

Milton's Prayer for Patience

I AM old and blind!
Men point at me as smitten by God's frown;
Afflicted and deserted of my kind,
Yet am I not cast down.

I am weak, yet strong,
I murmur not that I no longer see
Poor, old, and helpless, to Thee belong,
Father supreme! to Thee.

All-merciful One!
When men are farthest, then art Thou most
near,
When friends pass by, my weaknesses to shun,
Thy charity I hear.

Thy glorious face
Is leaning towards me, and its holy light
Shines in upon my lonely dwelling-place—
And there is no more night.

On my bended knees,
I recognize Thy purpose, clearly shown;
My vision Thou hast dimmed that I may see
Thyself—Thyself alone.

I have nought to fear;
This darkness is the shadow of thy wing;
Beneath it I am almost sacred—here,
Can come no evil thing.

Oh! I seem to stand
Trembling, where foot of mortal ne'er hath
been,
Wrapped in that radiance from the sinless land
Which eye hath never seen.

Visions come and go,
Shapes of resplendent beauty round me throng,
From angel lips I seem to hear the flow
Of soft and holy song.

It is nothing new,
When heaven is opening on my sightless eyes,
When airs from "Paradise" refresh my brow,
That earth in darkness lies.

In a purer clime,
My being fills with rapture—waves of thought
Roll in upon my spirit—strains sublime
Break over me unsought.

Give me now my lyre!
I feel the stirrings of a gift divine,
Within my bosom glows unearthly fire,
Lit by no skill of mine.

The Young Gardener.

PERHAPS there was a garden plot known as his, which, aided by a suggestion or two from his father, he carefully cultivated. Any father would be proud of such a son as "The Young Gardener." The faithful, affectionate dog, gambolling by his young master's side, seems to take in the whole situation, and rejoices in his master's joy. Woe be to any one who shall dare to interrupt him, or take anything off his barrow. Look at it again, and if you see, as your Editor sees, you will then agree to the following:—

1st. It is suggestive of healthfulness. That boy is the picture of health. You may be sure that he goes to bed early, and gets up early. He don't chew nor smoke tobacco, nor use intoxicating drinks; none of your home-made cider or wine for him, his nose would be offended if you put whisky near it. He eats his share of porridge and other wholesome food, and drinks plenty of good milk and water, and keeps his skin clean by the use of plenty of soap and water. He is none of your poor, thin little boys the wind mustn't blow upon; but a real healthful little fellow.

2nd. It is suggestive of industry. If the contents of his barrow is a specimen of his crop, then you may be certain that his garden is the very opposite of what King Solomon describes, when he says: "I went by the field of the slothful . . . and lo it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof." It had been well digged, carefully planted, and the hoe had not been allowed to get rusty, and where and when he

could not well use his hoe, then he hand-pulled the weeds. It would be quite a delight to look on it. See how he has filled his barrow; notice the way he has taken hold of the handles, see the way he steps. Off jacket and vest, roll up his shirt sleeves, and at it with a will. What pleasure to see a man or boy work after that fashion. Doubtless he can swim as well as the next, at the proper time, and with suitable companions; but he don't believe in all play.

3rd. It is suggestive of cheerfulness. Some boys and girls have the unfortunate habit of looking rather sour when they are at work; just as though they hated it. They are cross and don't half do it, unless they are watched all the time. Our Young Gardener looks to be real happy. Perhaps he is a little proud of his crop, and as he hastens to the door, he is thinking what his mamma will say when he calls her to look at what his barrow contains. Or it may be that is what he calls the minister's portion, and his young heart is so happy it shines out all over his face while he thinks of the surprise he'll give the minister. However that may be, he looks very cheerful.

Healthful, industrious, cheerful; these, with true religion in his heart, make him just such a boy as the world needs. If he lives to manhood he'll help to make the world the better for his abode in it; and in the judgment of the great day, the Lord Jesus Christ will say unto him, "Well done."—*Ensign.*

The Borrowed Baby.

"PLEASE, ma'am, I've come to borrow the baby." The speaker was a rosy-cheeked girl who lived with the family over the way. It was a regular nuisance, this lending the baby all the time. She did not seem to belong to us any more at all. I suppose we were all a little jealous, because she loved the new people so much, and they took so much pains with her, teaching her little cunning ways and pretty sayings; and I must say they were most judicious, never giving her sweet things to make her sick, or letting her take cold. So, for the hundredth time I rolled little Dudu up, and, kissing her good-bye, sent her off to act the part of a borrowed baby. When John came home to dinner, and found the baby gone again, he was just as angry as he could be. "Why can't they go over to the asylum and take their pick of babies." "But not ours, John," I said, quickly. "Well, no, of course not, but I don't propose to have strangers going halves with our baby. Besides, I won't have them teaching that child any more religious nonsense, and they bring her as well know it; when they bring her back this time you may as well settle it once for all."

