

## The Family Circle.

## CHRIST ALL AND IN ALL.

O Jesus! when I think of Thee,  
Thy manger, cross, and throne,  
My spirit trusts exultingly  
In Thee, and Thee alone.

I see Thee in Thy weakness first;  
Then, glorious from Thy shame,  
I see Thee death's strong letters burst,  
And reach heaven's mightiest name.

In each a brother's love I trace  
By power divine exprest,  
One in Thy Father God's embrace,  
As on Thy mother's breast.

For me Thou didst become a man,  
For me didst weep and die;  
For me achieve Thy wondrous plan,  
For me ascend on high.

O let me share Thy holy birth,  
Thy faith, Thy death to sin!  
And, strong amidst the toils of earth,  
My heavenly life begin.

Then shall I know what means the strain  
Triumphant of Saint Paul:  
"To live is Christ, to die is gain."  
"Christ is my all in all!"

George W. Bethune, D.D.

[For the American Presbyterian.]

## THE ORIGIN OF SOOT.

BY DAISY MEADOWS.

There once lived a famous king whose name and history you will not find in Rollin's, nor Wilson's, nor Weber's, nor anybody else's "Outlines." But notwithstanding the silence of those learned writers, this monarch is fortunate in a chronicler whose stories are treasured in the memories of thousands, and seem to nearly all of us, at one time in our lives, the triumphs of Art; a writer whose songs and poetry, touched by the music of a mother's voice, have soothed our infant slumbers, or awakened our childish delight—the ever-to-be-venerated Mother Goose.

In a style whose Saxon purity is unequalled, she thus begins the song of "The Blackbird Pie."

Sing a song of sixpence  
A pocket full of rye;  
Four-and-twenty blackbirds  
Baked in a pie.

When the pie was opened,  
The birds began to sing;  
Was not that a dainty dish  
To set before the king?

It is quite useless for me to quote any further. The masterly manner in which the other actors in the drama are introduced—and disposed of in a few words—is known to every one. But there is a sequel to the song that is not found in most of the editions of our author's work. Some persons go so far as to say that this fragment was never written by Mother Goose, because it is in prose, and all the rest of her compositions are in poetry; also, that it wants a certain clearness and brevity peculiar to her nervous style. Indeed, almost as many objections have been urged against its genuineness as were once put forth in favor of that of the Epistles of Phalarus. Alas! there is no Bentley living now to settle the question beyond dispute. So that all that can be done will be "to state the case" and let each one decide the matter for himself. My own opinion is, that if not the work of Mother Goose herself, it is that of one of her lineal descendants.

## SEQUEL.

"When this remarkable pie was preparing, and the cook had made the pastry after the recipe most approved by the royal taste; had placed the birds in order; and had reached the important stage of seasoning, he happened to be called away from the kitchen for a few minutes, leaving the scullion there alone. Now the scullion, like most lads at his age, was rather mischievous, and as the cook had been considerably out of humor (a thing by no means uncommon with his profession), and had given the boy a sore beating with the big ladle for knocking over a jelly, he looked around eagerly for some chance to pay 'tit for tat.' Seeing the pie was just ready for the seasoning, a happy idea struck him. Carefully scraping some soot from a side of the huge chimney-place in which he was just going to kindle a fire, he went and shook it over the birds as if it was pepper. Unfortunately, in his haste he dropped a large part of what he held, that stuck together in his hand, in one spot between two of the birds. Afraid of being caught, he didn't stop to take it out, but pushing them together to hide it, ran back to his fire-kindling. The cook came bustling back, and seeing the pie look as if it had been salted and peppered (?) imagined he had done it himself, and hurried to cover it with the upper crust.

"When the pie was taken out of the oven and opened, that wonderful concert described by Mother Goose took place. The cook was astounded. He ran to call his fellow-servants to witness the marvel, and sent word to the king. A-lack-a-day, when they had all reached the kitchen the music had ceased. Some of them, of course, gave credit to what the cook related. But the king shook his head incredulously, and said he would have to hear it to believe it; and even intimated that it was probable the cook had done more that morning than taste the wine with which he had flavored his sauces and jellies."

