The Family Circle

A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS.

A penny for thy thoughts, sweet boy,
Who smilest up at me,
Thy father craves the simple joy
Of sharing thoughts with thee.

His mind must hold a lot of things,
As life's great scroll unfurls.
Less bright than those which lisping brings
From underneath thy curls.

So tell him of thy childhood's wealth,
Thy toys and friends and games;
He loved them all, ere age in stealth
Filled him with meaner aims.

Relate to him how thou hast lost
A wager, or at play;
'Twere comfort gained at trifling cost:
He's met defeat to day.

The world has leered on him in scorn,
His friends have passed him by.
Ah! many a load thy father's borne
To light thy infancy.

To give thy little body grace
And strength and manly size,
To bring the rose red to thy cheeks,
The fire to thine eyes.

Thy mother, boy, is gone to God,
And we must fight alone;
Asleep so soon? In land of Nod,
Let childhood claim its own.

I see in every blood lit curve
My Mary's image fair:
Such noble hearts, 'twere joy to serve,
I kiss thy mother's hair.

Let angels show thee fairyland,
Where mother lives to-day:
I fold the dimpled hand on hand,
Ah, God! I, too, will pray.

Keep him as pure in after years
As when he came from Thee,
And he'll not bring his father tears,
Or shame her memory.

A penny for thy thoughts, sweet boy,
At rest in slumber's span:
Thy father hath no greater joy
Than thee, his little man.

ORIGIN OF SOME POPULAR PHRASES.

A native of the Emerald Isle is said to be responsible for the phrase, 'Catching a Tartar.' In a battle an Irishman called out to his officer 'I have caught a Tartar!' 'Bring him here, then,' was the reply. 'He won't let me!' rejoined Pat, and, as the captive carried off his captor, the saying caused much amusement, and has been a popular phrase ever since.

Anyone who has witnessed the manufacture of a rustic whistle can be at no loss for the origin of the saying, 'As clean as a whistle.' A piece of young ash or willow, about four inches long and the thickness of a finger, is hammered all over with the handle of a knife until the bark is disengaged from the wood and capable of being drawn off. A notch and a cut or two having been made in the stick, the cuticle is replaced and the instrument is completed. When stripped of its covering, the white wood, with its colorless sap, presents the very acme of cleanness.

The phrase, 'As right as a trivet,' seems to have its origin in the fact that a trivet, or any other utensil with three legs or points of support, will invariably stand firm, although these may not be exactly of the same height or length. The case is, however, different with a four-legged stool, considerable skill and accuracy being required to ensure it resting on all four legs at once.

With regard to the saying 'As mad as a hatter,' one is at a loss to understand why a hatter should be made the type of insanity, rather than a tailor or a shoemaker. An authority, however, explained the origin in the following ingenious way. The French compare an incapable or weak-minded person to an oyster. 'He reasons like an oyster,' they say, and it is suggested that, through the similarity of sound, the French *huître* may have given occasion to the English 'hatter.' From '*Il raisonne comme une huître*' may have come out 'As mad as a hatter.'

'Eating humble pie' is a phrase which really arose from the corruption of the word 'umbles' or 'numbles,' the coarser parts of a deer killed in hunting, which, when made into a pie, were formerly reserved for the lower hunt servants; while 'cooking his goose' is a phrase which originated when the King of Sweden, on approaching a hostile town, excited the contempt of the inhabitants by the smallness of his army. To express this they hung out a goose for him to shoot at, whereupon the king set fire to the town to 'cook their goose.'

The common phrase, 'Tuft-hunter' is applied to a person who seeks the society and apes the manners of those far above him in the social scale. The question is often asked how the word 'tuft' came to be used in this connection. It is said by some authorities that the phrase took its rise at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, where at one time the young noblemen wore a peculiarly-formed cap with a tuft, which presumably attracted hangers-on.

It is related that 'Hobson's choice' arose from the fact that Hobson, a noted carrier in Cambridge, would only let out his horses and coaches for hire in rotation, refusing to allow his customers to choose, a customer being compelled to take the horse nearest the door. Thus it became customary, when anything was forced upon one, to say 'Hobson's choice.'

HARD ON THE WITNESSES.

A street brawl occurred one day, and a number of the peace breakers were apprehended and brought up for trial before the Bailie. After witnesses had been examined pro and con, the Bailie curtly decided,

'Half-a-croon apiece!' against all concerned, witnesses and prisoners alike!'

Of course this decision was called in question by the witnesses, who submitted that they were in no way connected with the disturbance, but were simply onlookers.

But the Bailie was inexorable 'It disna matter a button, ye had nae business there. Half-a-croon apiece, or ten days!'

A FRIEND OF THE FAMILY.

When Miss Ann Pickett dropped in on her neighbor, Mrs. Spicer, and found her moping over the fragments of a gilt vase, Miss Ann sympathised generously. 'It must have been quite a costly vase,' she said, looking admiringly at the pieces.

'No, it only cost two shillings,' Mrs. Spicer acknowledged. ''Taint that I feel so bad about.'

'Maybe it was a gift that you prized because of associations—'

Mrs. Spicer shook her head. 'Jim and I bought it over in Tompkinsville a long time ago; I prized it because it was such a saving to the family. The first year we had it I kept it on the front shelf for a general ornament; then when Jim's birthday came and I hadn't anything else handy to give, I gave him the vase for his own. Next Christmas, instead of paying out good