

dark ages of the seventh and eighth dynasties, when the Egyptians seem to have been oppressed by disaster.

Just what Professor Petrie's new discovery will prove with respect to the conditions of life among what he terms the prehistoric dwellers of Egypt cannot be determined without a further examination in detail; but one thing seems reasonably certain at present, and that is, they reveal a condition of barbarism among the inhabitants of that part of the world such as to make their destruction by a deluge a justifiable if not the only means by which an overruling Providence could operate to people the earth with a purer class of beings. The record which the distinguished Egyptologist has brought forth in this later age of the world is a fitting parallel to the description given in the sixth chapter of Genesis, when it is said the inhabitants were mighty men, but their wickedness was so great, the thoughts of their hearts being evil continually, that "it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth," and He destroyed all except Noah and they that were with him in the ark.

THE JAP AND THE CZAR.

The "little Jap" does not seem to be such a small chap after all, considering the fact that he now regards himself a match for the "colossus of the North," and would rather try his skill and strength with the Russian czar today than put off any longer a conflict that he regards as inevitable sooner or later. The situation may be looked upon as presenting a rather remarkable metamorphosis from that of a year ago, when Japan was regarded as too insignificant to even risk a war with China; now it is big enough to measure arms with the most extensive empire on earth, and all through having beaten the Chinamen a few times.

Nor does Japan's attitude in this latest phase of the eastern war question seem more improbable of maintenance than when the mikado proposed to fight China less than a year ago. His armies already are in the field and in fighting trim. He has China in a position that it must either give him any required assistance against Russia or be wiped out of existence itself as a nation. China is satisfied with the treaty of peace, and of course would not willingly consent to pay the price of a change at the demand of Russia, which it considers has no business to interfere. Thus far Japan and China are together in an affair that must be regarded as their own. On the other hand, Russian interference cannot receive any effective support from European nations, because it is uncalled for. The czar's territory is not invaded, and his only reason for meddling and attempting to dictate terms to Japan is lest the latter should become a formidable power in Asia—a destiny which it looks as though Russia is too late to change, and which it has no right to control. The Muscovite wants for himself an important part of what Japan has secured from China, but if he tries to prevent the transfer or to gratify his own desire for

territorial aggrandizement in Corea or at Port Arthur, there is every prospect that Japan will retake Saghalien island, which the Russians seized from the mikado twenty years ago.

In this situation it looks as though Japan can stand quietly by the treaty made with China, carry out its provisions, and if Russia grows about it, ask the Muscovite what he is going to do. Then if there is any proposition to fight it out, Japan is ready for that, with a prospect of gaining more fame.

TALKS TO BOYS.

I.—THE TWO ROADS.

The famous German author, Jean Paul Richter, relates an anecdote of a youth who fell into an unquiet slumber and dreamed that he was an aged man, standing at a window in contemplation of his past career. He raised his eyes to the deep blue sky where the stars shone steadily; then he cast them on the earth where few more hopeless beings than himself moved toward their certain goal—the tomb. It seemed to him that he had passed sixty of the stages which led to it, and had brought from his journey nothing but errors and remorse; his health was destroyed, his mind vacant, his heart sorrowful, and his old age devoid of comfort.

As a vision before him, the days of his youth rose up, and he recalled the solemn moment when, at his humble German home, his father had placed him at the entrance of two roads—telling him that one led into a peaceful, sunny land, covered with a fertile harvest, and resounding with soft, sweet song; that the other led the wanderer to a deep, dark cave, whence there was no issue, where poison flowed instead of water, and where serpents hissed and crawled. He looked toward the sky, and cried out in agony: "O days of my youth, return! O my father, place me once more at the entrance to life, that I may choose the better way!"

But the days of his youth and his father both had passed away. He saw wandering lights floating beyond, over dark marshes, and then disappear; these were the days of his wasted life. He saw a star fall from heaven, and vanish in darkness; this was an emblem of himself, and the sharp arrows of unavailing remorse struck home to his heart. He remembered his youthful companions who entered life with him, but who, having trod the paths of virtue and of truth, were now honored and happy. The clock in the tower near by struck, and the sound recalled his parents' early love for him, their erring son; the lessons they had taught him; the prayers they had offered up in his behalf. Overwhelmed with shame and grief, he dared no longer look toward that heaven where his father and mother were; tears ran from his darkened eyes, and with one despairing effort he cried aloud, "Come back, my early days! come back!"

He was aroused by his own voice; his youth had come back—for it had been but a dream which came to his slumbers on New Year's night. He was still young—but his faults were real. He thanked God fervently that

time was still his own—that he had not yet entered the deep, dark cavern, but was free to tread the road leading to the peaceful land, there to enjoy the society of the good and the pure; and in his heart he resolved that the prayers of loving parents, the lessons of kind teachers, and the admonitions of those who pointed the way to God and heaven, should not be wasted on him.

The dream, how typical of many a career which can be pointed to in common, everyday life, in which the bitter cry, "Oh give me back my early days!" is unavailing; where wasted youth will not return! With these lessons of actual existence before them, more vivid than even the young man's dream, it is not to be wondered that the earnest efforts of parents, teachers, and preachers of the Divine plan of salvation go out in intense pleadings today for the youth of these mountain vales to walk in the road which leads to eternal peace and happiness; to sacrifice those appetites, habits and inclinations which only produce broken health, beclouded minds, comfortless age, and ceaseless misery.

The ending of the two roads, how far apart! Yet at their outset the divergence is so slight as to seem hardly perceptible; but the space grows wider and wider as we go along either, until the other passes out of sight. How shall we choose so as to avoid the deep, dark, poisonous cavern as an inevitable destination? Go to the entrance of the two roads, as did the dreamer, and listen! The voice of our Father instructs, in language not to be misunderstood—in tones as penetrating as those in which were uttered the Ten Commandments amid the thunders on Mount Sinai more than three thousand years ago, and whose echoes are ringing over earth today.

What does He say? For surely words of such vast import should be indelibly impressed on every brain—should be ineffaceably written on every heart. Let us recall a recent episode in our experience, when the tempter made special efforts to lead the boys in the way of darkness, by inducements to contract the tobacco habit, against the which the servants of the Most High made emphatic protest. This brings the inquiry, Is following the tobacco habit, which to many seems but a little step at most from the right way, treading the road toward that awful cave whence there is no issue, where poison flows instead of water, and where serpents hiss and crawl? Let us find the answer, examine as carefully as time will permit, and tell in plain words of the plain facts we meet.

What does Father say, as He calls our attention to the two roads? "Tobacco is not good for the body!" Surely He knows, for in the Divine providence He formed that body and gave it to man. Again, tobacco "is not good for man, but is an herb for bruises and sick cattle." So; it may not be used internally for medicine for man when he is ill—even the man who thinks thereby to cure his sickness has not the divine permission to use tobacco therefor within his body, as whatever might be the imaginary relief in one direction, the whole effect is not good; so says the Lord. Tobacco is an herb