

CHANCER IN ART.

BY

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PR

1909

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Chaucer in Art.

~~GT6242~~

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From the portrait in the
National Portrait Gallery.



By order of Thos. Horclow



In telling of this goodly company,
 Of their old piety and of their glee;
 But let a portion of ethereal dew
 Fall on my heart, and presently unweave
 My soul — " [Reacts.]

1.
Lowell thought the inscription
over the gate to the "Assembly
of Fowls", might be written on the
first page of Chaucer's works: -

"Through me men go into the blissful place
Of the heart's heal and deadly wounds' cure;
Through me men go unto the well of Grace,
Where green and lusty May doth ever endure;
This is the way to all good aventure;
Be glad, thou Reader, and thy sorrow offeest,
All open am I, pass in, and speed thee fast!"

In Chaucer, may be found not only
the well of Grace and blissful places
in May-time, where stringed instru-
ments are playing harmonies
of ravishing sweetness, but

especially a gallery of wonderful portraits.

Authors have very often noted how Chaucer has painted in pen pictures the essential traits and characteristics of his "sitters." Coulton writes that "the variety of characters which Chaucer has brought together in this single cavalcade is as probable in nature as it is artistically effective. All moods, from the most exalted piety down to the coarsest buffoonery, were possible and natural on a journey religious indeed in essential conception, but which had by this time become so common and worldly a function that few pilgrims dreamed of putting off the old Adam until the white walls of Canterbury came in sight." Lowell says, "Characters and portraits from real life had never been drawn with such discrimination, or with such variety, never with such bold precision of outline, and with such a lively sense of the picturesque." Bliss Perry, when commenting on professional traits, refers to the "Prologue to the Canterbury Tales" - "one never wearies of admiring the simplicity of the soldier, the awkwardness of the sailor

