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## SPECIMENS OF OLD ENGLISH POETS.

No. 1.—CHAUCER.

*Portraits from the Pilgrimage to Canterbury.*

### THE NUN.

Ther was also a Nunne, a Prioress,  
That of hire smiling was ful simple and coy;  
Hire gretest othe n'as but by Seint Eloy;  
And she was cleped Madam Eglentine.  
Ful wel she sange the service diviue,  
Entuned in hire nose ful swetely;  
And Frenche she spake, ful fair and fetisly,  
After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe—  
For Frenche of Paris was to hire unknowe  
At mete was she well ytaught withalle;  
She lette no morsel from hire lippes falle;  
Ne wot hire fingres in hire sauce depe.  
Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe,  
That no droppe ne fell upon hire brest,  
In courtesie was sette, ful moche, hire lest:  
Hire over lippe wiped she so clene,  
That in hire cuppe was no ferthing sene  
Of grese, whan she dranken hadde hire draught.  
Ful semely after hire mete she raught.  
And, sikerly, she was of grete disport,  
And ful pleasant and amiable of port;  
And poined hire, to contrefeten chere  
Of court, and ben estatelich of manere,—  
And to ben holden digne of reverence.

But for to speken of hire conscience,—  
She was so charitable and so pitous,  
She wolde wepe if that she saw a mous  
Caughte in a trappe, if it were ded or bleide.  
Of smale houndes hadde she, that she fedde  
With rosted flesh, and milk, and wastel-brede;  
But sore wept she if on of hem were dede,  
Or if men smote it with a yerd smert;  
And all was conscience and tendre herte.

Ful semely hire wimple ypinched was;  
Hire nose tretis; hire eyen grey as glas;  
Hire mouth ful smale, and therto soft and red;  
But, sikerly, she had a faire forehed,—  
It was almost a spanne brode I trowe;  
For hardily she was not undergrowe.

Ful fetise was hire cloke, as I was ware.  
Of smale corall, about hire arm, she bare  
A pair of bedes gauded all with grene;  
And thereon heng a broche of gold, ful shene,  
On which was first ywritten a crowned A,  
And after *Amor vincit omnia*.

### THE MONK.

A Monk ther was, a fayre for the maistrie,  
An out-rider, that loved venerie;  
A manly man, to ben an abbot able.  
Ful many a deinte hors hadde he in stable;  
And when he rode, men mighte his bridle here  
Gingeling, in a whistling wind, as clere  
And eke as loude as doth the chapell belle,  
Ther as this lord was keper of the celle.  
I saw his sleves purified at the hond  
With gris, and that the finest of the lond,  
And, for to fasten his hood, under his chinne  
He hadde, of gold ywrought, a curious pinne,—  
A love-knotte in the greter ende ther was.  
His hed was balled, and shone as any glas,

And eke his face, as it haddè ben anoint.  
He was a lord ful fat and in gool point.  
His eyen stepe, and rolling in his hed,  
That stemed as a furneis of a led;  
His bootes souple, his hors in gret estat;  
Now certainly he was a fayre prelat.  
He was not pale as a forpined gost.  
A fat swan loved he best of any rost.  
His palfrey was as broone as is a berry.

### THE FRIAR.

A Frore there was, a wanton and a merry,  
A limitour, a ful solempne man,  
In all the ordres foure, is none that can  
So moche of dalance and fayre langage.  
He hadde ymade ful many a marriage  
Of yonge wimmen, at his owen cost;  
Until his ordre he was a noble post.  
Ful wel beloved and familier was he,  
With frankleins, over all, in his contree;  
And, eke, with worthy wimmen of the toune;  
For he had power of confession,  
As saide himselfe, more than a curat,  
For of his ordre he was a licentiat.  
Ful swetely herde he confession,  
And pleasant was his absolution.  
He was an esy man to give penance,  
Ther as he wiste to hau a good pitance;  
For unto a poure ordre for to give,  
Is signe that a man is wel yhrive;  
For if he gave,—he dorste make avant,  
He wiste, that a man was repentant;  
For many a man so hard is of his herte,  
He may not wepe although him sore smerte:  
Therefore, in stede of weping and praieres,  
Men mote give silver to the poure freres.

## ELIHU BURRITT, THE LEARNED BLACKSMITH.

(From the Border Watch)

As this indefatigable philanthropist has been in Great Britain for some time back, it will, no doubt, gratify many of our readers to learn something more regarding his history than they may have been able to glean from the newspapers of the day. The following brief sketch of the life of Mr. Elihu Burritt, extracted chiefly from American documents, is from a letter from Dr. Dick of Dundee to the *Evangelical Magazine*.

"Elihu Burritt was born in New Britain, Connecticut, in the year 1811, of honest and respectable parents. He enjoyed the privilege of attending the "District school" for some months every year, till he was sixteen years old; and by his diligence and attention to his studies he became well versed in the elementary branches of an English education, and by cultivating a taste for reading, he acquired much valuable information. When he arrived at the age of sixteen his father died, and he was apprenticed to the trade of a *blacksmith*; and when the term of his indenture had expired, and he had attained his legal majority, he had gained the reputation of being a young man of good moral and *religious* character, a skilful workman in his vocation, and one who cherished an ardent attachment for books. The *BIBLE* was the first book which he thoroughly studied; and at a very early age, he was familiar with almost every passage in the Old and New Testaments. He next availed himself of the opportunity of reading afforded by the "Social Library" in the town in which he lived; and afterwards was dependent on the kindness of his friends. Before he reached the age of twenty-one he was conversant with the English classics both in prose and poetry, and passed delightfully many of