

205 His prominent eyeballs never
They glittered like the flames beneath a kettle;
Supple his boots, his horse in fine condition.
He was a prelate fit for exhibition,
He was not pale like a tormented soul.
210 He liked a fat swan best, and roasted whole.
His palfrey^o was as brown as is a berry.

The Friar

There was a *Friar*, a wanton one and merry,
— A Limiter,^o a very festive fellow.
In all Four Orders^o there was none so mellow,
215 So glib with gallant phrase and well-turned speech.
He'd fixed up many a marriage, giving each
Of his young women what he could afford her.
He was a noble pillar to his Order.
Highly beloved and intimate was he
220 With County folk within his boundary,
And city dames of honor and possessions;
For he was qualified to hear confessions,
Or so he said, with more than priestly scope;
He had a special license from the Pope.
225 Sweetly he heard his penitents^o at shrift^o
With pleasant absolution,^o for a gift.
He was an easy man in penance-giving
Where he could hope to make a decent living;
It's a sure sign whenever gifts are given
230 To a poor Order that a man's well shriven,^o
And should he give enough he knew in verity
The penitent repented in sincerity.
For many a fellow is so hard of heart
— He cannot weep, for all his inward smart.
235 Therefore instead of weeping and of prayer
One should give silver for a poor Friar's care.
He kept his tippet^o stuffed with pins for curls,
And pocket-knives, to give to pretty girls.
And certainly his voice was gay and sturdy,



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240 For he sang well and played the hurdy-gurdy.^o
 At sing-songs he was champion of the hour.
 His neck was whiter than a lily-flower
 But strong enough to butt a bruiser down.
 - He knew the taverns well in every town
 245 And every innkeeper and barmaid too
 Better than lepers, beggars and that crew,
 For in so eminent a man as he
 It was not fitting with the dignity
 Of his position, dealing with a scum
 250 - Of wretched lepers; nothing good can come
 Of commerce with such slum-and-gutter dwellers,
 But only with the rich and victual-sellers.^o
 But anywhere a profit might accrue
 Courteous he was and lowly of service too.
 255 Natural gifts like his were hard to match.
 He was the finest beggar of his batch,
 And, for his begging-district, paid a rent;
 His brethren did no poaching where he went.
 For though a widow mightn't have a shoe,
 260 So pleasant was his holy how-d'ye-do
 He got his farthing^o from her just the same
 Before he left, and so his income came
 To more than he laid out. And how he romped,
 Just like a puppy! He was ever prompt
 265 To arbitrate disputes on settling days^o
 (For a small fee) in many helpful ways,
 Not then appearing as your cloistered scholar
 With threadbare habit hardly worth a dollar,
 But much more like a Doctor or a Pope.
 270 Of double-worsted^o was the semi-cope^o
 Upon his shoulders, and the swelling fold
 About him, like a bell about its mould
 When it is casting, rounded out his dress.
 He lisped a little out of wantonness^o
 275 To make his English sweet upon his tongue.
 When he had played his harp, or having sung,
 His eyes would twinkle in his head as bright
 As any star upon a frosty night.
 This worthy's name was Hubert, it appeared.

Vocabulary

eminent (em'ə-nənt) adj.: high-standing; great.

240. hurdy-gurdy
instrument played
a crank.

252. victuals
especially of

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these
love of lux
Friar comp
tions of a

261. farthing
British coin
a penny.

265. settle
disputes
court by
Though
negotiat
officially

270. do
quality
capelik

274. w
preten