on horse-back, the lawyer who seemed
 busier than he was, the doctor who had
 studied but little of the Bible, the merchant
 whose talk was of money-making." In Green's
History of the English People, we find, "The great
 poem on which his fame must rest, the Canter-
 bury Tales", was begun after his first visits to Italy

~~~~~ The frame-work—that of a pilgrimage  
 from London to Canterbury—not only enabled  
 him to string together a number of tales, com-  
 posed at different times, but lent itself ad-  
 mirably to the peculiar characteristics of his  
 poetic temper, his dramatic versatility, and  
 the universality of his sympathy. His tales  
 cover the whole field of mediæval poetry;  
 the legend of the priest, the knightly romance,  
 the wonder-tale of the traveller, the broad humour  
 of the fabliau, allegory and apologue are all  
 there. He finds a yet wider scope for his genius  
 in the persons who tell these stories, the  
 thirty pilgrims who start in the May morn-  
 ing from the Tabard in Southwark—thirty  
 distinct figures, representatives of every  
 class of English society from the noble

to the ploughman." Wm Blake, writer  
and painter, says, "— the characters of  
Chaucer's Pilgrims are the characters  
which compose all ages and nations.  
Some of the names and titles are  
altered by time, but the characters  
remain forever unaltered, and con-  
sequently they are the physiognomies  
and lineaments of universal human  
life, beyond which Nature never steps.  
Names alter, things never alter. As  
Newton numbered the stars, and as  
Linnaeus numbered the plants, so  
Chaucer numbered the classes of  
men."

One is disappointed in not finding  
more interpretations of Chaucer by the  
painters and illustrators. There are  
few notable examples. Perhaps it is  
because they have never entered into  
the gate to the "Assembly of Fowls", or  
perhaps it is because his narration  
and description leave out little detail  
or are all-sufficient in themselves,

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and so the painter, as before a glorious  
sunset, feels the task too overwhelming

Let us see how Blake (1757-1827) interprets  
Chaucer's "Canterbury Pilgrims" in paint.



CHAUCER'S CANTERBURY PILGRIMS

Engraved by J. Smith from the original design by William Blake. The scene is from Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, the pilgrims on their way to Canterbury.

"Ye goon to Canterbury; God you speede,  
The blisful martir gylte you youre meede!"

This picture, now in the National Gallery, London, is painted in "fresco", a word which Blake applied to a method of his own of painting in water-colour on a plaster ground of glue and whitening laid on to canvas or board. Once when Blake had a big exhibition of his works, he exhibited this painting and wrote a "Descriptive Catalogue" in which he put forth his ideas on painting and interpreted Chaucer's characters in the "Prologue to the Canterbury Pilgrims". Irwinburne says, referring to the picture in the exhibition, "The admirable power and high dramatic quality of that singular but noble picture, the latent or superim-

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overlaid beauty which corrects and  
redeems its partial ugliness; the strong  
imagination and the farciful justice  
of the entire work, were invisible to all  
but such spectators as Charles Lamb;  
if indeed there were ever another capable  
of seeing them to such purpose." Blake  
was very individualistic in his art.  
Although a considerable writer, he earned  
his living through his "graver". He  
suffered many hardships and was  
not appreciated either in his writings  
or drawings before his death. He has  
left a number of wonderful illustrations  
of the greatest writers, and none is more  
famous than his paintings of the "Lantern-  
bury Pilgrims."

The "immortal Prologue", which Blake  
set himself to interpret;—tells us about

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the brave, courteous knight, his son the Squire,  
and their sturdy yeomen; about the Lawyer  
and the doctor who rode on pilgrimage,  
though the one was so busy and the other's  
study was 'but little on the Bible'; about the  
dinner-loving Franklin, the Merchant with  
his thoughts always on his business,  
the pirate Shipman, the rascally Miller,  
the drunken Cook, the crafty Manciple,  
the crabbed Reeve, the fine London burgesses,  
and the honest, kind-hearted ploughman;  
most of all about the 'religious' people - the  
sunder-hearted Prioress, with her lady-chap-  
lain and priests, the hunting Monk, the  
Friar, 'the best beggar in his house,' the  
Summoner and Pardoner, types of the very  
worst hangers-on of the Church; and, to balance  
these, the good Parson and the studious Clerk  
of Oxford, with not an ounce of worldliness  
between them.<sup>1 2</sup> An important point to  
keep in mind is that Chaucer has

<sup>1</sup> - Chambers' Encyclopaedia of Literature.

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these personages go on a four days' journey to the shrine of Saint Thomas à Becket, and the stories they tell also throws some light on the character of each.

Blake heads the procession by the Chivalry group; the knight, his son and the German: -

The Knight.

"He was a verray perfight gentil knight.  
His hors was good, but he ne was nought gay.  
Al fastygan he werede a gepoun  
Al bysmothered with his habergeoun."

The Squire.

"\_\_\_\_\_ his sone, a young Squire,  
A boyere, and a lusty bachelor,  
With lokkes crulle as they were leyd in presse.  
Al twenty yere of age  
Al his stature he was of evene lengthe,  
And wonderly delivere, and gret of strengthe.  
And he hadde ben somtyme in chivachie,  
He was as freshe as is the moneth of May.  
Short was his gowne, with sleeves longe and wyde."

The German.

"And he was clad in cote and hood of grene.  
A shef of pocok arwes brighte and kene

Under his belte he bar ful thriftily.

And in his hond he bar a mighty bone.  
A not-heed hadde he with a brown visage.

A Cristofre on his brest of silver schene.

The handrik was of grene;  
A forster was he sothly

After shivalry comes the Church group;—a  
“Lady-abbes”, a nun and three priests:

The Prioressse and the Nun (and three priests).

“That of hire smylyng was ful symple and coy;

And sche was cleped madame Eglentyne.

Ful wel sche sang the service divinne,

And French. sche spak ful faire and fetysly,

After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,

At mete wel i-taught was sche withalle;

Sche leet no morsel from hire lipper falle,

Ne wette hire fynghes in hire sauce depe.

Ful fetys was hire cloke,

Of smal coral aboute hire arm sche baar

A peire of bedes gauded al with grene;

And theron heng a brooch of gold ful schene,

Another Noun with hire hadde sche,  
That was hire chapeleyn, and Prestis thre."

Behind the Prioress ride the rest of the  
Church Group; the Monk, the Friar, and the  
Pardoner and the Summoner.

The Monk-escort.

A Monk there was, a fair for the maistrie,  
An out-rydere, that lovede venerye;  
A manly man, to ben an abbot able.

This ilke mornk lutt olde thinges pace,  
and held, after the newe world the space.

I saugh his sleeves purfiled at the honde  
With greys, and that the fyneste of a honde.  
And for to fastne his hood under his chynne  
He hadde of gold y-wrought a curious pynne:  
A love-knotte in the grete end ther was.  
His heed was balled, that schone us every glas,  
And eek his face as he hadde ben anoynt.  
He was a lord ful fat and in good poynt;

Now certainly he was a fair prelate;  
He was not pale as a for-pyned goost.

His palfrey was as brown as is a berge."

The Friar.

"\_\_\_\_\_ a wanton and a merize,

A lymytour, a ful solemne man.  
 In alle the ordres foure is none that can  
 So moche of daliaunce and fair langage.

---

For he hadde power of confession,  
 As seyde himself, more than a surat,  
 For of his ordre he was licentiat.

---

His dyket was ay farsed ful of knyfes  
 And synnes, for to give faire wyfes.

---

His nekke whit as the flour-de-lys.  
 Therto he strong was as a champion.  
 He knew the tavernes wel in every town,  
 And everych hostiler and tappestere,

---

Of double worstede was his meny-cope,  
 That rounded us a belle out of the presse.  
 Somwhat he lipede, for his wantownesse,  
 To make his Englisch swete upon his tunge;  
 And in his harpyng, whan that he hadde sunge,  
 His eyghen swynkled in his heed aright,  
 As don the sterres in the frosty night.

This worthi lymytour was cleped Huberd."

The Summoner and the Pardoner.

To Sompnour was ther  
 That had a fyr-reed cherynyes face,

And whan that he wel drunken hadde the wyne,  
 Than wolde he speke no word but Latyn.

A garland hadde he set upon his heed,  
 As gret as it were for an ale-stake;

With him ther rood a gentil Pardoner  
 Of Rouncivale, his frend and his somper,  
 That strenght was comen from the court of Rome.

This pardoner hadde heer as yelwe as wax,  
 But smoothe it heng, as doth a strike offlex;  
 By unces byrgge his lokkes that he hadde,  
 And therwith he his schuldres overspraddle

But hood ————— ne merede he noon,

A vernicle hadde he served upon his cappe.  
 His walet lay byforn him in his lappe,  
 Bret-ful of pardoun come from Rome al hoot.

No berd hadde he —————

For well he myste —————

He made preche —————

To mynne silver —————

The Manciple and a citizen fill out the  
number of those riding ahead of the Host;  
By the side of the Host is the Shipman:

The Manciple.

"A gentil Manciple was ther of a temple,  
of which ashatours mighten take exemple  
For to be wyse in beggynning of vitaille.  
For whether that he payde, or took by taile,  
Algaue he waytede so in his achate,  
That he was ay bifore and in good state.

And able for to helpen al a schire  
In any cas that mighte falle or happe;  
And yet this manciple sette here aller cappe."

The Host.

"Gret chiere made oure hoost us everichon,  
And to the soper sette he us anon.  
He served us with vitaille at the beste;  
Strong was the myn, and wel to drynke us <sup>thete</sup>  
A seemely man oure hooste was withalle  
For to been a marshal in an halle.  
A large man he was, with eyen stepe,  
A fairer burgerys was there noon in Chepe;  
Boold of his speche, and wys, and well ytaught,  
And of man hood hym lackede right naught.  
Eke therto he was right a myrie man;  
And after soper pleya he bigan,

and spake of myrthe amonges other thynges,

"I saugh nat this yeeer so myrie a compaignye  
Atones in this herberwe, as is now.

Fayn wolde I doon you myrthe, wiste I how-  
And if a myrthe I am right ~~now~~ by thought  
To doon you ese

And well I woot, as ye goon by the weye,  
Ye shaper you to talen and to pleye,  
For trevely, confort ne myrtle is noon  
To ride by the weye dount as stoon,  
And therefore wol I maken you disport,  
As I seyde erst, and doon you som confort;  
And if you liketh alle by oon assent  
For to stouderen at my juggement,  
And for to werken as I shal you seye,  
To-morwe, whan ye riden by the weye,  
Now; by my fader soule that is deed,  
But ye be myrie I wol yere you myn heed!  
Hold up youre hond, withouten moore speche?

Amorwe, whan that day bigan to sprynge,  
Up roosoure hoost, and wasoure aller cok,  
And gadrede us togidre, alle in a flock,  
And forth we riden.

## The Shipman.

"In a gowne of faldyng to the knee.

A daggere hangynge on a baas hadd he  
Above his necke, under his arm adown.  
The booke somer hadd he maid his here aboun

