

Christian Family.

The Fool's Prayer.

The royal feast was done; the king
Sought some new sport to banish care,
And to his jester cried, "Sir fool,
Kneel now, and make for us a prayer!"

The jester doffed his cap and bells,
And stood the mocking court before:
They could not see the bitter smile
Behind the painted grin he wore.

He bowed his head, and bent his knee
Upon the monarch's silken stool;
His pleading voice arose: "O Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!"

"No pity, Lord, could change the heart
From red with wrong to white as wool;
The rod must heal the sin; but, Lord,
Be merciful to me a fool!"

"'Tis not by built the onward sweep
Of truth and right, O Lord we stay;
'Tis by our follies that so long
We hold the earth from heaven away.

"These clumsy feet still in the mire,
Go crushing blossoms without end;
These hard, well-meaning hands we thrust
Among the heart-strings of a friend.

"The ill-timed truth we might have kept—
Who knows how sharp it pierced and stung?
The word we had not sense to say—
Who knows how grandly it had rung?

"Our faults no tenderness should ask,
The chastening stripes must cleanse
them all,
But for our blunders—oh, in shame
Before the eyes of heaven we fall.

"Earth bears no balsam for mistakes;
Men crown the knave and scourge the fool
That hid his will; but thou, O Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!"

The room was hushed; in silence rose
The king, and sought the garden cool,
And walked apart, and murmured low,
"Be merciful to me a fool!"

—Atlantic.

A Poor Little Mother.

Once a little lady dressed in black and red
Tucked her little children safely in their
bed.

A green leaf curling over was all the roof
they had.

But the softly singing breezes and the
sunshine made them glad.

Off flew the little mother through the
summer air:
She never thought of danger, or felt a sin-
gle care.

A grassy glade, a hill-top, and then a field
of clover

This little dame in black and red went fly-
ing gayly over.

But in a pretty garden where grew a red,
red rose

The little lady lighted to nestle and re-
pose:

As soft as fairy velvet, and oh, so red and
sweet

Were the fragrant leaves around her and
underneath her feet.

Out tripped a merry maiden along the
garden gay,

The red, red rose to gather, to the little
dame's dismay.

She drowsily came creeping from out
sweet rose-leaf land,

And stood a moment thinking on the mer-
ry maiden's hand.

The little maid laughed softly, she was so
full of glee.

Held up her dimpled finger, and clear and
loud called she:

"Lady bug, lady bug fly away home!
Your house is on fire, and your children
will burn!"

Off flew the little mother in terror wild
and dread

Across the hill and grassy glade and field
of clover red.

Her little wings were aching, her anxious
spirit drooped,

When at the tiny portal in breathless fear
she stooped.

There lay her little children all snugly
tucked in bed,

Yes, safe and sound, and sleeping, with
the leaf overhead!

—St. Nicholas.

Things That Never Die.

The pure, the bright, the beautiful,
That stir our hearts in youth;
The impulse of a worldless prayer,
The dream of love and truth;
The longing after something lost,
The spirit's yearning cry,
The striving after better hopes—
These things shall never die.

The timid hand stretched forth to aid
A brother in need;
The kindly word in grief's dark hour
That proves a friend indeed;
The plea for mercy softly breathed,
While justice threatens nigh,
The sorrow of a contrite heart—
These things shall never die.

The memory of a clasping hand,
The presence of a kiss,
And all the kind and loving acts
That form affection's bliss;
If with a firm, unchanging faith,
And holy trust on high,
Those hands have clasped, those lips have
met—
These things shall never die.

The cruel and the bitter word
That wounded as it fell;
The chilling word of sympathy
We feel but never tell;
The hard repulse that chilled the heart
Whose hopes were bounding high.
In an unending record kept—
These things shall never die.

Let nothing pass, for every hand
Must find some work to do;
Lose not a chance to waken love,
Be firm, and just and true,
So shall a light that cannot fade
Beam on thee from on high,
And angel voices say to thee—
"These things shall never die."

Sammy Snapple.

"There you are again, boy, a sitting
on them steps—meeting-house steps to
be sure, but none the better for that,
when it ain't Sunday, and you ain't
waiting to go inside. There you sit
with your elbows on your knees, and
your head bowed over, kind a discour-
aged like, on your hands; and you
won't get up one peg higher in the
world while you sit there."

"Have got to sit somewhere—haven't
I?" snarled out Sammy Snapple;
"might as well sit as stand when there
ain't the first thing a fellow can do,
and I might as well sit on meeting-
house steps as on anything else. I
wish I had all the money and all the
good clothes that the folks have who
go inside; then I wouldn't be sitting
here."