Before proceeding any further, I must interrupt the narrative to make an explanation. The opinion is very generally held that this pie was not opened until it was set before the king. It will be seen that the sequel favors the opposite position, namely, that it was opened before it was brought into the royal presence. Now, if any one will carefully notice the exact words used by Mother Goose in the first stanza of the song, he will see that there is nothing in them that conflicts with the sequel. Nay, the whole context confirms the latter's interpretation. It gives us to understand that the king is counting money in his room, and the queen eating bread and honey in her parlor, at the time the singing takes place. Evidently the hour for dinner had not yet arrived. The pie was opened, probably, to let it cool. The king may have liked his

meats cold as some peculiar people do now. At all events, it would be unwise to throw discredit on this history because it does not agree, in one point, with a popular and long cherished idea. For "there is no opinion so absurd but which at some time been held by the multitude;" which, as Captain Cuttle would say, is Cicero—slightly altered.

"Dinner time arrived. The dishes were brought in, in the usual order; and among them the wonderful pie, in which the birds had sung when it was opened. After the unusual circumstance had been fully discussed, the king and queen were served. In spite of professed infidelity, it must be confessed, that their majesties tasted the pie at first as if they expected it would not be like an ordinary one. And they both agreed that but for a slight bitterness, which they had never observed in blackbird pie before, this one ate like the most of those they had ever had. While they were settling to their own satisfaction the cause of the difference, the king suddenly threw down his knife and fork, and making a most horrible face, ran to the window and spit out what he had in his mouth.

"Ugh!" said he, returning, "I never tasted anything like that!"  
"Why, what is the matter?" asked the queen.  
"Matter," he answered, "I believe that pie is full of soot. Yes it is," he cried angrily, turning over the piece on his plate. (He had cut into the identical spot where the scullion had dropped too much.)

"Soot!" exclaimed the Queen.  
"Yes, soot," roared the king, in a passion.  
"Where is the cook? Send the fellow here this minute."

The cook was called. He was quite alarmed on hearing he had spoiled the king's dinner; but he actually trembled when he saw his royal master in such a rage.

"Sirrah," exclaimed the king, "how came the pie you baked for me full of soot?"

"Soot? your majesty," echoed the terrified servant, quite bewildered.

"Aye, soot!" thundered the king, "and by the wand of Merlin, unless you answer me speedily, I'll have you thrust up the chimney to make your dinner off it for a week."

"M-m-m ay it p-p-please your majesty, I can't tell how it could have h-h-happened," cried the cook, stammering and in tears. "I made the p-pie with the greatest care, and think it must have been b-b-b-witched. Your majesty knows that I said the birds sang when I opened it."

The king had grown calmer at sight of the cook's distress, for he convinced him that his old and faithful servant had not offended him wittingly. So, as he did not wish to show how much he was ashamed of himself for having been in such a passion, he assumed a "most majestic high scorn" in answering this opinion. "Know, sir cook, that no witch has the power to harm a monarch who is under the protection of the mighty fairy Braid Pieces, whose golden favors I have been counting this very morn. I told you, at the time, what I thought about the marvellous singing you described. No, my man, you must look elsewhere for a reason. Who was in the kitchen besides yourself to-day?"

"No one, please your majesty, but the scullion."  
"Bring the young rascal here then," cried the king, growing angry again. "I'll throw he is at the bottom of the mischief. If my suspicions prove true, he shall smart for this."  
The boy was sought in vain. He knew what was the matter when the cook was sent for, only too well; and fearing the consequences that might ensue to himself, had made a hurried "change of base." He was never seen again by any of the king's servants, and disappears entirely, henceforth, from this veracious history.

Now, the whole matter might have ended here, had this monarch not been, of a meditative turn of mind. But, wonderful to relate, considering the unpleasant manner in which his attention had been directed to the subject, he became deeply interested in the nature and origin of soot. Like most other sovereigns when perplexed by any subject, he called for the opinions of the wise men of his kingdom. Their explanations were very "scientific," as science was understood in those "benighted days, before the modern genii, steam and electricity, had supplanted the old-time fairies. But none of them satisfied the king. He thought there must be some other reason than any they had given why the soot should be so very black, bitter and defiling. This he determined to find out. So, to the great annoyance of the cook, he would sometimes have the fire put out in the kitchen, and go and peer up the chimney by the hour. There was an old wing of the palace, not often used by the royal household, in the chimney of which the birds built their nests for years. Occasionally, in pursuing his investigations, he even mounted to the loft, over this part of the house, where no attempt was made to hide the solid masonry of the chimney before it made its exit at the roof. Here he had discovered a loose stone that he could take out and replace at pleasure. And he would gravely remove this stone, scrape a little of the soot off, turn it over, look at it, and ponder thereabout, until it was whispered among the servants that the king had gone "daft."

