He Could Go On Wid Dat Prayer.

(A story of missionary work among the coloured people in the South, after they had been freed from slavery.)

A poor ignorant old coloured man,
When the work among the freed began,
Came to the mission place one day,
And asked that he be taught to pray.
A lady missionary there,
Tried him with the Lord's Prayer;
She explained each separate sentence,
Of forgiveness and repentance.

To understand he long had striven,
"We must forgive to be forgiven."
He agreed with all the rest,
But "forgive" he couldn't digest.
"So God forgive dis darkie none,
Till he forgive every one
Say, teacher, stop! I's can't do dat'"
He left repeating, "Can't do dat."

After some weeks he came again,
To go on "wid dat prayer" then,
"Now, teacher, commence where yer close,
Forgive us as we forgive those.
I'se done forgive ole massa all,
How he kicked me like a ball!
Five hundred lashes once he gave
Dis here poor old coloured slave!
Hit a crowbar on me head,
And trow me out for nearly dead.

"And I pass him by on the street,
An' wouldn't speak as we'd meet,
But to-day I forgive him true,
For when we met I says, 'How'd do?'
Now, go on again wid dat prayer,
I forgive him as it says there."

'Twould be well for many another,
As well as our old coloured brother,
Just to think more seriously of those
Whom they refuse to forgive hard blows.
You'll certainly have to do your share,
Before you can go on "wid dat prayer."

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, JULY 1, 1899.

ALCOHOL AND COLD.

The unvarying testimony of Arctic explorers, whale-fishers, fur-traders and trappers, and of the inhabitants of high northern latitudes, of Alpine guides and others exposed to extreme and long-continued cold, demonstrates not only the inutility, but the absolute injuriousness of alcohol as a generator of animal heat, and the vast superiority of an oleaginous diet for that purpose.

Sir J. Richardson mentions as a proof of his power of resisting cold, which he attributed to his entire absence from spirits that, though advanced in years, he was enabled to go into the open air at a temperature of fifty degrees below zero without an overcoat.

Sir John Ross says of his northern expedition: "I was twenty years older than any of the officers or crew, and thirty years older than all excepting three, yet I could stand the cold and endure fatigue better than any of them, who all made use of tobacco and spirits."

"He who will make the corresponding experiments," says the same commander, "on two equal boats' crews, rowing in a heavy sea, will soon be convinced that the water-drinkers will far outdo the others." The free use of ardent spirits is one of the chief causes of the failure of so many Arctic expeditions, and when the men drank nothing but water, they endured the rigour of the climate with impunity. A Danish crew of sixty men were winter bound in Hudson's Bay. Before spring, fifty-eight of them died. An English crew, under the same circumstances, lost only two men. The former had an ample supply of ardent spirits; the latter had none.

An old Orkney whaler narrated to the present writer a tragical illustration of the depressing effect of alcoholic liquors on the bodily powers. The crews of two ice-locked vessels were forced to abandon their ships, and to travel many miles on the ice in order to take refuge in that to which he belonged. The one had only their usual rations of fat pork and biscuit. The other had, in addition, a supply of brandy. The whole of the first crew arrived safely. The whole of the second perished from cold and exposure.

The setting in of a Canadian winter or any "cold snap" of unusual severity, is generally attended with several instances of death from exposure of poor wretches enfeebled and almost devitalized by habits of inebriation.

Baron Larrey, the great French surgeon, says that "during Napoleon's retreat from Moscow, those soldiers who indulged in the use of intoxicating liquors sank under the effects of cold almost in battalions; but their fate was not shared by those of their comrades who abstained from those liquors." Marshal Grouchy says that "he was kept alive for days on coffee, while others, who took spirits, slept never more to rise." At the present time the Russian soldiers, on a winter march, have rations of oil served out instead of spirits, experience having shown its superiority as a generator of heat. The Esquimo, who live largely on blubber, are able to endure with impunity the intensest cold.

Dr. Hooker, a medical officer under Sir J. Ross, says: "Ardent spirits never did me an atom of good. It does harm; the extremities are not warmed by it . . . you are colder and more fatigued a quarter or half an hour after it, than you would have been without it."—Withrow's Temperance Tracts.

THE AUSTRALIAN BOOMERANG.

BY WILLIAM RITTENHOUSE.

