

HOME & SCHOOL

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Geoffrey Chaucer.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER, who bears the title of "Father of English Poetry," was born about 1328, and died in 1400. He was of good family, and was probably educated at Cambridge or Oxford. In early life he connected himself with the Court; serving first as a page, and subsequently as a soldier and representative of the Crown in foreign lands. As long as Edward III. lived, he seems to have abounded in honours and wealth; but in the reign of Edward's successor, Richard II., changes occurred in his fortunes, which brought with them poverty, exile, and imprisonment. The restoration of the House of Lancaster, which he strongly favoured, returned to him the honours and emoluments which he had lost, and from that time, until his death, he lived in comfort. His closing years were spent in literary work; and, when he died, his body was laid in Westminster Abbey, where, in the Poet's Corner, it still remains.

Chaucer's fame, as a writer, rests chiefly in his "Canterbury Tales." These "Tales" represent a company of pilgrims collecting at the Tabard Inn, in Southwark, and going thence to the shrine of Thomas à Becket, at Canterbury. These pilgrims agree to tell two stories each, while going, and the same number while returning, from Canterbury. Chaucer, however, did not live long enough to complete his original design; and so only the Prologue and twenty-four Tales are given. Two of the Tales are in prose; the rest are in flowing verse. All of them are written in the English of that period, and are plentifully sprinkled with words which are no longer used. But while they are difficult to read without a glossary, they are still full of interest, and furnish the best picture of the life of the fourteenth century which has come down to us. "Every character is a perfect study, drawn with a free, yet careful hand—in effect, broad, and brilliant in colour, but painted with a minuteness of touch and a careful finish, that remind us strongly of the elaborate pencilling of our Pre-Raphaelite artists, whose every ivy leaf and straw is a perfect picture." The fol-

lowing is from his description of the Knight in the Prologue of the "Canterbury Tales." It will give a slight idea of his style, and of the English of his day:

"This *like* worthy Knight hadde ben also Sometime with the lord of Palacie, Agen another heathen in Turkio; And evermore he had a soverejgne pris[†] And though that he was worthy, he was wise,

A Story of Tithes.

MANY years ago a lad of sixteen years left home to seek his fortune. All his worldly possessions were tied up in a bundle which he carried in his hand. As he trudged along he met an old neighbour, the captain of a canal boat, and the following conversation took place, which changed the whole current of the boy's life:

trade he knew anything about was soap and candle-making, at which he had helped his father while at home.

"Well," said the old man, "let me pray with you and give you a little advice, and then I will let you go."