~~~~~  
If mye conscience took he no keep;"

Riding seven a breast are the Parson,
Man of Law, Plowman, Physician, Country
Gentleman and two citizens:

The Parson and the Plowman

"A good man was ther of religion,
And was a poure Parson of a town,
But riche he was of hooly thought and werk.

~~~~~  
He waited after no pompe and reverence,  
He maked him a spiced conscience,  
But Cristes loore, and his apostles twelve  
He taughte, but first he folwed it hym-selve.

With him ther was a Plowman, was his brother,  
That hadd he glad of doing ful many a fother.

~~~~~  
His tithes payed he ful faire and wel,
Bothe of his propre swynke and his catel.
In a tabard he rood, upon a mere."

The Man of Law and the Frankelyn.

A Sergeant of the Lawe, war and wys,

That often hadde been at the parrys,
 Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.

Nowher so busy a man as he ther nas,
 And yet he seemed bisier than he was;

He rood but humbly in a medlee cote
 Girt with a cinct of silk, with barres smale;

As Frankelene was in his compaignye,
 Whit was his berd as is a dayeye.

Of his complexion he was sanguyne.
 Withoute bake mete was nevere his house,
 Of fish and flesch, and that so plenteuous,
 It served in his house of mete and drynke,
 Of alle deyntees that men koude thynke.

Ful ofte tyme he was knyght of the shire.
 An aureole and a gipsur al of silk
 Heeng at his girdel, whit as morne milk."

The Doctor of Phisik.

"In al this world ne was ther noon hym tik,
 To speke of phisik and of surgerye;
 For he was grounded in astronomye."

He knew the cause of everich maladye,
 Were it of hoot or cold, or moyste, or drye,
 And where they engendred, and of what humour.

His studie was but liuel on the Bible. ¹⁸

For gold in phisike is a cordial,
Therefore he lovede gold in special."

The rear is made up of the Wife of Bath,
Merchant, Miller, Cook, Clerk of Oxford, and
Chaucer:

The goode Wif of Ba the.

"But she was som-del deef, and that was seache.

Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed,
Ful streite yteyd, and shous ful moyste and ^{newe.}
Broid was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe.
She was a worthy womman al hir lyve,
Housbondes at chirche-dore she hadde fyve

Gut-sothed was she, soothly for to seye.

Upon an amblere isily she sat,
Gwympled wel, and on hir heed an hat
As brood as is a bokeler or a targe,
A foot-mantel aboute hir hips large,
And on hire feet a paire of spores sharpe.

Of remedies of love she knew per-chance,
For she koude of that art the olde chance.

The Marchant.

"_____ with a forked berd,
In mottelée, and hye on horse he sat,
Upon his heed a Flaunderssch bevere hat,
His bootes clasped faire and fetisly.
His resons he spak ful solempnely,
Townyng alway thence of his wynnynge.

The Miller.