One day when he went into the loft he heard a queer sound that rather startled him at first. He looked around for the cause but could see nothing. Still the odd, grating noise continued, and seemed to come from the chimney. He went to it, a little fearfully, took out the stone and found that chimney-bird's nest, with half-fledged young ones in it, had fallen down from its place and rested on a ledge near by. One little fellow had tumbled out and was making a great fuss, in which the rest were helping him. The king put in his hand and lifted the whole, nest and birds, out very carefully, and then put the unlucky member of the family, who was abroad against his will, back with the rest of his kin. But such a noise as was set up the instant that he moved them is indescribable. If as many crows were to get a sore throat, and then have a concert, it might be some approach to it. Nothing daunted the king took them to one of the little windows for examination. Then indeed he did come near dropping them, for he had never seen young chimney-birds before. Such ugly, uncanny little creatures as they were, with their sharp needle-like claws; their bodies dressed in a scanty suit of grayish pen-feathers; and their mouths,

open as wide as possible, letting out such an unearthly clamor. To stop it he tried covering them up with his handkerchief, and was delighted to find that it quieted them. Then he stood a while considering what he should do, for the nest had been injured either by its fall or his handling, and would not hold the young birds securely. At last he decided, like a sensible man, to go and ask his wife's advice, for he was too kind-hearted to leave the poor little things to their fate. Her Majesty was just taking her usual luncheon of bread and honey; and jumped up in astonishment when her husband came in, holding something in his hand that made such a horrible noise. For the birds had set up their most earnest protestations at finding themselves moving again.

"It is a nest with young birds in it, that fell down the chimney," explained he, uncovering them.

"Oh! what horrid little things!" cried the queen. "Do take them away."

"That's just the difficulty," he replied. "Where would you put them? They will fall out of the nest, I fear, for it is broken." The queen thought a moment and then said, "I think it would be a good plan to take them out in the garden, and put them on the top of the evergreen bush that is before the large arbor. It will support the nest firmly, and as it is probable that the old ones are not very far away, they may hear them there, (they must be deaf if they don't) on returning home, and come to them. And you had better make some one sit in the arbor and watch awhile, for fear some cat may be prowling around."

"Good!" said the king, "your advice is excellent, as usual. And it's such a fine day I think I'll sit in the arbor myself." Off he posted on his kindly, if unkingly errand. After placing the birds on the evergreen he went and sat down to watch, as he had proposed. The birds soon quieted down and only uttered their dismal croakings at intervals. It was a beautiful day; the air that came softly through the garden was laden, the sad thief, with fragrant booty stolen from many flowers; in the bright sunlight, the blue sky shone like polished sapphire; and no emerald was ever tinged with green, so lovely, as the soft lawn grass. But the king grew drowsy; perhaps from watching; or, perhaps, as those were "the days in which kings wore their crowns," from the weight of his golden circlet. However it was he went to sleep. Not that he was aware of the fact, for he thought himself wide-awake, when presently he saw the two old birds dart down through the air to their nest. He might have known he was dreaming, if people were ever logical in sleep, by one very singular circumstance; the power he found he possessed of understanding all they said; a gift that even the fairy Braid Pieces had never been able to grant him. The mother bird sought her brood at once, while the other one flew about, now here, now there as if perplexed by the "situation." The king, watching them, wondered if such pretty birds had ever been as homely as their nestlings. At last the restless bird began to give vent to his vexation.

"A pretty how to do! Come home with food for one's family and find such a state of affairs. I never heard of such a thing!"

"Be thankful," said the mother, "that none of our babies are missing, at any rate."

"Well, you may be as thankful as you please," returned her irate spouse, "but if I could catch a sight of the monster who has dared to meddle with my nest, I would peck his eyes out. Yes, I would, even if it was one of those human giants."