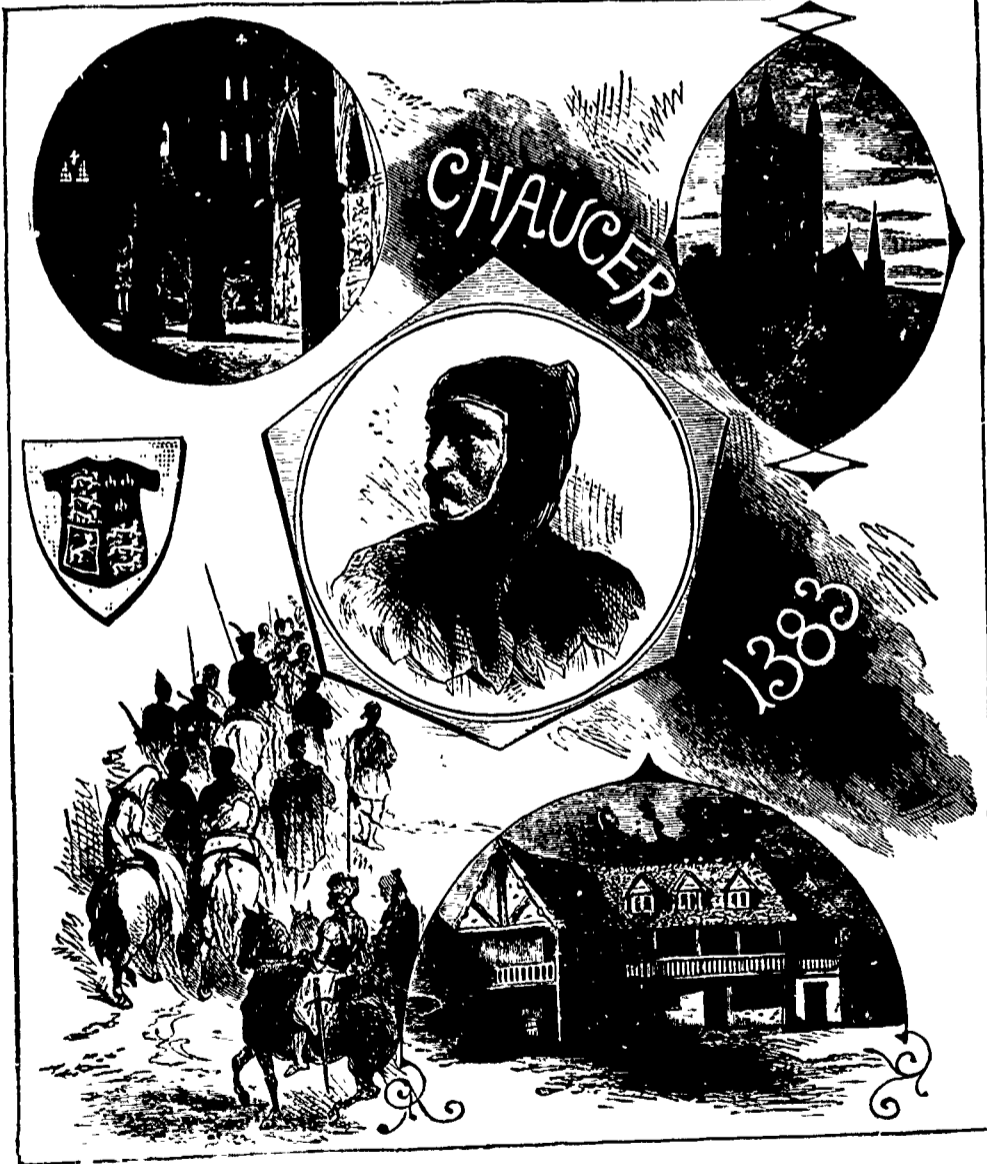
They both kneeled down upon the towpath (the path along which the horses that drew the boat walked).

The old man prayed for William, and then this advice was given: "Some one will soon be the leading soap-maker in New York. It can be you as well as any one. I hope it may. Be a good man; give your heart to Christ; give the Lord all that belongs to Him of every dollar you earn; make an honest soap, give a full pound, and I am certain you will yet be a great, good and rich man."

When the boy reached the city he found it hard to get work. Lonesome and far away from home, he remembered his mother's last words and the last words of the canal boat captain. He was then and there led to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." He united with the Church. He remembered his promise to the old captain. The first dollar he earned brought up the question of the Lord's part. He looked in the Bible and found that the Jews were commanded to give one-tenth, so he said, "If the Lord will take one-tenth I will give that." And so he did. Ten cents of every dollar was sacred to the Lord.

After a few years both partners died, and William became the sole owner of the business. He now resolved to keep his promise to the old captain; he made an honest soap, gave a full pound, and intrusted his book-keeper to open an account with the Lord and carry one-tenth of all his income to that account. He was prosperous; his business grew; his family was blessed; his soap

rich, and he grew rich faster than he ever hoped. He then decided to give the Lord two-tenths, and he prospered more than ever; then five-tenths. He educated his family, settled all his plans for life, and told the Lord he would give Him all his income. This is the true story of a man who has given millions of dollars to the Lord's cause.—*Gospel in All Lands.*



GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

And of his port as meke as is a mayde. He never yet no vilanie ne sayde In all his life, unto no manere right, † He was a veray parfit gentil Knight."

The only young woman student at the Boston University Law School is called appropriately by the men law-students their sister-in-law.

* Same. † Praise. ‡ No kind of person.

"Well, William, where are you going?"

"I don't know," he answered. "Father is too poor to keep me any longer, and says I must now make a living for myself."

"There is no trouble about that," said the captain. "Be sure you start right, and you'll get along finely."

William told his friend that the only