

## GROWING AGED TOGETHER.

BY ROBERT COLLYER.

There is a touching little story in the Apocrypha about a young man and woman who were just married and ready to start together on their untired career, and this was their first cry to heaven, when the wedding guests had gone and they were left alone in their chamber, "Mercifully ordain that we may grow aged together."

The man had come a long way after his wife and knew very little about her, except as her father had told him they were a good and honest stock. She was to go back with him and live with him under the eye of her mother-in-law, and how the experiment would succeed, as the years swept on, he had of course no idea. His mother was a woman of very notable qualities. When her husband went blind once, she turned out and made the living with her spinning-wheel, and they were so delighted with her work in one place that they gave her a kid in addition to her day's wages. But when she brought it home and her husband heard it bleating, he wanted to know where she got that kid. She told him it was a present, but he did not believe her. He said she had stolen it! Well, she could go out and work for him, but she could not and would not submit to a charge like that, so she turned on him and gave him such a piece of her mind as I suppose he never forgot as long as he lived, and after this they got along very well, until better days came, and there is no hint in the family history that she ever referred to the thing again. She had it out with him then and there and made him ashamed of himself no doubt. And then, as she knew he was a true man and he knew she was a true woman, in the face of this grim conviction, they did not rush into the divorce court or threaten to do so,—he did not turn brute, or she vixen; the sky cleared when the storm was over, and never clouded up again; and how the story got out, I have no idea—perhaps the man told it, a long time after, against himself.

This young man was their one child, the pride and joy of their life, and this was the home into which he was to bring his wife. What would come of it, he could not tell. Whether she would settle kindly in the new place, or be all the time fretting after the home of her childhood; whether such a woman as his mother was, and as his wife ought to be, could so blond their supremacy as to make one music, as before instead of a discord that would make him rue the day he brought them together, like the elements in a galvanic battery. All this was unknown to him, but he knelt down with her and prayed: "Mercifully ordain that we may grow aged together."

It was one of those weddings, too, for which we sometimes predict a leisurely repentance. Love at first sight, followed by very brief courtship, and then the wedding, friends' congratulations, kisses, tears, laughter, and a supper, which they ate, no doubt, looking shyly at each other and wondering whether it could be possible they were husband and wife. Was it a dream that had come true, or only a dream—a drama, or that out of which all dramas are made—a mirage of sun and mist on the horizon of their life, or the essence and substance of realities. Poor things, they were both quite young; they did not know much of the world they had lived in, and nothing at all of the world they were entering. Since they first met, it had been Eden unfallen, with the dew of heaven on it—did they wonder whether a brief space would find them outside their Eden, in among the thorns and briars, with a flaming sword at the gates forbidding their return? I can only wonder, I cannot tell; but this is worth more than all such surmise, they knelt down together, in the still, sweet sanctity of their chamber, with the light of Eden on their faces, with its sweetness and purity like an atmosphere about them, and then the man prayed and the woman said amen to his prayer.

It was natural, also, that coming together as they did, they should know very little of each other in regard to those details of the life before them, on which so very much must depend in the course of time. There was a story in their sacred books about a fore-elder who had made just such a match as this, and it didn't turn out well at all. They were unrelated souls, and as time went on it revealed the difference so fatally that when he was an old man and blind, she practiced on him a gross deception to gain a blessing for her favorite son he had meant to bestow on his own. They may have thought of this and wondered whether their trust in each other would ever come to such an end as that. He had swept suddenly into the circle of her life, a fine stalwart fellow, filling up the picture she had in her heart of the man she would marry. But she really knew no more about him than he knew about her. Could he hold his own as bread-winner, and she as bread-maker? Could he keep a home over her head, and could she make it bright and trim, as a man loves to see his home when he comes in tired and wants to rest? Would he turn out selfish or self-forgetful, or she a frivolous gossip, or a woman he could trust like his own soul? Would the sunshine break out in his face, as she entered the door, and meet the sun-hine breaking out on hers? Would she cry, "Husband, here's your slippers, little Anna has been toasting them this half hour; and he replied, "Ah, wife, you're the woman to think of a man. Where are the children?" or would he save all his snarls until he had shut the door and sat down to supper, and she gave him back his own with asury. There it all lay before them, the vast, unknown possibility, leading to heaven or to hell by the time they got to their silver wedding. There was but one wish resting in their hearts, come what would, resting them as the lark in my old home-land, rests among the heather; and then it soared, as the lark soars, singing into heaven; and this was the burden of their spung-time melody: "Mercifully ordain that we may grow aged together."

