



I were well to spare me two or three
 Out of your numerous Family.

Illustration by John G. Saxe, from 'The Family' in 'The Illustrated Family Bible'.

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IN looking through each diff'rent state,
Wherein Mankind participate,
Philosophers can ne'er agree
On human Joy or Misery :
What's the severest state of Woe,
Or greatest pleasure here below.
This knotty, subtle point depends
On such contrasted views and ends,
That how to draw the certain line
And with precision nice define,
What would imply extreme distress,
Or mark the height of happiness,
Is not within the narrow reach
Of what Philosophy can teach,

HORACE has said, who was no Fool,
As we all know who've been at School,



That, on whatever project bent,
Man is the prey of discontent.
Broken with toils, with arms opprest,
The Soldier thinks the Merchant blest;
And when the threat'ning Tempests rise,
Arm me for war, the Merchant cries:
While he, who in the City lives,
Sighs for the peace the Country gives;
The Country Folk unheard, unknown,
Think there's no pleasure but in Town.
—Sir FRANK pours forth his daily prayer
To Heaven, that He may have an Heir.
He joys not in his rural reign
O'er peasant tribes and large domain;
For nought can please, or cheer his spirit,
Since there's no Offspring to inherit:
While his near Neighbour *Jemmy Guest*,
Of far inferior means possest,
Thinks hourly how to cut and carve,
Lest he, and sixteen Bairns should starve.
Hence 'tis, we see, both weak and vain
In erring mortals to complain;

For where's the man in Life's vast range
Who would his whole condition change.
Ask one of his estate what share
He'd give to purchase him an heir :
To answer you, though somewhat loth,
He might reply, he wants them both.
Then ask the other would he spare
Sir FRANK a bantling for his heir ;
No, not for all his golden store,
Though Heaven should send him twenty more.

Of all things going, JEMMY GUEST
Lov'd his dear Wife and Children best ;
And this he proved since he could claim
A Husband's and a Father's name.
When He first married, at his door
Was seen the dashing coach and four ;
But when five babes appear'd in view,
It dwindled to a coach and two :
At length, when other five were able
To sit like Branches round his table,

The call of Prudence he obeys,
And only sports a one-horse chaise :
For JEMMY GUEST was always loth
Beyond his coat to cut his cloth ;
And when he heard the babbling sounds
Of full five more, He sold his hounds.
He thought he had enough to do,
For fifteen mouths to bake and brew ;
But, such was his prolific Dame,
As Time went on, another came ;
And all his thought and all his care
Was how to spend and how to spare.
Though, still rewarded by the pleasure,
With which he view'd his filial Treasure,
As each in diff'rent charms appears,
From one month old to eighteen years,
His anxious fears he oft forgot,
Of what might be their future Lot.
When he beheld their Cherub Faces,
Their growing forms, their youthful graces,
He envied not the rich and great,
Who roll in wealth and live in state ;

And, as he view'd his num'rous care,
He would prefer the pious prayer:
That Heav'n would give them daily food—
Bless them with health—and make them good.

One morn at breakfast, as He sat,
Attentive to their various chat,
Death at the door in form appear'd;
And, as aloft his arm he rear'd,
JEMMY began to stir and stare
And ask'd the *Shape* his errand there.
He grinn'd a ghastly smile, and said—
To follow his old-fashioned trade.
To get a pretty little picking
Among this brood of human chicken.
JEMMY replied—I'll ne'er consent
To such a barbarous intent:
Touch not, I pray, a single feather,
Take none, or take us all together.
—Think not, said Death, I'll march away
And let my arrow lose its prey:

Why, here's this brat so loudly squalling—
Leave him to me—I'll stop his bawling.
—Poor little dear, it scarce can walk,
And has but just began to talk.
—Then there's the Babe in t'other room,
Who will not talk for months to come.
—If from her Nursling forc'd to part,
T'would break the Angel Mother's heart.
Indeed I cannot spare you one,
So take us all, or pray be gone.
But if you must employ your dart,
E'er from this chamber you depart,
To me and mine delay the curse,
And make your meal upon the NURSE.

E OF DEATH.

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