

**CANTERBURY CHIMES;  
OR, CHAUCER TALES  
RETOLD FOR CHILDREN**

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Canterbury Chimes; Or, Chaucer Tales Retold for Children by Francis Storr & Hawes Turner

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**FRANCIS STORR & HAWES TURNER**

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©

# CANTERBURY CHIMES

OR

*of*  
HAUCER TALES RETOLD FOR CHILDREN

BY

FRANCIS STORR AND HAWES TURNER

LATE SCHOLARS OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

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'Let not my weak tongue falter  
In telling of this goodly company,  
Of their old piety, and of their glee:  
. . . . .  
that I may dare, in wayfaring,  
To stammer where old Chaucer used to sing'—KEATS

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LONDON

C. KEGAN PAUL & CO., 1 PATERNOSTER SQUARE

1878

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1879. July 31,  
By exchange.

## PREFACE.

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CHAUCER is one of the few great story-tellers of the world, and many of his tales are such as children most delight in.

There is so little supremely good literature within the reach of children, that it is a matter for regret that the 'Canterbury Tales' have been hitherto unknown to them.

Differences of spelling and pronunciation are enough to deter many grown-up people from reading Chaucer, and to children prove an insurmountable difficulty; while the occasional coarseness of the 'Canterbury Tales' makes it an unfit book to be placed in their hands.

A translation or paraphrase of selected tales is then the only way of making Chaucer at all accessible to children, and this is the task which we have here attempted.

This is no place to discuss the problem of translation, but we may briefly submit that a mixture of prose and verse, however skilful, is jarring to all readers, and to children intolerable. We have attempted to preserve the poetry of the original as far as is consistent with prose rhythm. Chaucer's sunny humour can hardly live out of his powerful rhyme, but even of this we have tried to keep some faint reflection.

Liberties have necessarily been taken. Some portions have been translated, others merely paraphrased, with here and there a modern touch added. Mythological and astrological passages have been freely pruned. The so-called 'Cook's Tale' seemed so suitable for our purpose that we have put it in the place of 'Sir Thopas.' Our only plea for so great a licence is that the tale is thoroughly in keeping with the age, and that it is difficult to account for its presence in several of the MSS., except on the supposition that Chaucer intended to re-write it.

From erudition we have carefully abstained; but a teacher who should use this little volume would easily from other sources supply a commentary. Perhaps we may hope that upper-class schools may find this a useful substitute for some



of the rather dreary compilations commonly used as reading books.

We trust that this version of the 'Canterbury Tales' will lead children who may read it to turn later to the rich original, there to find a splendid amplification indeed, but not a contradiction of their old story-book. The tales here selected have passed muster with many a childish audience when told by the fire-side, and this leads us to hope that they may please a wider circle of young readers in their written form.

The woodcuts (taken from the Ellesmere MS.), for which we are indebted to the courtesy of the President of the Chaucer Society, give a truer idea of the personages of the Prologue than such modern pictures as Stothart's, or even Blake's; and we believe that children will not be offended by the bad drawing, while they will be pleased by the real power shown in these seriously-meant grotesques.

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## CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION TO THE CANTERBURY TALES	I
THE KNIGHT'S TALE: PALAMON AND ARCITE <i>✓</i>	39
THE MAN OF LAW'S TALE: CONSTANCE <i>✓</i>	86
NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE: THE COCK AND THE FOX <i>✓</i>	109
THE SQUIRE'S TALE: CANACE <i>✓</i>	126
THE FRANKLIN'S TALE: DORIGEN	140
CHAUCER'S TALE: GAMELYN <i>✓</i>	166