Still we have to see how this cry would be of no more use than it is now sometimes, if it did not stand through all the

time to come at once as a safeguard and an inspiration; a safeguard against some things that prevent our growing aged together, and an inspiration to some that help us. It was a natural and most beautiful longing just then voicing itself out of their pure hearts' love. They felt sure they had been made for each other, and while they knew that time must turn the raven to white, furrow the brow, bleach the bloom, and touch all their faculties with its wintry frost if they should live, still they wanted the good God to deal them out an even measure together—This seems to me to be the binding word of the whole story: together then as now; in the autumn as in the spring; in taking as in giving, until they were borne away, not far apart, into the life to come.

But touching the most outward things of our life, I can see a danger, if they do not take care, that their prayer will not, and cannot be answered. They may both grow aged; that may be as God ordains, and they may live together while their life lasts; that must be as they ordain, yet this day may be for all that, the end of their equality in age. For if he were one of those men we have all known, whose life and soul is given over to business, who rise early and sit up late, and work like galley-slaves to make a fortune, and she were one of those women who take life easy, and run no risks, he might be a broken down old man with a fortune, while she was still young enough to enjoy it. Or, if he had a secret vice, such as keeping ice water on the side board, and a sample room in the closet, or any other of those subtle and dangerous evils that are always watching for a chance to drag a man down, while she held her life sweet, and pure, and true, then, long before their silver wedding, he may be in his grave, or be fit for very little out of it; an old man in mid-age, with the warning finger of paralysis on his shoulder, or the spirits of inflammatory rheumatism in his marrow—a broken man she has to nurse him like a fretful child. Or if she, poor girl, is beginning this wedded life, as so many of our girls do, without the fine, sturdy womanhood of the open air, with a bloom on her blessed face like that you see on the blossoms in a hot-house, while he has in him the strong vitality of the desert and the hills, then by the time she has borne those six sons, we hear of afterward, she will have aged two years to his one. I know, if he has a man's heart in his breast, he will love her and cherish her all the more for her lost beauty and broken health and some blessings may be found in this altered relation which might never have come to their perfect equality. But this is not the real kernel of the question. This blended being of the man and woman is, first of all, a piece of exquisite mechanism, ordained of heaven for a certain work on this earth, and it is the first condition of it that all the arms of its power shall be equal to their design. Now where this power fails by our folly, on either side, the thim, in that shape is past praying for; we can only pray them for power and grace to make the best of it, and, thank God, that prayer can always be answered. So I hope, when they cried, "Mercifully ordain that we may grow aged together," this outward condition of equality in health and strength was there in their nature, or they might as well pray that the wheels of a watch, one-half p.wter and the other half steel, might be of equal endurance and worth.

And so to-day, if young men are not honest and wholesome clean through, and if young women will not train themselves to the finest and sturdiest womanhood possible to their nature; if they will not eat brown bread, and work in the garden—it they have one—with some more grip than a bird scratching, and quit reading novels in a hot room, and devouring sweetmeats; if they dare not face the sun and wind, and try to out-walk, aye, and out-run their brothers, and let our wise mother Nature buckle their belt, they had better not say amen when the stalwart young husband cries, "Mercifully ordain that we may grow aged together."

This, however, is the most outward condition; reaching inward, we find others more delicate and divine. These young people have now to find each other out, and they may spend a life-time in doing that. Some married folks find each other out, as I have read of mariners finding out the polar world. They leave the shores of their single life in the spring days, with tears and benedictions, sail on awhile in sunshine and fair weather, and then find their way little by little into the cold latitudes, where they see the sun sink day by day, and feel the frost creep in, until they give up at last, and turn to ice sitting at the same table.

Others again, find each other out as we have been finding out this continent. They nestle down at first among the meadows, close by the clear streams; then they go on through a belt of shadow, lose their way and find it again the best they know, and come out into a larger horizon and a better land; they meet their difficult hills and climb them together, strike desert and dismal places, and cross them together; and so at last they stand on the further reaches of the mountains, and see the other ocean, summing itself, sweet and still, and then their journey ends. But through shadows and shine, this is the gospel for the day; they keep together right on to the end. They allow no danger, disaster, or difference to divide them, and no third person to interfere, for if they do it may be as if William and Mary, of England had permitted the great Lions to divide their throne by first dividing their hearts.