"They didn't earn their clothes a
sitting on meeting-house steps—did
they, bub? I reckon if you should
ask 'em they wouldn't tell you so.
Some of 'em were early birds, I can
tell you, bub; earlier than robins or
orioles, or than any of them high
breasted, bright winged creatures that
are up so early Spring and Summer
mornings, it seems as if nobody could
be up earlier. And some of these
moneied folks and well dressed folks
you are envying had to sit up late of
nights to earn their money. They are
eating sweet bread now, to be sure,
but it ain't the bread of idleness."

"I haven't—a—relation in the
world," drawled out poor little Sam-
my Snapple.

"And lots of boys haven't," answer-
ed farmer Tubs. "Besides, relations
ain't the thing a boy can have,
Sometimes, the more you have of 'em
the worse you are off. Now, bub,
you've got your own way to make in
the world. You've got to 'paddle your
own canoe,' as folks say, and I'd be up
and at it; and then, if you want a
rest sometimes, and feel as if you
must have it, why, it won't hurt you
to sit down a while on the meeting-
house steps."

Mr. Jonathan Tubs, or farmer Tubs,
as he was generally called, was known
as a "hard-fisted farmer," but his
neighbors eaid his heart, unlike his
fists, was as "tender as a Spring chick-
en." And this was true, for he would
n't have hitched his horses in front of
the meeting house and let his wagon
load of beets and turnips stand half
an hour and more, while he talked to
Sammy Snapple. Though the hands
were brown and hard with toil, the
man who owned them had in his
heart the tenderest human feelings for
all poor waifs and wanderers who
came in his way; and Sammy Snap-
ple was certainly a waif and a wan-
derer.

"I'm sorry for you, Sammy, so I am,"
continued Mr. Tubs. "I'm a kind of
tumbled-up farmer, but folks that ex-
pects to see my heart turned into
stone will have to wait a while. I
want to help you, and I'll do what I
can. I'd take you right home and
keep you for my own, but you know
how it is. Almost everything is har-
vested, and, besides, I've got a whole
army of boys of my own, and the
danger is that they will die of laziness
before the winter is over, and the
spring work is ready. So you see
there's no good place for you, bub, on
my farm—not at present, any way.
But there's a place for you somewhere
for there ain't any living thing, from
a grasshopper to a giant, that hasn't a
place, though it may take good eyes
to tell, at the first look, just where the
place is."

"I haven't a relation in the world,"
sighed Sammy.

"I know it, bub; but, as I just told
you, there's a good, as well as a bad
side to that. I know your story well
You had at first a father and mother
as every boy had; somehow,
when the folks down here were want-
ing 'em to stay and expecting they
would, the Lord was making different
calculations, and all of a sudden they
slipped away, first one and then the

other—only a few weeks apart. Then
that poor old widow took you; and
folks all thought she'd be kind, she
wasn't. She took to drink, and a
wretched life she led you my boy;
and now she's gone—the Lord have
mercy on her soul! but it's a good
thing for you she's gone, though you
are alone in that little shanty of hers.
I won't call it a shanty; though, for
it's a tight little frame house. The
wind may whistle around as much as it
chooses, but it can't get in, nor the
snow, either. And my advice to you
is to stay right there, seeing the poor
creature, who pretends to take care of
you, left the house to you, and seeing
you've got Aunt Tabby next door, so
near that you can shake hands from
window to window. There's a good
stove there, and the same furniture,
such as it is,—that has always been
here. I'll send you all the wood
you'll need for the winter, it'll be ex-
ercise for you to saw and split it. I'll
see too it, too, that the baker leaves
you a good loaf of bread every day.
And I'll do more than this Sammy, I'll
set you up in business."

"Set me up in business!" exclaimed
Sammy, as he stared at Farmer Tubs.

"Yes, that's what I mean. You can
begin moderate,—you know. I'm
down two or three times a week, and
whenever I come, I'll bring you three
or four dozen of those bright, red ap-
ples of mine that shine like mahog-
any, and you can hang 'em up in the
window; and my word for it, they
won't hang there long, you'll sell 'em
so fast. And you can have some pe-
anuts and chestnuts too in the window.
My wife has got some idle glass jars,
and I'll fill three or four of them with
nuts and you can set 'em up in the
window, and let all the world know
that you are keeping store for a liv-
ing; so now, bub, don't grow to self
meeting house steps, but stir your self
before you are ten minutes older."