"The Millere was a stout cur for the noose,

He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre,
Ther was no dore that he wolde heve of barre,

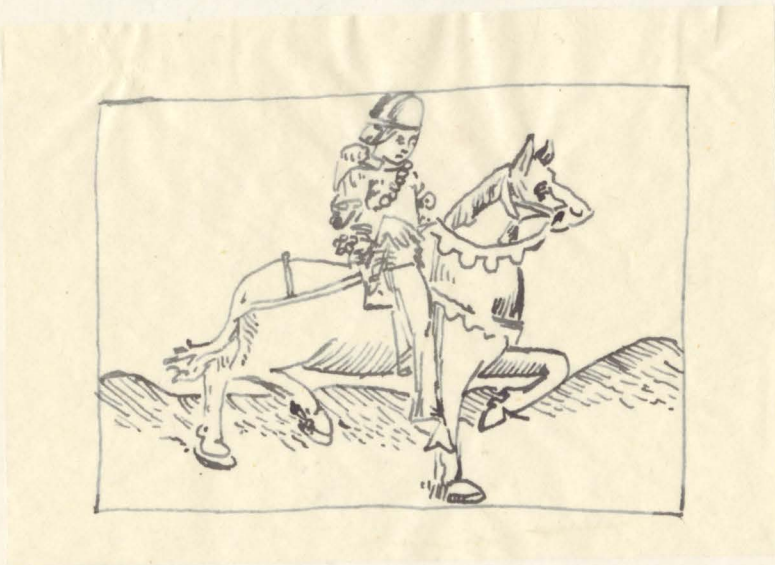
His berd as any sorwe or fox was reed,
And therto brood, as though it were a spede.
Upon the cop right of his nose he hade
A werte, and thereon stood a toft of hères
Reed as the bristles of a sowes eres;
His nosethirles blake were and wyde.
A sword and bokeler bar he by his syde.
His mouth as greet was as a greet forneys,

Hel koude he stelen corn, and tollen thries,

This were a puppet in an arm to embrace
 For any woman, small and fair of face.
 He seemeth elfish by his countenance,
 For unto no right doth he dalliance."

Interpreted by our ~~twentieth~~ ^{seventeenth} century
 notions, Blake's quaint composition is some-
 what stilted; but it is very interesting.
 The poses of the Host and the Shipman
 were not by accident. The Pardoner joined
 to this group connects the first
 half of the company with the latter
 half. The disorderliness of the Wife of
 Bath and the Cook relieve the regularity
 of the rear. The doves and the archi-
 tectural effect are Mediaeval. The archi-
 tecture also smacks of Early English.
 It would be difficult to account for
 all the legs of the horses if the dust
 of the road did not conveniently blow
 one way. That Blake's more-or-less

wooden figures are somewhat crude, must be admitted; but that the figures and the landscape harmonize, that the spirit of the times and the special occasion has been portrayed with infinite definiteness, and that the figures themselves do not go far astray from illustrating the originals, must also be admitted.



The tale of the chivalrous yeman.

From the second edition of
Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales"
printed by Caxton.



"Bifel that, in that seson on a day,
 In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay
 Redy to wender on my pilgrimage
 To Caunterbury, with ful devout corage,
 At night was come into that hostelrye
 Wel nyne and twenty in a compaignye
 Of sondry folk, by aventure y-falle
 In felawshipe, and pilgrims were they alle,
 That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde."

This painting of Thomas Stothard's is also in the National Gallery, London. Stothard (1755-1834) was a famous designer. His designs "were estimated to number 5000, and of these about 3000 have been engraved. His best known painting is the 'Procession of the Canterbury Pilgrims', the engraving from which attained an immense popularity. The commission for this picture was given to Stothard by R. H. Cromek, and was the cause of a quarrel with his friend Wm Blake."^①

If Blake's painting could be called "ugly", Stothard's could be called "pretty". However, the landscape and figures show the influence of Rubens. The arrangement is not the same, but some of the most important figures are in somewhat the same relative position in the procession. The Knight's Group precedes the Prioress's Group. The Wife of Bath is

① - The Encyclopedia Britannica.

in the last half. The cook is in the rear. It might be for a day's outing that Stothard has arranged his group. The Host is the guide. In Blake's arrangement, ~~the~~ procession is serious, and they need no guidance. The Host is in the centre and his business is to bind the company together by "good-fellowship." One feels that Blake's people are really of Chaucer's time, while Stothard's are the descendants living at the time of Stothard. Stothard's winsome and angelic Wife of Bath and his ogle-eyed monks are not the same characters that Chaucer talks about. The Church group as a whole is not well interpreted. Blake was intensely religious; he could appreciate the frailties of even the ecclesiastics, as Chaucer depicts them.

Lamb preferred Blake's painting

so Stothard's⁵. Rossetti says, the engraving²⁶
began in the autumn of 1809, was brought
out in October 1810, considerably preceding
the print from his rival Stothard. The
two productions are no less unlike than
the two men. Blake's is as unattractive
as Stothard's is facile, as hard and strong
as Stothard's is limp; one face in Blake's
design means as much on the part of
the artist, and takes as much scrutiny
and turning-over of thought on the part
of the spectator, as all the pretty fanto-
cini and their sprightly little horses
in Stothard's work, from first to last.
Be this said without any undervaluing
of the numerous and excellent gifts of
this charming designer - gifts which
make many of his works precious
indeed, and confer no despicable
value upon this very picture of the
Canterbury Pilgrims."

When Zephyrus eek with his sweet breath
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tender croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne,

(So pricketh him nature in his corages):
Then longer folk to goon on pilgrimages

701.

From the Painting by ROBERT VAN VORST SEWELL,
in possession of GEO. GOULD, Esq.