"Hush!" said his wife, "I see one in the arbor."

"Ah, do you?" he replied, and into it he dashed.

"Did you move my home and babies?" asked the doughty champion, fearlessly taking up a position on the vines very close to the king.

"No," answered his majesty; and gave the whole account of his finding the nest.

"Indeed," said Mr. Chimney-bird, "I have made a great mistake, it seems. I hope you'll excuse a bird whose feelings overpowered him. We are both very much obliged to you for your kindness. I am sure, I wish there was some way in which I could prove my gratitude; but as there is none, I'll bid you good-bye." He made a little bow with his pretty head, and would have flown away, but the king stopped him.

"Perhaps there is a way in which you can serve me. As you live in a chimney, I wonder if you could tell me about something with which I have long been puzzled."

"What is it?"

"Soot," answered his majesty. "The learned men in my dominions gave me their opinions on the subject; but none of them seem to touch the root of the matter. I suppose you know I am the king?"

"You must excuse me," said little Mr. C., bowing with great politeness, "for not having been aware of that fact before. That we have no king among the birds was probably the cause of my ignorance."

"Never mind," said his majesty, good-humoredly; "but tell me, if it won't keep you too long, what you know about the matter in hand."

"Well," said Mr. Chimney-bird, with an anxious glance towards his nest, "all that I can tell you is the tradition that has been handed down among the birds from times immemorial. You have often heard the winds among the leaves of the trees and flowers. Sad gossips are those winds. As they steal softly in at doors, and windows, or creep through chinks and key-holes, or bluster along the highways, they catch up the words that men speak and bear them far away; words of ban and blessing; anger and sorrow; pure words and words of defiling. Then they are off among the leaves; murmuring softly to them when they bear the echoes of love and peace; fluttering among them with tales of hope and joy; stirring them furiously with anger's bluster; shrieking with cries of murder; or whispering mysteriously the burden of a guilty secret. Ah, we little birds cannot understand it all, but the winds and leaves do. And the birds who build among the trees tell us that the leaves are the best of confidants. That they never breathe again the secrets of the winds, unless when it is dark at night and they forget themselves to talk in their sleep. So when the trees into whose hearts have sunk whatever the leaves have heard, are cut down, and burned, the merry blaze and sparkle of the fire, and its cheerful warmth are the good and pleasant things the winds have borne; while the smoke that blinds, and chokes, and the soot that blackens and grimes, are the

visible form of words that men call bad and vile."

"Dear, dear," said the king, "how different is what you tell from that which I heard from others. I wonder now if it is really so."

"Birds, whose fathers and great-grand-fathers were born in a chimney, ought to know something about it, I should think," said little Mr. C., ruffling his feathers.

"You must not get offended so easily," replied his auditor. "I am very glad, indeed, to have had this opportunity of hearing you, for the subject has been troubling me a long time. . . ."

A gentle shake of the shoulder and his wife's voice saying—"You are dreaming aloud"—awoke the king just here. He started up to find the queen standing before him with a smiling face.

"Have I been asleep?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, and while you were napping the cat has eaten the young birds, I fear, judging by appearances. The nest, or the remains of it, are on the ground, you see. And as I came up, the gray cat scudded past me in a violent hurry. You are a famous watcher!"

"Well, that is too bad," said the king. "But at any rate, I have had a long conversation with the old bird, and found at last 'The Origin of Soot!'"

"What do you mean?" asked the queen.  
"Come into the palace and I'll tell you about it at dinner."

## A BATCH OF STORIES.

—The Rev. Nicholas Van Vranken of Fish-kill, richly enjoyed a jest. The following incident is handed down by tradition. Having visited one of his parishioners, as he was about leaving, the latter said:—"Dominie, the next time you come bring a bag, and I will fill it with oats." On his next visit, Mr. Van Vranken did take a bag with him, but it was one of unusual dimensions;—two large sheets having been sewed together for the purpose. His friend took the sack, and paid the Dominie in his own coin, by filling it with oats in the sheaf.—*Congregationalist.*