The national weapon of the Australian aborigine is a queer affair. It is convex on the upper surface, and flat below, and always thickest in the middle, from which it is scraped away, toward both edges, which are tolerably sharp, especially the outer one. Hard, tough wood is necessary for these "throw-sticks," and the crooked root of a tree, or a branch grown at an angle of about forty-five degrees, makes the best boomerang.

For such branches and roots the Australian savage is ever on the alert, his favourite wood for the purpose being that of the blue gum tree, or eucalyptus. As far as mere finish goes, he shapes his boomerang roughly; but when it comes to the essentials of the thing—the adjusting of the proper curves, the weight, etc.—the otherwise unintelligent native shows remarkable science and skill.

All boomerangs are not alike, by any means. There are the large and heavy weapons, for hunting and fighting, and then there are the lighter ones for games of skill, and the tiny ones for the children to practice with. Most "throw-sticks" are perfectly plain; but occasionally a native paints his in bright red, or ornaments them with raised carvings, serpentine figures, or tribal hieroglyphics. A typical war specimen measures thirty-three inches from tip to tip, is two inches wide, and weighs twelve ounces. The general and mistaken notion about a boomerang is that, when skilfully thrown, it always returns to the thrower. But this is not true. Whenever a boomerang strikes anything, whether the object it is aimed at or not, it drops like an ordinary stick. Only when it meets with no obstruction in its flight does it return to the thrower.

A GOOD PLEDGE.

I promise—
To be loyal forever to my faith and my country.
To be attentive to my religious duties.
To honour and respect my parents at all times.
To be temperate in all things.
To be clean of speech.
To venerate the aged.
To protect the helpless.
To cultivate my own talents.
To discourage trashy literature.
To help my neighbour.
To be kind to dumb animals.
To labour for the good of my associates.

Chaucer *Continued.*

tender . . . a pleasing image, a golden-hearted verse, opens quietly as a water-lily, to float on the surface without breaking it into ripple."

It is this ease and naturalness that makes Chaucer the favourite that he is. With him is nothing strained or forced, we have not to labour in sympathy with him in our effort to follow him. Neither does he take us away to some other world to show us something tender or beautiful or strong, but he simply disenchants us from the blinding power of familiarity, and lo! the common world is found still to contain the bright May morning, and the sparkling dew, and the tender green, and the "wee, modest, crimson-tipped flower," and in our common lives are characters in whom we recognize the features of the squire and knight, the lawyer and doctor, the jolly host of the Tabard and the "poor parson of a town."

Another notable feature of this work is its dramatic spirit. Here again Chaucer appears as the father of modern literature, and the herald of the great age of action and progress that was coming on. In the collections of tales before Chaucer, we do not think of the persons who tell the tales, but only of the persons and times of whom they tell. In Chaucer we never lose interest in the men and women who are speaking to us, their characters and histories, and what they say and what they do. It is not too much to say that in the "Canterbury Tales," for the first time in modern literature, we find the marks of a genius that would afterwards have rejoiced in the life and movement of the Elizabethan drama; or, later still, in the character and incident of the modern novel.

To us, one of the most interesting things in the "Canterbury Tales" and other writings of Chaucer in this period is the growing ascendancy of the ethical and modern and English spirit. The old Teutonic reverence for women, of which the Roman Tacitus speaks with admiration, is reasserting itself and superseding the mock reverence of flattery that is still so dear to the Gallic mind. No one admires more than Chaucer the sweetness and beauty and innocence of maidenhood, but he is not carried away with a French flutter of ecstasy at sight of a pretty girl. It is the good wife and mother that commands his deepest reverence and admiration. So may it ever be with Englishmen.

In Chaucer we find, too, a reverence for true religion that is not overborne by contempt and disgust of the ignorance and hypocrisy which have so often brought discredit on sacred things. He tells of the itinerant peddler of indulgences:

"His wallet lay before him in his lap
Bret-ful of pardons come from Rome all hot."

So, too, he tells of the friar, "a wanton and a merry":

"Full sweetely heard he confession
And pleasant was his absolution.
He was an easy man to give penance
There as he wist to have a good pittance."