The Haberdasher
The Merchant

A sepia-toned photograph of a group of people, including men, women, and children, traveling with pack animals (donkeys or mules) carrying large bundles. They are in a rural setting with a simple building in the background.

Complete Set (size, 9x92½ inches)		\$30.00
When Sold in Sperate sections	} Centre section, 9x46½ inches	20.00
		End Sections, 9x23 inches

This modern painting by Robert Van Vorst Sewell is a mural decoration in the home of George Gould, Lakewood, N. J.

"Chaucer's tales cover the whole field of mediæval poetry." The Group of the Church reflects the Mediæval Church. Sewell has a procession and it is serious enough, but he did not imbue it with the Spirit of the Middle Ages. He did not think back farther than the time of Shakespeare. The latter is a favorite period of the best illustrators. Edwin Abbey loved to clothe his figures in the garb of the Elizabethans and it mattered little, apparently, what early English

period he was portraying. Chancer's time is before the sophisticated elegance of the Elizabethan Court.

In the "Centre section",  the Knight might be one of our famous Confederate officers, if he wore a broad-brimmed hat and had less trappings on his horse. Swell has lighted on one of the characteristics of Chancer's Knight in that the figure denotes a gentleman and a soldier. In the group of "The Knight, the yeoman and an humble", the Knight resembles Don Quixote. The Spaniard was too romantic for a real crusader. Chancer's Knight is chivalrous and sane. The Knight's dignified tale pleased

the shrewd Host—

"Aure Hoste lough, and swoor —

"For trevely the game is welbigonne."

In the "Group of the Right Wall" (1899), Harry Bailey, the Host, is a different one from Chancer's Host. This Harry Bailey lived at the time of Franz Hale. Chancer's Host is not handsome, but he can re-inforce his speeches with a prayer as well as an oath. In the Cathedral, the Host required the Pardoner, the Miller and others to be less like "lewd goats" and to go worship at the shrine. Chancer's Host did not think of himself especially but of the pleasure of the crowd. Sewell's Host may continue to smile, but There were times when Chancer's Host worried. Blake

has drawn a man who has taken upon himself a responsibility. The arms are outstretched to gather in all the vexations of the company. The Wife of Bath in the "Centre Section" is too shrewish; she is better in the group of "The Friar, the Wife of Bath and the Squire", in that she has a more cognotish quality. Even here she is not quite so flagrant the "Woman of the World" as Blake painted her, or as Chancer meant her to be. It is possible Blake painted her too rakish. Sewell's Chancer has a gray beard and his hand is up, as in the Hoccleve portrait. Chancer's Man of Law is in a coat of parti-colours, with a silk belt ornamented with small

metal bars; Sewell's Sergeant at Law wears the ermine.

The mood of the group on the "Left Wall" (1899) is nearer Chaucer's creation. On the whole, here is to be found a Church atmosphere. The picture does not go too far over to the saintly spirit of the early Italian paintings, but the nuns are pious and quaint. The Miller, on his donkey, gives variety to the composition. Sewell's figures and horses are well drawn. The variety in the grouping is very fine. In his skill as a "picture maker", he is as superior to either Blake or Stothard as a modern artist ought to be.



Pilgrims setting out from the
"Tabard".

From Wrio's "Chaucer." ①



Canterbury Pilgrims ②

① Garrett and Gossé - English Literature, Vol. 1.

② Garrett and Gossé - English Literature, Vol. 1; From MS. 18D.ii. in Brit. Museum.

The following twenty-two cuts, with
 the one of Chaucer on the cover, are
 from the Ellesmere M.S. of Canterbury
Tales.



The Squire.



The Knight.



The Friar.



The Prioress.



The Monk.



The Monk's Dogs.



The Seasonal Nun.



The Nun's Priest.



The Canon's Yeoman.



The Pardoner.



The Parson



The Summoner.



The Mansiple.



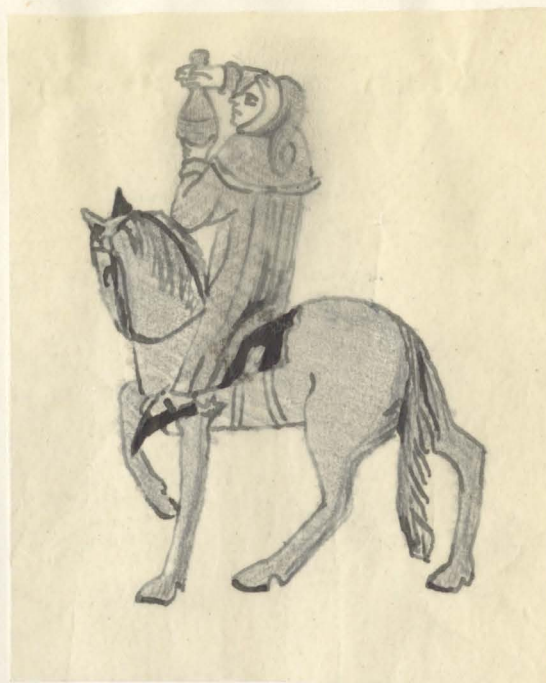
The Reeve.



The Shipman.



The Franklin.



The Doctor of Physic.



The Man of Law.



The Merchant.



The Wife of Bath.



The Miller.



The Cook.



The Clerk of Oxford.