—The Rev. John Spencer was in early life a revolutionary soldier, and was accustomed to say that he received his education in the continental army. Notwithstanding his limited education, he was a clear and logical preacher, and he was noted for the keenness of his wit. He used to preach a sermon on the Divine sovereignty, which was a very compact and able argument. A Methodist preacher who heard it, said to him "Mr. Spencer, I heard your sermon, and it was a very able one. I cannot answer it, but I do not believe a word of it." "I am sorry to hear you say so," said Mr. Spencer, "very sorry, for nearly all of it was taken from the Bible." It was in fact a skillful arrangement of passages of Scripture history.—*Ibid.*

—The pulpit oratory of the Middle Ages was, of course, very generally leavened with peculiar tenets and corruptions of Roman doctrines. The personages of the Old and New Testament were set forth as having been good Catholics, with the most utter disregard of the unities of time and place, and with an effrontery which tells its own tale of the ignorance and credulity of the hearers: The French ecclesiastics were the boldest in this respect. Abraham and Isaac, in their journey to Mount Moriah, are represented as employing themselves by the way in duly reciting aves and paternosters; and the Virgin Mary at the time of the Annunciation, is said to have been found telling her beads and reading her "Hours"—not in Latin, however, nor in French, carefully adds the preacher, but in Hebrew. Father Chatenier, so late as 1715, speaks of "L'Abbe Jesus!" Nicholas de Lyra asserted that He was of the order of Friars Minorists.—*Blackwood's Magazine.*

A BUSINESS ESTIMATE.—One of our Chicago-business men was discussing, not long ago, the merits of a far-famed Liberal preacher of our city, with an enthusiastic female member of his congregation. He had been to hear him, but he could not see that he was such a remarkable man. "Well then," said she of the Negative, triumphantly, "will you tell me what it is that draws so many people to hear him?" "I've noticed," was the very professional answer, "that if there is any special rush of customers at a store, it is generally found to be because the merchant has been 'underselling the trade.'" The conversation closed.—*Advance.*

—One of the best newspaper jokes lately heard of, was unintentionally perpetrated upon themselves by the Rev. Mr. Rogers, of Memphis, and the *Daily Times* of Chicago. Mr. Rogers preached a sermon in advocacy of Romanism as the true religion, and showing the futility of Protestant Episcopal organizations, delivering what he supposed was the manuscript of this sermon to the *Times* reporter. He was astonished to read in that paper next morning, a synopsis of a discourse delivered by him, ten years ago in defence of Episcopacy. He evidently drew his sermon from the wrong end of the barrel.

—We read that when Massillon delivered his remarkable Lent sermon on "the small number of the elect," after speaking of four great classes of sinners—those who do not wish to repent at all, those who do wish it but put it off, those who thought they had no need of repentance—he concluded that division of his sermon with the striking apostrophe, often quoted, but not yet too often, delivered in his most thrilling tones: "Withdraw now these four classes of sinners from the congregation—for they will be withdrawn from it at the great day. Stand forth now, ye righteous! Where are ye? Remnant of Israel, pass to the right! Wheat of Jesus Christ, separate yourselves from the chaff destined for the burning! O God, where are Thine elect?" We read that even the careless audience were so impressed by the solemnity of the appeal that hundreds among them half rose up in their places with a murmur of excitement, as though they expected to see the separation actually take place; and that the general emotion was so vivid that the nerves of the preacher himself were visibly shaken. But such emotions are transient, and for any practical effect on the religion or morals of his age, it would seem that Massillon preached in vain.—*Blackwood's Magazine.*

—Speaking of the neglect of Catholics to converse with the impenitent on the subject of personal religion, a well known pastor of this city lately said: "When I, a clerk in a store, was under conviction of sin, I got leave of absence from my wicked employer and rode seventeen miles to visit a good uncle and aunt of mine, to talk with them. They gave me no encouragement to broach the subject and I rode back again without saying a word about it." There is a whole sermon in that simple statement.—*Advance.*

