

"I returned, then, to London for my preparatory work in sketches with sunshine effects, and the weather conditions were favourable, too, although it was in March, towards the close of the wintry season.

"I saw once more the throne in the same glare-obscure (light and shade), in the same golden vapor, so sumptuously poetic, which enraptured my vision on my original visit to the House of Lords.

"The studies finished, I went back to Paris, realizing thoroughly what I had to do, but not knowing positively if I should succeed. I started my work then, having before me a very distinct likeness of the Queen's face. This, be it understood, was not the copy in enamel of a nose, of a mouth, that I was going to execute, but the portrait of the Queen of England, the Empress of India, seated a little in the background, in a semi-obscure traversed diagonally by two or three rays of the declining sun, like bars of gold, which attached themselves to the carved corners of the royal stall, or lighted up the red tapestry hangings. In short, I proposed to myself to express, so as to speak, a synthesis of resemblance; a resemblance, moreover, rather moral than physical; almost a historical vision.

"And from this vision of contemporaneous history one must evolve a veritable poem of royalty, to be considered with emotions of admirations and respect. Have I succeeded in this? I repeat, it is not for me to say."

The Indian Witness says that it is safe to assume that 100,000,000 of the population of India have an average annual income of not more than \$5.00 a head.

#### Children Asking the Blessing.

Attention has been called in these columns to the pretty custom of allowing the children in a family to say grace, and some forms of blessing in prose and verse suggested. But is it not well, when they do it voluntarily and naturally, to let the children use their own form of words? They will surely understand and remember that. In one family the children successively officiated as chaplain at the table, the form for years, with slight variations, being as follows: "O God, bless us; thank you for this food; forgive our sins; for Christ's sake. Amen."

Even childish comments or improvised additions to the usual form are not at heart irreverent, and are far better than stiff, unintelligible formality. In one family, where the father had just begun the custom of saying grace, the four-year-old boy remarked that he did "not like it as well as what grandpa said when he was here—papa's blessing is not long enough, and it doesn't ask God to give us better food!"

A minister whose duties often took him away from home left the asking of the blessing to his little sons, also charging them strictly to care for the health and comfort of their invalid mother. The latter was much surprised to hear this petition in the father's absence: "O Lord, we thank thee for giving us such a good father. We thank thee for giving us such a good mother, and when she dies we pray thee to give us a better one!"

One interesting fruit of this custom in years gone by was the habit of the children of Christian families to imitate it in their own play feasts, as is no doubt well remembered by many now grown up. One such tradition is of three or four children

partaking of a mud-pie dinner on the roadside, the oldest sister, with thumb carefully placed under the forefinger, after the manner of their aged grandfather, reverently repeating, "O God, more buntenty mazy-more present tense." Years after it came out that this remarkable prayer was a snatch of the grammar lesson heard at school added to the grandsire's stereotyped petition, "More abundantly bless and feed our never-dying souls!" This points a moral. When grace is said in the presence of children it should always be expressed in simple, distinct language; else how shall the children that sit in the place of the unlearned say "Amen," seeing they understand not?

A well known doctor of divinity related a reminiscence of his childhood in a country parsonage. The children were not allowed to eat "between meals," so that clothespins were served in place of food in their dining table in the barn. One form of blessing was, "O Lord bless this food, and don't let any of it stick in our throats," the last petition having reference to the experience of a

young brother who had nearly come to his death by getting a piece of lead in his throat. As the children grew up they felt less inclined to ask the blessing at their clothespin banquets, and a discussion sometimes arose as to whose duty it was, the guests rightly claiming that it belonged to the host. At last they settled it in the same way they chose the "it" in a game, by using the time honored formula, "Intra mintra, cutra corn, apple seeds, apple thorn." Even then, when it fell to "the other boy," he would decline, and so the future D. D. had to ask the blessing anyway!

Since the above was written a letter has been read from a naive pastor in the Armenian country, one item of which touchingly illustrates how the New England custom has borne fruit in the distant Orient. "Theodoret is sweet in many ways. Before we begin anything to do at the table he is the one to say, 'Pray,' preparing his hands so beautifully."—The Congregationalist.

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