These contemporary representations of the Pilgrims show the poor anatomical knowledge of the artists of the times, they however have an historical value as well as an artistic quaintness. Blake, Stothard and Sewell have imitated the MS. somewhat. Blake has the hand of the Knight up. Stothard has the Squire on a prancing steed with a high cap. Blake, Stothard and Sewell have the Friar without a hat - Sewell's Friar has the hood back. Blake has a garland on the head of the Miller. Both Blake's and Stothard's Pardoners have a hat and a crucifix. Both Blake's and

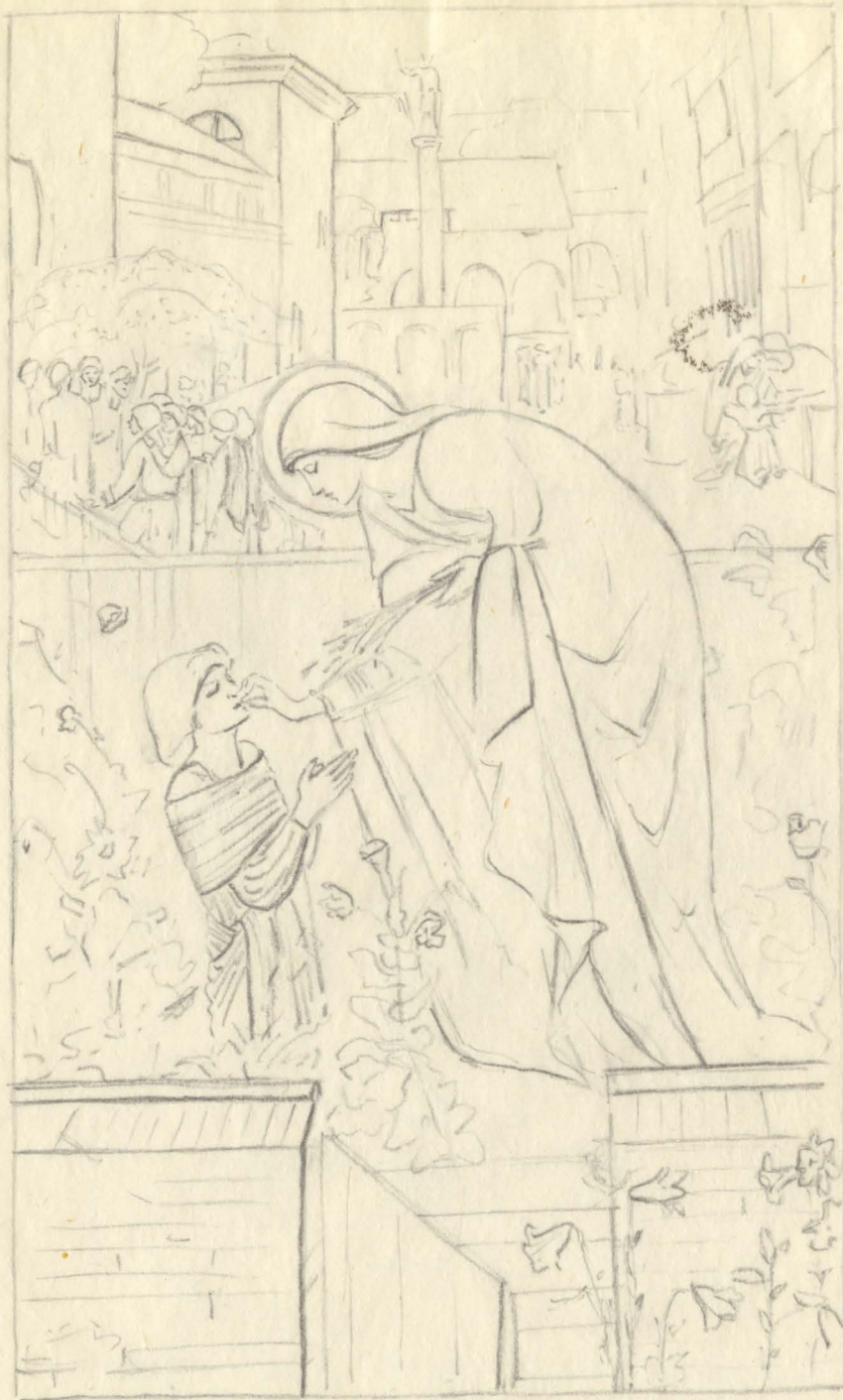
Sewell's Millers have an horn-like instrument. Blake's Manciple has a phial; Sewell's Manciple has a phial - the Manciple of the MS. University Library, Cambridge^① has a phial.

There is another wall painting, painted by H. S. Marks, at Eaton Hall, seat of the Duke of Westminster.^② Marks (1829-1898) turned his hand to various forms of art work.^③ Eaton Hall is one of the famous show places of England. Its architecture is neo-Gothic. It was erected 1870 to 82.

① Garnett and Gosse, English Literature, Vol. 1 - MS. Gg. 4. 27, University Library, Cambridge.

② Librarian, University of Arizona.

③ Dictionary of Painters and Engravers.



The Frioress's Tale

*owned by Lady Colville,
England.*

6

eighty-seven pictures by Burne-Jones, a full-page woodcut title, fourteen large borders, eighteen borders for the pictures, and many ornamented initial words and letters designed by Morris himself.^① Chaucer seems to have been a favorite of Burne-Jones from almost the first to the last of his professional career. In 1858, "The Prioress' Tale" was painted on a panel of a cabinet for William Morris. His easel picture "The Prioress' Tale", owned by Lady Colville, England, is his last finished work. It is said that he worked on this painting at intervals from 1869 to 1898.^② The "Prioress' Tale" as related in the "Canterbury Tales" is the story of a little boy who loved to sing "O, Alma Redemptoris."