## FACTS CONCERNING ROMANISM.

In the economy of Roman Catholicism, the experience of centuries has been tasked to construct a religious system so adapted to man as he is by nature, that he should submit to ghostly authority, however repugnant to his rights and reason; and have a hope of Heaven without sanctification. In this wonderful machinery which has outlived empires and worked its way over more than half the civilized globe, there is one element more omnipotent than all the rest. It is the appeal which is made to the passions of men in the deification of the Virgin Mary. Woman, in the fascinating and mysterious power of sex; woman in her tenderness, indulgence and sympathy for even guilty sufferers, is the magnet of Romanism: This explains the reason why Popes, cardinals, bishops and priests are anxious to restore, as they say, proper honors to the Virgin. This gives origin to their cry, now universal: "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"—*Rev. Thos. Brainerd.*

Romanism in its doctrines, though most skillfully fitted to human nature in certain conditions, is not and cannot be adapted to meet an enlightened community, where the Bible has made a first impression. Truth is the only instrument which can permanently sway cultivated mind. Truth is the great agent with which God harmonizes and controls a moral universe. Where the Bible has gone, it has created a spiritual perception and a conscience, that repel alike the dogmas and the usages of Romanism.

It is not easy to make a Protestant, however ignorant, believe that he ought to burn his father's Bible; that the Deity intended to make a revelation to the world, but so failed, that his book is dangerous to men, and must therefore be hid away for interpretation by Romish priests; that the Virgin, instead of Jesus, is a "mediator between God and men;" that while the body of Jesus was all unbroken, He divided His literal flesh and blood among His disciples; that the humble confession of a penitent, like the publican, to God, is now unavailing, unless breathed first, privately into the ears of a Romish priest; that the dead are not only subjects of prayer, but that they can be so defiled by canonization at Rome, as to be objects of prayer; that the probability of a man's escape from purgatory, is graduated by the amount of money which his wife and children are willing to pay for masses to be said in Latin for his soul; and that the eternal and immutable law of God, is so accommodating that it can be safely dispensed with, if the Pope sees fit to grant, as he has often granted, a plenary indulgence to sin.

The progress of light has made this nation familiar with the relative condition of Roman Catholic and Protestant countries. Our children can and do compare the United States with South America, Scotland with Ireland, England with Spain. Our children can trace the march of the Bible, by the broad train of light and blessedness which it has left on the nations under its influence. Every ignorant and illiterate Romanist from Europe, the victim of superstition, stands a reluctant and pitiable, but truthful witness for Protestant Christianity before these great people. Every traveller, drawn by business or pleasure to Cuba, Ireland, Spain or Italy, returns to bear testimony to the debasing influence of a creed which robs man of the Bible. The ignorance, superstition and beggary of modern Italy, more hateful than the malaria which girds the Imperial city, present to our youth the true tendencies of Romanism in its very citadel.—*Ibid.*

My advice to all Protestants, who are tempted to do anything so besotted as turn Catholic, is, to walk over the sea to the Continent; to attend mass sedulously for a time; to note well the mummeries thereof; also the idiotic, mercenary aspect of all the priests; and then, if they are still disposed to consider Papistry in any other light than a most feeble, childish piece of humbug, let them turn Papists at once—that's all.—*Charlotte Brontë.*

## THE EFFECT OF PARDONS.

We are sometimes led to question whether the provision granting the right of pardon to the executive, is not directly opposed to the ends of justice and reform. We are quite sure that some check needs to be put upon the free use of the prerogative. The following paragraph from *Hours at Home* suggests a reason for this:

"The reports on our table throw important light on the subject of pardons. They show that fully 13 per cent. of the inmates of our State prisons are made the objects of executive clemency. In one the percentage rose in 1867 to 41; in another to 36; in a third to 30; and in three others to 20 or upwards. Many of the wardens complain of this excessive use of the pardoning power. Mr. Haynes, of the Charlestown prison—a high authority—says: 'The facilities for obtaining pardons in our country are so great that it has become the all-engrossing thought of convicts, the probability of it is often discussed on their way to prison; it is the theme of nine-tenths of the letters written and of the personal interviews of their friends; and it preys upon them night and day.' Everywhere this state of mind is found to be a great hindrance to reformation. We are thorough converts to the doctrine of that eminent British jurist—Matthew Davenport Hill—that the true principle is to substitute reformation sentences for time sentences. This principle is making progress among the thinking men of our country. Its adoption would relieve the question of pardons of all difficulty, since, within certain limits, (for there must always be a minimum of punishment), it would place the fate of the prisoner in his own hands."