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THE JOYS OF AGE.

Of all the New Year it was the maddest, merriest day. No need to call them early; they had long been awake for joy. Breakfast could hardly be eaten for excitement, and before nine the carriages were at the door. Eight beautiful carriages, with room for sixteen in each and four on the box! And three horses to each carriage—that made twenty-four in all, enough to mount cavalry, thought some! "Prime 'orses, said old Mr. Jameson, and he too!' had a right to speak, having cleaned bus horses for fifty years from the day that a 'bus took his leg off, what time our fathers worshipped taper hats and lilac trousers.

Up got the ladies into the three first vans. "Mother, mother, wait for me!" cried an old man, and scrambled in beside his wife, who had buried all their children long ago. Three others came and set beside their wives. One pair had lately married, no one being able to raise any just cause or impediment why they should not be joined together in holy matrimony, and so they had secured the comfortable married quarters. "This 'ere's our 'oneymoon," said the man, and the carriage creaked with feminine laughter.

"Right behind," cried the last conductor, and in single file the brakes moved away from the door. A crowd of children on the pavement raised a cheer. "Bless 'em!" said the workmen's wives, holding up their babies to look, 'It's good to see the old people enjy theirselves."

At first they were silent, and sat staring in front of them, almost amazed, while their bones were rattled over the stones. "Good job it ain't rainin'," said one at last, to encourage sociability. 'Glad old Blowhand's got a fine day to his funeral." returned another, with cheerful sympathy, but the conversation collapsed.

Presently they emerged through long rows of decent suburb into a country of open fields and hedgerow trees, with here and there a little wood, and here and there a residential mansion, where roses grew, and tennis courts were being marked out for the young gentlemen and ladies in the afternoon. " Now we're at large," said one of the women, and she took off the brown shawl such as all were wearing, and displayed the dark linen dress that all were wearing, too. "I like being at large, I do," she went on, "not as I've anything against them as don't, nor yet by reason of me never getting out. I'm let out twice a week, through being old enough to look after myself now, praise God, and well-behaved, too

"Whenever I've been for a treat, I've always tried not to be disagreeable to no one." retorted another, with a wealth of stored-up meaning.

sorry to incommode sure, Mrs. Benson," said the first speaker, "but there's some not fit to look after themselves, no matter for how old. And there's some has to be knocked off their leave for weeks every time after bein' at large.

"Now don't be hard on us to-day, Mrs. Turner," said a blue-eyed woman. 'There's none on us knows which may be betrayed into something next. Don't the hay smell lovely layin' out on the fields? As owdacious a crop as ever I see in Worcestershire, where I was born, maid, and married. Most owdacious! but I doubt they'll carry it through its bein' sodden with the wet.

Instead of the ceilings and drab walls and well-scrubbed boards, with the familiar smell of sanitary cleanliness, the big sky was over them now, the wheels splashed through puddles of sweet-smelling rain, and the wind blew across hayfields and hedges of wild rose. Keeping their hands covered in their shawls, they looked about them quietly with patient, faded eyes. Their faces were gray as ghosts in the fitful sunshine. The brakes stopped to water the horses. The men got stiffly out, and stood leaning over gates, or looking at the bar, and smellthe mixture of beer and sawdust. Then they drove on again. "The ride's ilwas the best part of a treat," said Mrs. Turner.

It's a compensation," answered Mrs. denome sweetly. "That's what it isa componsation.

Two reached the field where they were to pure, and drove in through the gate

upon the real grass, the horses throwing up their heads, for they felt the soft turf under their feet as when they were young. Dinner served in a big shed-'first-rate meat,' they all said it was, and so was the tart, and the ginger beer. "This hair do make one 'ungry," said

an old man at the end. 'It ain't the hair so much as the sightseein','' said a woman. "We learn to be abstemious where we are through livin' always the same. No 'ousekeepin' to do, no children to mind, nor yet no rent to get together-it was them things kep' us 'ungry whiles we had 'em.''

'Don't you be complainin', Mrs. Wilson," said another. "We got a nice clean place where we are, and always a bit to eat, and a good bed to sleep on.

I always was one for a good bed."
"I'm no complainin'." answered answered Mrs. Wilson, "I'm only sayin"."

After dinner the men went for a walk round the village. The shopkeepers came to the doors to look at them, and the village children followed them up and down: they looked so queer in their blue serge suits and soft black hats, like the parson's.

"Seems to me they takes us for a mad-'ouse more than what we are," said one of the old men.

"Sooner they did," said another, older still, in a gruff voice.

"That's 'cos you're used to killin' Roossians in the Crimea War, Mr. Pierce," the first speaker replied, and all laughed silently, for the veteran was a little fractious sometimes.

Wasted with age, twisted into queer shapes with rheumatism, wooden-legged, half-paralyzed, worn out with years of toil, they crawled along the village street. It was an exciting walk. Generous publicans asked them in by twos and threes to have a glass. Some bought little screws of black tobacco with pence they had been given by the poor. Others bought acid drops and peppermints, to give them a taste.