① Noyes, Alfred: *Wm Morris*, p. 139-140.

② *Masters in Art*; Pub., Bates and Guild Co.

c

One day on his way home from school, he sang it while walking through the Jewish quarters. The Jews thought he was insulting them with the song and killed him. They threw his body in a pit but the song came forth as before -

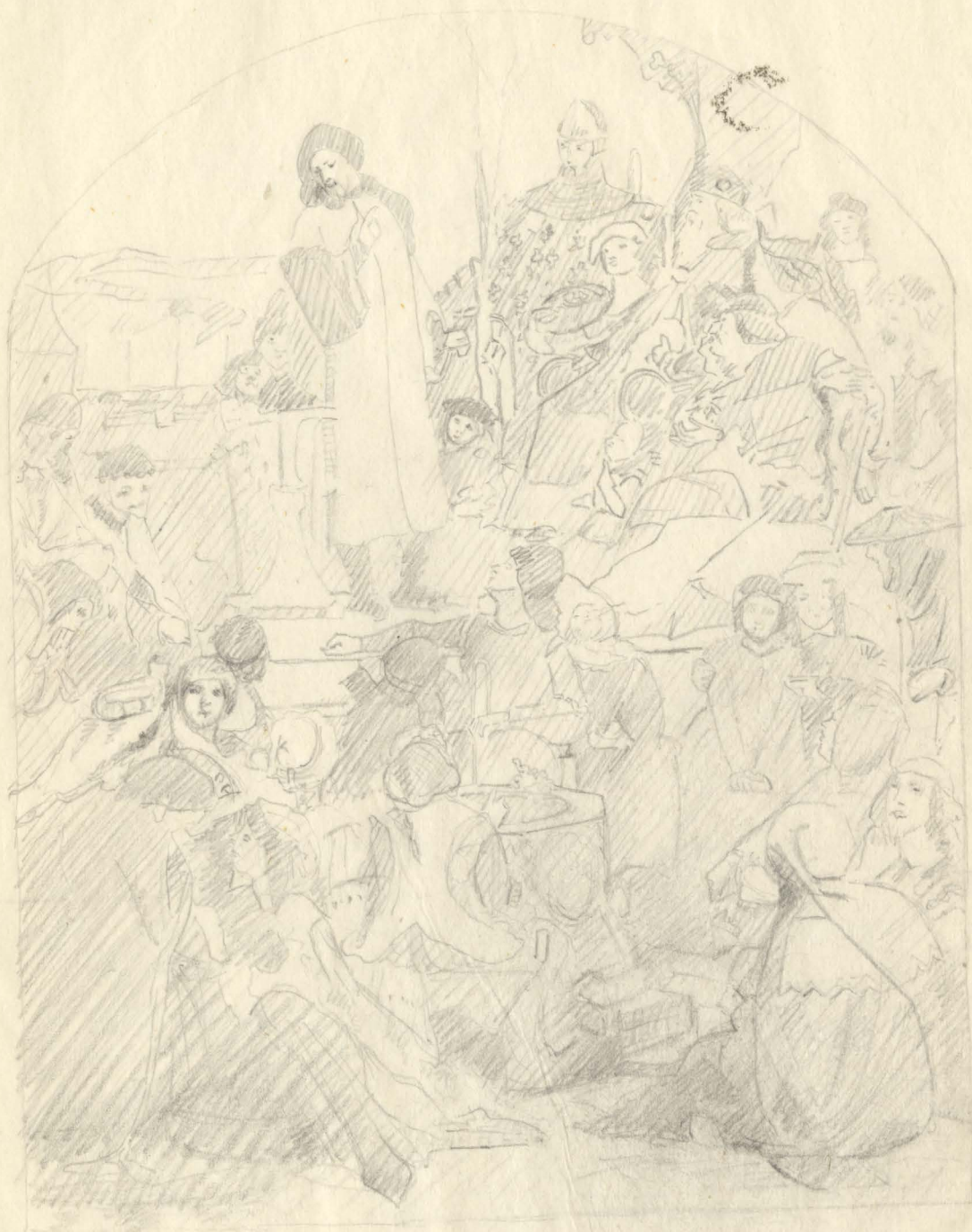
"O, Alma Redemptoris' 'gan to singe
So loude that al the place 'gan to ringe."
Some Christians heard the song and procured the body. The abbot asked the child to explain the singing since his throat was cut. The child told him the Virgin had placed a miraculous grain in his mouth, and that by it, as long as it remained in his mouth, he would be enabled to continue to sing. The priest took the grain out and the child died. Burne-Jones chose the moment of the Virgin's laying the grain on the child's tongue as

the theme for his painting. The design of the painting differs from the design on the cabinet.^① In the background, on the right, the child is being murdered; on the left, the school is represented. The composition is Italian. Burne-Jones was influenced immensely by Mantegna and Botticelli. P. de la Sigeranne says, "Burne-Jones seems to have been born in the fifteenth century — preserving through his slumbers all the exquisite and primitive refinement of the Tuscan painters — he awoke in the midst of a world older by three centuries than himself."^② In the foreground, is the "pit" decorated with the poppy. The lily, at the bottom of the picture, was often used by the Pre-Raphaelites as a symbol for the doctrine of The Christ. The pallid figures of the Virgin and the child are exaggerated in height, endowed with Burne-Jones' "graceful stiffness," delicately outlined and intensely spiritual. The color scheme is bright with blue, rose, orange and gray."^③

① Monk house, Cramos; British Contemporary Artists.

