

THE RETIARIUS.

BY REV. WILLIAM P. BREED.

The gentlemen and ladies and the howling mob of old Rome, as they gazed from the galleries of the amphitheatre into the arena to see men kill each other for their amusement, often saw the Retiarius approach his adversary, holding a net in one hand and a three-pronged, sharp pointed fork in the other. The net he tried to throw over his adversary, and then when he had him entangled he stabbed him to death with his trident.

Satan is the chief of Retiarii. He carries with him a fine, invisible net with which he entangles his victim. That net is Procrastination. With this he catches the sinner and then with his weapon he slays him. In countless instances the cunning, half-pious "not yet" becomes "not at all," "to-morrow" becomes "never," "Go thy way for this time" becomes "go thy way for all time."

Years ago an advertisement was placarded on the city walls, of a pleasure expedition with this alluring assurance, "Only one night at sea." Years and years have passed and that vessel is yet at sea. Many a sinner has said, "Only one more month or two and I will repent," and the month or two has proved as long as eternity!

Cut this net of the adversary with the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God! Give open ear to its "*Now* is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation! Seek ye the Lord *while he may be found*; call ye upon him *while he is near*—or ever the silver cord be loosed or the golden bowl be broken. Before the awful word go out, Joined to idols let him alone." Let him alone, ye ministering angels. Let him alone, ye prayers of God's people. Let him alone, thou Word of God. Let him alone, all gracious, soul-saving influences, forevermore.

The province of Honan, China, has a population of fifteen millions, and thus far but one missionary has entered the field. The natives are said to be superior alike in physique and intellectual capacity. To this field the eyes of the Presbyterian Church in Canada have been directed, and it was decided to send Mr. Goforth (who graduates this year from Knox College) as the pioneer missionary.

TAUGHT EARLY.

He was a pretty little fellow, but it was his manners, not his looks, that attracted everybody—clerks in the stores, people in the horse-cars, men, women and children. A boy four years old, who, if anybody said to him, "How do you do?" answered "I am well, thanks," and if he had a request to make, be it of friend or strange, began it with "Please." And the beauty of it was that the "Thanks" and "Please" were so much a matter of course to the child that he never knew he was doing anything at all noticeable.

"How cunning it is," said a showy woman to his mother, as they sat at dinner at the public table of a hotel one day, "to hear that child thank the waiters, and say 'please' when he wants anything. I never saw anything so sweet. My children have to be constantly told if I want them to thank people. How well you must have taught him, that he never forgets."

"He has always been accustomed to it," said the mother. "We have always said 'Please' to him when we wished him to do anything, and have thanked him. He knows no other way."

The showy woman looked as if she did not need any further explanation of the way in which habits are formed.

Probably you do not.—*Wide Awake.*

WHY MOURNERS ARE BLESSED.

"Blessed are they that mourn," for he who never mourns never mends. Compunction of a godly sort, dissatisfaction with all past attainments, and honest grief at falling short of Christ's high standard of holiness, all tend to growth in grace. There are too many dry-eyed Christians in the world. Gloomy, God-distrusting unbelief we have no apologies for. But there ought to be more tears of penitence over neglect of duty and woundings of Christ, more tears of sympathy with the wrong and suffering, and then we would have more gracious bursts of sunshine from Christ's countenance. Rainbows are never painted except upon raindrops. They that sow in the tears of contrition, reap in the joys of pardon and peace. Such tears water the roots of grace. Blessed are they that mourn and mend. The ladder to the higher Christian life starts from the dust of self-abasement; but for every round we need a fresh grasp on Jesus and a new lift by His loving hand.—*Cuyler.*