones "nay" when they seith "ye."
 "Do this," seith they; "al reddy, sire," seith he.
 Whyl worthy folk of lower midel kynd
 Wyth U-Haul hytched fled east and north to fynd
 Som place wherin hir litel wealth might growe
 Insted of into state tax coffers flowe.
 Yet even swich as staid wer ful appalled
 By car-tax hyk, so Gray shal be recalled.

Among us was a TERMINATOR bold,
 A player who on many a stage had strold.
 Ful big he was of braun, and eke of bone
 A manly man, ful wyth testosteroun.
 On TV he declayrd his wille to run
 His candidacie than was fayr begun.
 At ones began disputes upon his lyf
 Wych, ere he toke a Kennedy to wyf,
 Muche marred had been with lecherye and syn,
 And eke was ther some matter of his kin.
 His fader, in the German empyrs warres,
 Had worn that emblem evry man abhorres,
 The twysted cros. To wych his frends replyd:
 "Lord Kennedy was eke upon that syd!"
 But natheless dispute continued hotte
 To knowe was he conservatyf or not.
 Of policie he vauch-saifed next to nonne
 Save only: "Al for children must be donne!"
 Til sore complaynd those membyrs of his factioun
 That first applauded this bold Man of Actioun.
 And so, to soothe hir rancorous complaynts
 The Terminator call'd upon two saynts:
 St. Milton and St. Warren. They both blest
 His enterprys, and sanctiond thus he prest
 Ahead, as al perceived, on victoryes tracke.
 (Or if not, reste assuréd, he'll be backe.)

Latynos had hir man, with mustache speyr
 High domed his hed, with fast receding heer.
 LIEUTENANT to the Governour was he
 And Spanish spak ful faire and fetisly,
 After the scole of Ciudad Mexico
 For Spanish of Castile he did not knowe.
 In Englishe ones, amid a goodlie throng,
 His mynde did cruellie betray his tonge
 Whan he, addressyng Moorish clerks conven'd
 To glorify hir history, had seem'd

To greet hem with the N worde — wych, wel note,
 Is deeth to hem that seke the publick vote.
 And folies mor lay lurking in his past.
 Whan clerk at Fresno he his lotte had cast
 In wyth a wilde and heretickall order
 Wych ful denys oure nations southren border!
 And preche vil crede, wych he refused to shunne:
 "For oure race al, for other races nonne!"
 The Terminators fader wolde have blushd
 To say swich wordes, and spinmystres all rushd
 To parse hem to som softe and gentyll sens,
 But whyte and blacke alyk had toke offens.
 And hard-corre guilty liberalles asyd,
 No non-Latyno folk colde him abyd.
 And greate as Latyn votyr count maye be
 It lokés lyk: *Hasta la vista, babye!*

A WYF was ther, of Athenes cameth she
 And eke her campaygn started on TV.
 Of polles and raisyng fundes she knew perchaunce
 For she coude of that art the olde daunce,
 Her housbonde havyng troden paths polityckal
 Before he turned to lifestyl sodomityckal
 And lefte her. Yeares befor, whan she was yong
 In London towne had somtyme dwelt among
 Commentatours, pundittes, and swich kynd.
 Wyth one of hem, a much admiréd mynd,
 She lyved; but than despayrd, becaus, she said,
 Her lovyere was not any gode in bedde.
 Forsooth, in al oure mery companye
 Ther was none fyner drest than she,
 Rodeo Dryves fyn wares she knew ful wel:
 Versace, Gucci, Tiffany, Chanel.
 Ne fell her heer one lokke out of place
 Ne wrinkel one, ne blemishe mark'd her face.
 Allas, whan she did speken on TV
 Ne man colde folow but one worde in thre.

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[This is as much of the manuscript as has been deciphered to date. We shall bring you further passages as they become available.]

<http://www.nationalreview.com/derbyshire/derbyshire090303.asp>