② Magazine of Art, 1898.

③ Ibid. p. 12.



Chaucer at the Court of Edward III.

An important painting is "Chancer at the Court of King Edward III." by Ford Madox Brown. This painting was executed in 1851 and hangs in the Municipal Gallery, Sydney, Australia. A copy hangs in the Tate Gallery, London. ^① Chancer is supposed to be reading aloud from the story of Constance.

Brown really initiated the pre-Raphaelite movement, although he was never affiliated with any society. He influenced Rossetti, Holman Hunt, Burne Jones and others. His influence is seen very largely in

① - Bryan - Dictionary of Painters

the works of Millais.

The arrangement of the composition is pre-raphaelite. Even the landscape is of the Italian renaissance. The details of the personae are English. One characteristic of the Pre-Raphaelite school of painting is faithfulness to detail. Here if anywhere one would expect to find faithfulness of detail to the costuming of the period of Chaucer. Naturally there would be found in the Court the most advanced "fashions", since the most advanced ideas and culture would be found about the King. Ford Madox Brown

was a master draughtsman,
 so his figures have not the
 primitive quaintness of the
Ellsmere MS. or even of Blake's
Canterbury Pilgrims.

In the Victoria and Albert
 Museum, South Kensington, are
 the J. H. Mortimer original Chaucer
 drawings. Mortimer, a Royal Academi-
 cian, was a famous etcher, who
 was born before the middle of the
 eighteenth century.

There are a number of book
 illustrations. Besides the illus-
 trations of the Ellsmere MS. there
 are those of the University Library,
 Cambridge^① - contemporary Chaucerian
 representations. Some illustrate

① Garnett and Goss, English literature, Vol. I; MS. Gg. 4. 27,
 University Library, Cambridge.

Canterbury Pilgrims, but there are other illustrations, as Envy, Charity, Gluttony, Abstinence, Lechery and Chastity. The Ellesmere MS. drawings are the more superior.



Chastity.

Thomas Stothart did fourteen frontispieces for the Bell edition of Chaucer. Bell (1745-1831) edited editions of the

poets of Great Britain from Chaucer to Churchill. Each volume was illustrated by artists of the day as Stodhart, Mortimer etc.^①

Edmund Corbould^② illustrated the Routledge Chaucer.^③ Routledge (1812-1888) was a publisher. The subjects of eight illustrations by Corbould are: Sir Topas and ye gret Gyaunt Eliphant; ye Knightes Tale; The Reeve Tale; ye Wif of Bathes Tale; ye Monkes Tale; ye Nonnes Priestes Tale; ye Clerkes Tale; ye Squires Tale. The compositions are good. The figures and horses are well drawn. The knights are of an English-idealized Middle Age; the women, English women of the early nineteenth century.

① Dictionary of National Biography.

② Edmund Corbould probably belonged to the family of Corboulds, who flourished between the last half of the eighteenth century and the nineteenth century, and were famous as etchers and engravers.

③ Copy with notes and glossary by Thos. Tyrwhitt, Library of U. of I.



Ye Clerk's Tale.

The drawings of the pilgrims published with the Chaucer Society Publications^① are by Paul Hardy. John Urry (1666-1715) was an editor of Chaucer. It is said of this edition that "the text is probably the worst ever prepared."^② It was illustrated.^③

Among the more modern book illustrations may be found those of Walter Appleton Clark in Mackaye's "Modernization of the Canterbury Tales," and Warwick Goble's illustrations in color in the "Modern Reader's Chaucer" by Mackaye and

① XCI, Supplement, First Series.

② Garnett and Gosse, English Literature, Vol. I.

③ P. 33 of this paper.

Tutlock.^① Warwick Goble has thirty-two illustrations. The illustrations are dainty in drawing, good in composition, and delicate and harmonious in color. There are four illustrations in Troilus and Criseyde: - The Greek Fleet; The First Meeting; Criseyde and her Maidens listening to a Reading; Criseyde leaving Troy. Troilus and Criseyde is a favorite story. It is also well illustrated in the Nelson-Scott Edition.^②

"The Canterbury Tales was one

① - Recently, a librarian at the Public Library, New York City, set about to find the "best" illustrated book on Chaucer. Her finding was The Modern Reader's Chaucer by MacKaye and Tutlock, illustrated by Warwick Goble, published by the Macmillan Company, 1812 edition.

② - Gurnett and Goss - English Literature, Vol. I.

of the first English books to be printed, Caxton probably putting the first edition in hand as soon as he set up his press in England.^① Caxton's second edition is illustrated.^②

Chaucer reflected man for us as Shakespeare has done. The draughtsman has a more difficult problem than the form of things when he tries to illustrate life - as either author has interpreted it - life's sentiments, smiles and tears.

"
 ————— Thou maist it nat denye,
 For in pleyne text, withouten need of glose,
 Thou hast translate the Romaunce of the Rose,
 That is an heresye agayns my lawe,

① Garnett and Gosse, English Literature, Vol. 1.

② P. 22 of this paper.

And makest wise folk from me withdrawe;
And of Cresyde thou hast seyde as thee lyst,
That maketh men to women lasse tryste."



Griselda and the Duke.