But he gives also another picture—that of the faithful minister of the Gospel:

"A good man there was of religion
That was a poore Parson of a town:
But rich he was of holy thought and werk:
He was also a learned man, a clerk
That Christe's Gospel truly woulde preach,
His parishens devoutly would he teach.
Wide was his parish, and houses far asunder,
But he ne left not for no rain nor thunder
In sickness and in mischief to visit
The farthest in his parish much and lit,
Upon his feet, and in his hand a staff.
This noble exsample to his sheep he gaf
That first he wrought and afterward he taught.
He waited after no pomp nor reverence,
Nor maked him a spiced conscience
But Christe's love, and his apostles twelve
He taught, and first he followed it himselve."

John Wycliffe was Chaucer's illustrious contemporary; he died fifteen or sixteen years before the poet. For a long time Wycliffe was protected by the great Duke of Lancaster, who was also Chaucer's patron. It is impossible therefore to suppose that Chaucer was not familiar with Wycliffe and his work, but we have no statement of Chaucer's by which we can say positively that he was either a partisan or an opponent of Wycliffe. We do know, however, that Chaucer was heartily opposed to the religious degeneracy of the times and so far in sympathy with Wycliffe. We know also that Chaucer was a hearty admirer of the true minister of the Gospel, and the description of the parson, given above, is in some of its features peculiarly Wycliffite. No one thinks of Chaucer's parson as a good churchman. His object is not to teach and serve the church.

"But Christe's love and his apostles twelve,
He taught, but first he followed it himselve."

This freedom from a nauseous Churchianity was a mark of the Wycliffite as it is of every one who knows the freedom of a Christian man. Again, the parson's wandering on foot from end to end of his parish, staff in hand, was a peculiarity for which the Lollard priests of the time were noted. The objections to the Lollard in the "Canterbury Tales" come from the swearing host and the rough shipman.

But the silence of Chaucer has a meaning. He was not willing apparently to *take a strong stand with Wycliffe. The* age was not ready to take such a stand. For a reformation in morals and practice there was a readiness, but not for a reformation that demanded sweeping changes in discipline and doctrine. The need of such a reformation did not yet appear, nor was it felt at a later age by Luther and his sober contemporaries till circumstances forced it upon them in spite of their fears and prejudices. What wonder, therefore, if Chaucer, like many of the influential men of the age, held aloof from a movement that seemed to be running into fanaticism and heresy? And yet he could not take a strong stand against it because it was allied to a moral movement the need of which was deeply felt.

How gladly would we leave Chaucer here, with no word of any more serious fault or defect than an imperfect understanding of questions for which the world would not be ready for more than a hundred years. But there was a graver defect—there was a lack of moral sensitiveness and earnestness that has left its mark upon his work in a way that we must forever deplore. It is very true that there was a coarseness of taste and roughness of manner in those days that should not in fairness be judged by modern usages. Some of the collections *of literary delicacies of those days re*mind one of a German cheese-stall, and we must pass through the writings of Chaucer sometimes holding our noses. Yet after making all charitable allowances for peculiarities of taste, we cannot see how a man of thorough moral earnestness can deliberately make merry over tales of sin and shame. Chaucer himself feels this, and advises the reader to turn the page where some just cause of offence is to be found. There is much difference of opinion as to the genuineness of Chaucer's prayer or "Retractations" appended to the "Parson's Tales;" but, however the details of it may have been altered, we are not satisfied to pass it over as a fabrication made out of the whole cloth. There was room *for retractation, and we cannot but think* that in the quiet of his later years Chaucer must have reviewed his works, acknowledged frankly what was wrong in them, and thanked God, as we do now, for so much that is good.

WHERE HE WAS POOR.

"A rich man," says the Rev. W. M. Hay Aitkin, "was showing a friend through his house, and, after scaling a high tower, pointing in a northerly direction, said:

"'As far as your eye can reach, that is all mine.'

"'Is that so?' said the friend.

"'Yes. Now, turn this way; that is also mine.'

"'Indeed?' said the friend.

"'Now, look southerly—that is all mine, and westerly is mine also—in fact, on all four points of the compass, as far as the eye can reach, it is all mine.'

"His friend, looking at him, paused, and said:

"'Yes; I see you have land on all four quarters; but,' *pointing his finger upward,* 'what have you got in that direction?'

"But the rich man was unable to answer. He had nothing there."

In India there are 166 hospitals and dispensaries, and in China 182.

It cost $1,220,000 to evangelize the Sandwich Islands, and the United States have now a trade with them of $6,000,000 annually.