Did you ever hear any definition of marriage? A wise and witty man says: "It resembles a pair of shears so joined that they cannot be separated; often moving in opposite directions, yet always punishing any one that comes between them." The definition is as witty as it is wise; and he might have added, part the sheers and then all you have left is two poor daggers.

So it is possible we may grow aged in finding each other out, and wondering why we never saw that trait before, or struck that temper; but if there be between us a true heart, if the rivet holds, then the added years will only bring added reasons for a perfect union, and the sweet old ballad will be our psalm of life:

—Hidney Smith.

"John Anderson, my Jo, John,  
We clamb the hill together;  
And many a sunny day, John,  
We've had wi' ane another:  
Now we maun toddle down, John,  
But hand in hand we'll gae,  
And sleep together at the foot,  
John Anderson, my Jo."

We must find each other out, and then it is possible that, like my mother's old sheers, over which I used to ponder when I was a child, one side is greater and the other, by consequence, less.

I found James Mott delighted, one evening, when I went to call on him, because, while he was working in his garden, two men went by and one said, "that is James Mott?" "And who is James Mott?" "Why don't you know?" He is Lucretia Mott's husband." Now James Mott was by no means a common man—with a lesser half, he would have seemed a great man; and he was great in his steady and perfect loyalty to truth and goodness—but his wife was the woman of a century, while he was so noble and great of soul as to be glad and proud of her greatness, and at the same time he scorned all the greater for his worship, a feat, I notice, few men are able to accomplish.

Audubon, our great Naturalist, married a good, sweet woman, and when she began to find him out she found he would wander off a thousand miles in quest of a bird. She said "Amen!" and went with him, camped in the woods, lived in log huts and shanties on the frontier, any where to be with him. She entered into his enthusiasm, shared his labor and counted all things but loss for the excellency of the glory of being Audubon's wife. When the children began to come to them, he had to wander off alone, but he could not go into a valley so deep, or a wilderness so distant, that the light would not shine on him out of their windows. He knew exactly where he would find her, and how she would look, for while, as Ruskin reminds us, the clouds are never twice alike, the sunshine is always familiar, and it was sunshine he saw when he looked homeward. So, if you have read his notes, you will remember how his heart breaks forth into singing in all sorts of unexpected places as he thinks of the wife and children waiting his return; and in that way they lived their life until they dropped into the lap of God like mellow fruit. It was laid on the man to do this curious wild work. How the woman's heart yearned to have him home we may well imagine, and how gladly she would have given up some of his greatness to keep her children's father at her side, but she did not tell him so, if she was the woman I think she was; and so she is changed into the same image, from glory to glory. Growing aged together in the body, they are touched now in the spirit with immortal youth.

The little Idyl ends without telling us how the answer came to this cry on a wedding night, or whether it came at all as they expected and hoped. But that it did come in some good, sweet way, is certain; for there is no word about a convulsion, and they have six sons. They move away, when Tobit and his good wife are dead, and after that we only see the man who lives the neighbors believe, to be 127. It makes little difference that we do not know exactly how their life together ended. If they kept those safe-guards and followed this inspiration I have tried to touch, I know it was all right.

When Oberlin was 80 years old and very infirm, climbing one of his native mountains one day, he was obliged to lean on the arm of a younger man, while his wife, who was still strong, walked by herself. Meeting one of his parishioners, the old man felt so awkward, at his seeming lack of gallantry, that he insisted on stopping and telling just how it was. She could not lean on his arm, but she leaned on his heart all the same; they had grown aged together, but he had shot a little ahead; they must not think there was any other reason; it was as it always had been, only he was the weaker vessel now, and would his friend please say so when he happened to mention what he had seen. So it would be with these twain, in that far away Eastern valley; they would keep together, and when the arm failed the heart would still abide in the old beautiful strength.