I forgot to say that John and I were Free Thinkers, and did not go to church, or subscribe to any of the religious beliefs to which we had been educated. We had both graduated in a brilliant, intellectual school, utterly devoid of the foolish superstitions of any religious faith, and we intended to bring up our child in the same severely moral atmosphere. It did not once occur to us that ours was the strength of youth and presumption, or that our ignorance could not pull down in a day what knowledge had been a thousand years building. We felt that we were sufficient for ourselves and our child. The baby came

home. She was nearly three years old, but after all, only a baby, and as I took her from the girl I said: "We won't be able to lend the baby any more, Mary; her papa and I both think it isn't a good plan, and we cannot possibly do without her; the house is too lonely. Tell your mistress so with my compliments."

"I'm sorry, ma'am," said the girl, "because we all love little Dudu so much and she's really sweet. She can sing 'Jesus loves me' all through, and not miss a word."

"Superstition!" I exclaimed angrily. "Tell your mistress for me that I do not wish my child to learn those senseless hymns. I do not believe in them, nor do I intend that she shall."

"Not b-e-l-i-e-v-e them!" gasped the girl. "Why you ain't a heathen, be you?" I dismissed her curtly, and when John came home told him of the message I had sent.

"That is right, my little woman. I guess we know enough to take care of this little blossom. Hey, wee Willie Winkie, don't we?"

Somehow just then an old forgotten text flashed into my mind—"My grace is sufficient for thee," and it ran up and down the garret of my thought all the evening. When I put Dudu to bed I noticed that her hands were hot and her eyes seemed heavy. There was lots of diphtheria in the place, but she had not been exposed to it in any possible manner, our neighbours who had borrowed the baby for being as afraid of it as we were, for that was why no baby was at their home.

Oh, that dreadful time! I cannot recall it now—the days—hardly more than a day—of anguish; the awful suffering at the end, the parched lips and the fever-bright eyes—the awful realm of death and not one of hope, one word of comfort, only the cruel, dreary, unlighted grave that yawned for our darling! Just at the last there was a moment's peace. It was not on us that her last look fell. We turned to see who or what she saw, and there stood our neighbour over the way, whom she, at least, sweet darling, had loved as herself, and then she lifted the weary little hands, and a glad look of recognition was in the wan face, and we all heard the last broken words as they fell in awful distinctness from the baby lips:

"Jesus loves me—dis I know."

And it was all over, and only the memory remained of so much beauty and sweetness; and as our hearts were going back to the dust of unbelief, our good neighbour came like an evangelist, and giving us of her own brave strength, gained at the foot of the cross, said wisely: "Be content. God has only borrowed the baby!"—*Detroit Free Press.*

If you stand a quarter of a mile off from your father, you will be sore puzzled to know what he says or what he means; but if you go within five feet of him, everything will be plain. So, my Christian brother, if you stand off and away from God, your Heavenly Father, in the midst of earthly absorptions, you will undoubtedly be much at a loss to know what is His will; but if you live near to Him, walking with God (as the Scripture expression so significantly gives it), you will have no difficulty of this sort.—*Howard Crosby.*

Three Little Pilgrims.

THREE small children, a boy and two girls, respectively ten, seven, and four years old, arrived in St. Louis a few weeks ago, having travelled thither all the way from Kulm, in Germany, without any escort or protection but their innocence and helplessness. Their parents, who had emigrated last year from the Fatherland and settled in Sedalia, Missouri, had left them in charge of an aunt, to whom in due time they forwarded a sum of money, sufficient to pay the passage and other expenses of the little ones to their new home across the ocean. As they spoke not a word of any language save their own, in all probability they would never have arrived at their destination had not the relative in question provided them with a passport, not, truly, addressed to any earthly authority, but to Christian mankind at large. Before taking leave of them she gave the eldest girl a New Testament, instructing her to show it to every person who might accost her during her long voyage, and in particular, to call attention to the first leaf in the book. Upon that leaf the wise and good woman had inscribed the names of the three children, their birthplace and several ages, and a plain, unvarnished statement to the effect that "their father and mother in America were anxiously awaiting their arrival at Sedalia, Missouri," followed by the irresistible appeal, their guide, safeguard, and interpreter throughout a journey of over four thousand miles: "Verily I say unto you, forasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto Me."

"Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep."

By virtue of its age and value and previous associations this little prayer has become a classic. It must be very ancient, for who can tell when or by whom it was written? Thousands, from the silver-haired pilgrim to the lisping infant, sink to nightly slumber murmuring the simple petition. It has trembled on the lips of the dying. One instance was that of an old saint of eighty-six years whose mind had so failed that he could not recognise his own daughter. "Very touching," says the relator, "was the scene one night after retiring, as he called his daughter, as if she were his mother, saying, like a little child, 'Mother, come here by my bed and hear me say my prayers before I go to sleep.' She came near. He clasped his white, withered hands, and reverently said:

"Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to take;"

then quietly fell asleep and woke in heaven."

A distinguished judge, who many years ago died in New York in extreme old age, said that his mother had taught the stanza to him in infancy and that he never omitted it at night. John Quincy Adams made a similar assertion, and an old sea captain declared that, even before he became a decided Christian, he never forgot it on turning in at night.—*Anon.*

The intellect sits enthroned on the forehead and in the eye; and the heart is written in the countenance. The soul reveals itself in the voice only.—*Longfellow.*