And Sammy Snapple did stir him-
self. He went home—to the little
house, that was the only spot he
could call home—and when Aunt
Tabby came over, as she did in a few
minutes, to bring him a bowl of bread
and milk and a piece of pie, she found
him washing the two front windows,
to get ready for "keeping store." Of
course, she wanted to know what had
put it into his head to wash windows,
and then he told her all about it, and
she became so interested in his "store"
that she gave him a great many things
that she thought would find ready
market, so that on "opening day,"
there was quite a display in the two
front windows of "Sammy Snapple's
shanty."

Of course Farmer Tubs and Aunt
Tabby were happy purchasers on that
day, but trade was pretty brisk all
Winter.

And who was Aunt Tabby? Some
people called her Sammy Snapple's
next door neighbor. Others said,
"Oh! she is a woman who has always
lived alone—peculiar, but everybody
loves her."

The months came and went; and
one day Aunt Tabby said to herself;
"I believe I'd like to do it. Yes I
think that Sammy and I would get
on splendidly under the same roof.
I've got enough for both of us, and the
fact is I'd like to give him a home.
He's a brave little fellow, but he's
kept store long enough, and now he
and I will keep house together."

If there is any boy in all the world
who has a comfortable, snug home,
with a sweet-faced, motherly woman
by his side to comfort and cheer him,
that boy is Sammy Snapple. And
Tabby says that the way Sammy won
her heart was by "keeping store" so
bravely all winter.—S. S. Times.

—If, on laying down our pen, we can
not say, in the sight of God, "Upon strict
examination, I have knowingly written
nothing that is not true," and if, without
deceiving either ourselves or others, we
have not presented even our most odious
opponents in such a light only that we
can justify it on our deathbeds, if we can
not do this, study and literature seem to
make us only unrighteous and sinful.
—Nesbitt.

Why She Wept.

Old Nancy had been telling Bijah
that she'd give the court as good
"sass" as he sent, and that he might
give her six months and be hanged to
him. She walked out with an ugly
look in her eye and her teeth shut,
and was impatient for the fray to be-
gin.

"Years and years ago," began his
honor, as if talking to himself, "I used
to pass a white house on Second street
It was so white and clean, and its
green blinds contrasted so prettily,
that I used to stand on the walk and
wonder if the inmates were not the
happiest people in Detroit. They
were happy. They had plenty. They
had children who played games on
the green grass, and the birds sang all
day long in the arbor."

Old Nancy looked around uneasily
as he waited for a moment.

"As the years went by, the pretty
white house turned to brown with
neglect. The birds went away. The
children died or grew up ragged or
uncivil. I well remember the day
the husband and father put a pistol to
his head and ended his shame and life
together. The wife was drunk when
the body was brought home by the
crowd."

A low moan escaped the old wom-
an's lips.

"It was her love for drink that kil-
led that man—that buried the chil-
dren—that sent the birds away—that
passed the place into strange hands,"
whispered the court, "Is the woman
dead?"

Old Nancy groaned as the tears
fell.

"No she lives. She has no home,
no friends, no one to love her. There
must be times when she looks back to
plenty, peace and happiness, and has
such a heart ache as few women know
of. There must be times when she
remembers the graves she once wept
over, and children's voices must some-
times remind her of the tones of those
laid to rest long years ago. I would
not be in her place for all the wealth
in the world."

"Oh, sir? don't talk to me—don't
call it up!" she moaned, as she wrung
her hands.

"You may go he quietly said, "you
have not long to live. There are those
here who can remember when you had
silks instead of rags—when you rode
in your carriage instead of wandering
thru' alleys and lying in the gutters.
Some morning you will be found dead
That will be the last act in a drama so
full of woe and misery and wretched-
ness that it will be a relief to know
that you are dead."

White as a ghost, trembling in every
limb, and weeping as a child, she
passed out.—Detroit Free Press.

The Robbin.

BY JOHN G. WHITTIER.

My old Welch neighbor over the way
Crept slowly out in the sun of Spring,
Pushed from her ears the locks of gray,
And listened to hear the robbin sing.

Her grandson, playing ma. bles stopped,
And cruel in sport, as boys will be,
Tossed a stone at the bird who hopped
From bough to bough in the apple-tree.

"Nay," said the grandmother, "have you
not heard,
My poor bad boy! of the fiery pit,
And how, drop by drop, this merciful bird
Carries the water that quenches it?

"He brings cool dew in his little bill.
And lets it fall on the souls of sin:
You can see the mark on his red breast
still

Of fires that scorch as he drops it in.