"And what did you see?" I said once to a friend who had been into the Lake country, and who, on his return, told me he had gone to Wordsworth's home. "I saw the old man," he said, "walking in the garden with his wife. They are both quite old, and he is almost blind, but they seemed just like sweethearts courting; they were so tender to each other and attentive." Miss Martineau tells us the same story, with the additional particulars of a near neighbor, how the old wife would miss her husband and trot out and find him asleep perhaps in the sun, run for his hat, tend him and watch over him till he awoke; and so it was that when he died they made one grave deep enough for both, and when she died they were one—one in the dust as they were one in heaven, and had been on earth for over forty years. The world came to Wordsworth at last, but the wife at first. "Worse and worse," Jeffrey said, when a new poem came out; "better and better," said the wife. The world might scoff, the wife believed. She was no Sarah to laugh at the angel of the Lord. What wonder, then, they were sweethearts still at three score and ten.

So the wife of Thomas Carlyle, the woman with the brave blood of old John Knox coursing through her heart, upheld her husband through all weathers, proud of his strength, tender of his weakness, and never saying, "Thomas, pray do write so that people can understand you." His wild, weird words might puzzle her brain, but they were simple Saxon to her heart, and so when he died he had graven on her tomb, "For forty years she was the true and loving helpmate of her husband, and unworriedly forwarded him as none else could in all of worthy that he did or attempted."

And so this is a prayer we can all make to God on our wedding day, and if we will, on any day, and every day after, and always find the answer in the cry. Is there danger that we shall make it hard for heaven to answer us in the tale of the years, because we are using them up like a candle lighted at both ends? We can guard against

that. Is there danger that while we may grow aged together, in years there still may be such a fatal difference of spirit and purpose that at three score and ten we may merely be two old people who have found each other out, and in our knowledge have made shipwreck of our love? We can guard against that. No man and woman ever cried out with their whole heart, "Mercifully ordain that we may grow aged together," who did not find well-springs in their driest deserts, gleams of sunlight stealing through their darkest shadows, an arm of power for their most appalling steep, and sunny resting places all the way.

I think the average novel is making sad mischief in the average mind in its pictures of true love. It makes the tender glow and glamour which related natures feel when they meet, true love. It is no such thing; it is true passion, that is all; a blessed power purely and rightly used, but no more true love than those little hooks and tendrils we see in June, on a shooting vine, are the ripe clusters of October. For true love grows out of reverence and deference, loyalty and courtesy, good service given and taken, dark days and bright days, sorrow and joy. It is the fine essence of all we are together, and all we do. True passion comes first, true love last. "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body," and so it is written, "The first man is of the earth earthy, but the second man is the Lord from Heaven."

## Business Knowledge.

In looking around among the business community one often wonders at the choice of trades or professions which individuals have made. We see him whose capacities were adapted to fill the position of a grocer or trader occupying that of a lawyer, or even one who would have made a good farmer that of a clergyman; indeed, a very large portion of the human family are so unfitted to discover their proper profession or place in society that they frequently take one to which thinkers and observers see they are the least adapted. To this fact, and not to that mythical character "misfortune," may half the losses and failures made in trade be charged.

One great requisite to success in business is the proper understanding of that business by the party undertaking it, and yet we daily see men leaving the trade in which they may have become tolerably wealthy, to follow another of which they really know nothing. The successful dry goods merchant turns lumberman, and the result in nine cases out of ten is a disastrous failure, and this failure in place of being charged to ignorance falls under the usual designation of *misfortune*. When Ptolemy asked Euclid whether there was no other way of acquiring a knowledge of Geometry but through his Elements, he replied that there was no royal road to learning; and what is true of scientific is equally true of all other knowledge; for an individual to fill his place properly in society, previous knowledge of the business which he undertakes is, in nearly all cases, necessary. Now and then we find men with minds eminently ready to grasp almost everything at a glance, but to one of this kind there are fifty who require long previous experience. What would we think of the manner who would embark on some unknown ocean without compass or chart, searching for an island of which he only knows the name, and depending on every passing vessel for a knowledge of his position on the globe. And what ought we to think of the man who engages in a business of which he is utterly ignorant, and for information in which has solely to rely on others. If our bankers and traders would pay more attention to this matter and trust only those who from previous knowledge fully understand their business, very much fewer losses would be sustained by an often too credulous supplier.—*St. John Presbyterian Advocate*.