The churchyard was a great attraction, and nearly all spent a happy hour in spelling out the inscriptions and discovering the instances of good old age. "I've got one of a 'undred," squeaked an old man, stumbling over the mounds in his excitement. "Come and look in his excitement. 'ere! It says a 'undred and one, sure as ever I was born."

It was a creditable find, and a crowd of aged faces gathered quickly to peer at the stone. But astonishment was mute when another discovered a memorial of a hundred and ten years' life. A fair record that was, and no mistake! They felt it would be useless to search further, as they gazed with respect upon the grass. "Why, bless my soul," said a former cab-driver, "there's no knowin but what I might live another thirty years or more, me bein' under eighty yet. A man can do a lot o' things in thirty year."

Nob you, Mr. Conolly Said other. "They was 'ealthy in them days, that's where it was. You won't live that long, don't you think it."

"Don't you be so cocksure, Mr. Dickinson," said Mr. Conolly, and they all laughed merrily.

Well, well," said another, suddenly; 'it's a short way before most on us now. We won't talk about it.'

When they got back to the field they found the women seated in little rows on chairs, but some of them had been for a walk too, though a shorter walk, as became their sex, and one was talking rapidly in a state of happy excitement. I've met a gentleman as knows my family what I served with before I married him standin' there," she was explaining. "Rice was my family's name -Irish they was, but Protestant, quite respectable. And this gentleman told me as Master Charlie's gone to Persia. Many's the napkin I've pinned on him, bless his little 'eart! and now he's gone to Persia."

Tea-time came, and the day began to droop. The horses were put into the brakes again. One by one the old people followed each other and mounted, like lambs into the fold. In the silence under the darkening elms, only the two old men who had been gardeners were heard disputing.

"I tell you it's larkspur," said one pointing to an enormous blue spiral he had stuck in his buttonhole, with some Sweet William and a rose.

" Common people may call it larkspur," replied the other, with the patience of

scientific truth, "but it's own proper name is Delpheerum, and I know, because sixty year ago I rooted up a bed of it in mistake, and I've knowed ever since. But I'll never learn you to be a gardener, not if we lives another twenty years where we be."

"If you two gentlemen start gettin" quarrelsome, you'll spoil the treat," said the dwarf, handing round a packet of bull's-eyes, that each might take one. "And now whiles we're suckin' at these things, Mr. Raikes will oblige with his celebrated recitation of the two sparrers that lived unhappy ever after."

Mr. Raikes obliged with that, and many other of his boyhood's songs, for he had been a devil of a fellow, and to himself he was so still. The sun went down, the lanes were darkened, the long line of brakes drew into the city lights. Silent and sleepy, leaning against each other with gray and patient faces, the pensioners of labor rattled over the stones. A bell clanged, wide doors received them, the familiar smell came over them again, and the maddest, merriest day of all the year was done. One by one in their little beds they fell asleep.-From " Nation."

The meek may inherit the earth, but the mortgage is held by the other fel-

An Expert.-" I need a man for the information bureau. He must be one who can answer every question, even the most unexpected, without losing his head." "I'm just the man you want. I am the father of eight children."

Vicar-Well, Mary, I was very surprised to see John walk out in the middle of the sermon yesterday!

Mary-Ah, sir, I do 'ope you'll excuse my poor 'usband. 'E's a terrible one for walkin' in 'is sleep."

A little boy and a little girl were looking at a picture of Adam and Eve. "Which is Adam, and which is Eve?"

"I do not know," said the other, "but I could tell if they had their clothes on."

The class was discussing animals-how they walked, got up, etc. After she explained the cow's method of rising to her feet, the teacher asked: "Do you know any other animal that gets up like a cow?" Silence reigned for a moment, then one little girl timidly raised her

"What is it?" asked the teacher. "A calf," was the whispered reply.

Two country youths were on a visit to London. They went into the British Museum and there saw a mummy, over which hung a card on which was printed "B. C. 87."

They were very mystified, and one said, "What do you make of it, Bill?" "Well," said Bill, "I should say it was

the number of the motor-car that killed

Jokesmiths occasionally take liberties with the facts. Coincident with the anecdote published in a recent issue of the Saturday Evening Post, obviously alluding to Police Magistrate Denison, of Toronto, is another one in Life, attributed to the doughty magistrate, but really belonging to the late Chief Justice Armour. The latter was noted for a supreme contemia for the decisions of Appellate Courts On one occasion when a decision of his own had been sustained on appeal, a friend stopped him on the street to acquaint him with the fact and offer congratulations. "Well," responded the Chief Justice, "I still think I'm right."

At another time he was passing a painting of himself that had just been hung, in company with Justice Haggarty. "What do you think of it?" asked the subject of the likeness in a deep gruff

bass voice. "Well, it's very good, but there's something lacking," replied his companion in

his peculiar piping key. "What's the matter with it?"

"There should be a legend or something at the bottom of it." "What should it be?"

'I don't give a d--n for the Court of Appeal."