"Amen," I said to the beautiful myth;
"Sing, bird of God in my heart as well;
Each good thought is a drop wherewith
To cool and lessen the fires of hell.

"Prayers of love like the raindrops fall,
Tears of pity are cooling dew,
And dear to the heart of our Lord are all
Who suffer like Him in the good they
do!"

THE GENTLENESS OF GRACE.—The great-
est results in the working of God's provi-
dence are brought about in the quietest
ways. Truth falls on the ready soil like
light on the photographic plate; grace
clothing it with beauty and joy, as the
breath of Spring renews the landscape;
and the result is as when the glory of the
harvest follows the Summer's warmth, and
crowns the labors of the year.

The Weariness of Waiting.

Dear friends: In the "Home Cir-
cle," bright and hopeful as it appears
in these familiar pages, there are evi-
dently suffering sisters. Thinking,
this fair summer morning while the
breezes stir the musical pines and the
glad birds thrill me with love, of
these weary souls, I am especially re-
minded of one silent class—one par-
ticular kind of trial. Of positive sor-
rows, much is written; to the be-
reaved, to the heavily-laden, many
pens are ever addressed. Also for in-
valids—whose grief is largely nega-
tive—we find helpful words not a
few. But I think, while the birds
are singing and the wind accompani-
ment waxes sweeter and sweeter, of
the myriad beings not apparently
stricken—strong in health, comfort-
able in circumstances, active and use-
ful in life, who yet know the anguish
of waiting. It is not a withered, but
an unfulfilled hope, that sickens these
spirits; not what they have, but what
they have not, which tries them,
through long monotonous days, even
unto the utmost. They feel scarcely
among the afflicted, dare not—bearing
no visible cross—entreat the sympathy
of men. Indeed, they are keenly
aware that such plea might be met by
indifference, or with the verdict—
Weak, to weep over wishes in a world
throbbing with pain! Still, wishes
are forces; waiting is hard; and
somehow, in the beautiful morning, I
long to reach forth a hand to these
quiet sufferers, and to say, Fear not;
God heedeth all sorrow! God aideth
all need! Moreover, while actually
burdened, you must remember that it
is much to have hope; you must
strive, dear hearts, to realize the
brevity of time, albeit it sometimes
seems long, and you must especially
watch lest, in the passionate yearning
for future blessing, you fail to per-
ceive the jewels about your feet.

It is so easy to thirst for the far-
away sea while sparkling brooks—it
may be rivers—flow unheeded beside
us; so strangely natural to run about,
hither and thither, clamoring for joy,
while it patiently knocks (unheard in
the willful turbulence) at the door of
the heart.

It were false comfort to say, disre-
gard the future, despise the uncer-
tain. Not so, beloved. Hope grand
coming harvests; acknowledge the
charm and power of the unattained;
but throughout your waiting, with its
inevitable meed of trial, be thankful,
rejoice in the bountiful present, lifting
strong, patient faces to heaven.

What a sermonizer the wind and
the birds have unwittingly made me!
But the hand has obeyed the dictates
of the heart, and it is with true sisterly
feeling that I have written.—Ar-
thur's.

A BOY'S COMPOSITION ON HEADS.—
"Heads are of different shapes and sizes.
They are full of notions. Large heads do
not always hold the most. Some persons
can tell just what a man is by the shape of
his head. High heads are the best kind.
Very knowing people are called long-
headed. A fellow that won't stop for any-
thing or anybody is called hot-headed. If
he is not quite so bright, he is called soft-
headed. If he won't be coaxed nor turned
they call him pig-headed. Animals have
very small heads. The heads of fools slant
back. When your head is cut off, you are
beheaded. Our heads are covered with hair
except bald heads. There are barrel heads
heads of sermons (and some ministers used
to have fifteen heads to one sermon), pin
heads, heads of cattle (as the farmer calls
his cows and oxen), head winds, drum
heads, cabbage heads, logger-heads, come
to a head, heads of chapters, head him off,
head of the family, and go ahead. But
first be sure you are right. But the worst
of all heads are dead-heads."

—A venerable patient a retired founde-
ryman, tells us that during his apprentice-
ship to a shipbuilder of Philadelphia, he
became acquainted with a never failing
remedy for burns and scalds, and that in
his subsequent foundry life he saw innum-
erable such injuries relieved of pain and
healed as if by magic, by powdered char-
coal. The softer it is the better, and that
from pine wood is the best. It is to be
sprinkled over the burn as soon as possi-
ble, and renewed as it becomes moist or
drips off.—Louisville Medical Journal.

—Every man has his grief. If the Lord
does not give it to him he makes one for
himself.