

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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"Give us this day our daily bread"

Everybody knows what daily bread means, and that one must eat as long as one is in the world, and also that it tastes good—I think of that. Perhaps, too, my children occur to me, how they love to eat, and are so lively and joyful at table. And then I pray that the dear God would only give us something to eat.

"Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors."

It hurts when one receives an affront: and revenge is sweet to man. It seems so to me, too, and my inclination leads that way. But then the wicked servant in the Gospel passes before my eyes and my heart fails, and I resolve that I will forgive my fellow-servant and not say a word to him about the hundred pence.

"And lead us not into temptation."

Here I think of various instances where people, in such and such circumstances, have strayed from the good and have fallen; and that it would be no better with me.

"But deliver us from evil."

Here I still think of temptations and that man is so easily seduced and may stray from the straight path. But at the same time I think of all the troubles of life, of consumption and old age, of the pains of childbirth, of gangrene, and of the thousand-fold misery and heart sorrow that is in the world and that plague and torture poor mortals, and there is none to help. And you will find if tears have not come before they will be sure to come here; and one can feel such a hearty yearning to be away and can be so sad and cast down in one's self, as if there were really no help at all. But then one must pluck up courage again, lay the hand upon the mouth and continue, as it were, in triumph—

"For Thine is the kingdom
And the power
And the glory.
Amen."

A prayer must in the very nature of things be the expression of a wish, for we would not pray for things undesirable. That for which we pray is quite likely to be granted, if our petition is reasonable, for the desire probably in the event of prayer would be so great that we would do our part. Prayer is not real when based upon a whim, but becomes effective when the petitioner is willing and anxious to live his part, to do his part. No prayer will do much for one who prays and then deliberately goes out and by his own action gives the lie to his prayer.

SNEEZING

"Cupid sneezing in his flight
Once was heard upon the right,
Boding woe to lovers true;

But now upon the left he flew,
And with sportive sneeze divine,
Gave of joy the sacred sign.
Acme bent her lovely face,
Flush'd with rapture's rosy grace,
And those eyes that swam in bliss,
Prest with many a breathing kiss;
Breathing, murmuring, soft and low,
Thus might life forever flow!
'Love of my life, and life of love,'
Cupid rules our fates above,
Ever let us vow to join
In homage at his happy shrine.
Cupid heard the lovers true,
And upon the left he flew,
And with sportive sneeze divine,
Renew'd of joy the sacred sign."

—CATULLUS

The above clever poem is the outgrowth of an ancient superstition regarding sneezing. From this it appears that woe followed sneezing "at the right," but a sort of left-handed sneeze was an omen of joy and good luck generally. It passeth the understanding of we "moderns" the importance that once attached to so simple and involuntary an act as sneezing. To sneeze with us is to sneeze—some of us imagine that we may be "catching cold," but there the matter ends. There is no denying the fact that the sneeze which "hangs fire" is one of the most distressing experiences that well-bred society has to suffer. When you feel like sneezing there is nothing that you would sooner do for the time being—we all know that.

History relates many instances where a resounding sneeze and the half-hallelujah which followed it brought discovery and sometimes woe to the sneezer, regardless of whether he sneezed to the right or left—as set forth in the poem above.

If our students will delve into the literature of the past they will discover for themselves many remarkable things and events. And looking up these matters for one's self has a tendency to make them stick in the mind. However, we shall proceed with our sneezing:

It is said that when the King of Menomotapa sneezed certain ceremonies resulted which showed that the sneeze of despotism was a matter of grave concern—as we in this day would say, "Not to be sneezed at." Those who were near the King when he sneezed would salute him in so loud a tone that persons in the ante-chamber would hear it and join in the acclamation; this would be heard in an adjoining chamber and persons therein would join in the "hubbub," and in this way the commotion would be carried to the street, and eventually all about the city. Amusing, isn't it?

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