## Grapes as Food.

Men can live and work on grapes and bread. The peasantry of France, Spain, and Italy make a satisfying meal in this way, and of the wholesomeness of the diet there can be no doubt. Medical men constantly recommend the use of grapes for their patients. Scarcely any plant can equal the vine as regards the beauty of its leaves and fruit. As a covering for bare walls and for affording shelter and shade it is a climber of the first rank. To sit under one's own vine has in all ages been considered the acme of rural happiness—an emblem of peace, a symbol of plenty, and a picture of contentment. That pleasure, though perhaps not in all its fulness, may become the heritage of thousands in these temperate climates. Neither our latitude, longitude, nor leonard skies, nor erratic climate forbid the growth of the grapevine throughout the larger portion of the kingdom. In many districts its fruits will ripen more or less perfectly. In almost all it would ripen sufficiently to be useful for eating or wine making. Even green grapes are useful for conversion into vinegar, for making tarts, or wine. Hippogrates are universally esteemed. No one tires of them. If any declined to eat their own grapes, or grew more than were needed for home consumption, there is a ready market in most neighborhoods for grapes at from fourpence to a shilling a pound, according to quality. Thus cottages might make or save the rent many times over. I know many cottages in which the vine or vines are not only their chief ornaments, but the main source of profit. These might be multiplied up and down the country to infinity. As a means of increasing their number, I would suggest that prizes be offered by all cottage-garden societies for the best trained and most fruitful grapevines on cottages. I have known this done to such excellent effect that the vines became models of both; and such a spirit of emulation was stirred up that one labourer had paid another two days of his wages to do up his vines for him. There need be no fear of an excessive supply; neither are ripe grapes as perishable as most fruits. Cut with a piece of wood attached, and placed in bottles of water, or even suspended in a dry room, the ripe fruit will keep good for months, and even improve by keeping.—*London Gardener*.

## Scientific and Useful.

## APPLES AS FOOD.

It is stated that by a careful analysis it has been found that apples contain a larger amount of phosphorus, or brain food, than any other fruit or vegetable, and, on this account, they are very important to sedentary men, who work their brains rather than their muscles. They also contain the acid which are needed every day, especially for sedentary men, the action of whose liver is sluggish, to eliminate the obnoxious matter which, if retained in the system, produces inaction of the brain, and, indeed of the whole system, causing jaundice, sleepiness, soury, and troublesome diseases of the skin.

## STEAMED OYSTERS.

Drain the liquor from two quarts of firm, plump oysters; mix with it a small teaspoonful of hot water, add a little salt and pepper, and set it over the fire in a saucepan. When it comes to a boil, add a large cupful of rich milk (cream is better). Let it boil up once, put in the oysters, let them boil for five minutes or less—no more. When they "rattle," add two tablespoonfuls of butter, and the instant it is melted and well stirred in, take the saucepan from the fire. Serve with oyster or cream crackers, as soon as possible. Oysters become tough and tasteless when cooked too much, or left to stand too long when taken from the fire. A good and safe plan is, to heat the milk in a separate vessel set in another of hot water, and after it is mingled with the liquor and oysters, stir assiduously, or it may "catch," as the cooks say—i.e. scorch on the sides or bottom of the saucepan.

## FRIED OYSTERS.

Use for frying the largest and best oysters you can find. Take them carefully from the liquor; lay them in rows upon a clean cloth, and press another lightly upon them to absorb the moisture. Have ready several beaten eggs, and in another dish some crackers crushed fine. In the frying-pan heat enough nice butter to cover the oysters entirely. Dip each oyster first in the egg, then into the cracker, rolling it over that it may become completely incased. Drop them carefully into the frying-pan, and fry quickly to a light brown. If the butter is hot enough they will soon be ready to take out. Test it by putting in one oyster before you risk the rest. Do not let them lie in the pan an instant after they are done. Serve dry, and let the dish be warm. A chafing dish is best.

## OYSTER FRITTERS.

Drain the liquor from the oysters, and to a cupful of this add the same quantity of milk, three eggs and a little salt, and flour enough for a thin batter. Have ready in the frying-pan a few spoonfuls of lard, or half lard and half butter; heat very hot, and drop the oyster batter in by the tablespoonful. Fry a spoonful first, to satisfy yourself that the lard is hot enough, and that the fritter is of the right size and consistency. Take rapidly from the pan as soon as they are done to a yellow brown, and send to table very hot. Some fry oysters whole, enveloped in batter, one in each fritter. In this case, the batter should be thicker than if the chopped oyster were to be added.

## TO CLEAN LOOKING GLASSES.

Wash thoroughly a piece of soft sponge, and remove all gritty particles from it; dip it lightly into water, squeeze it out again, and then dip it into some spirits of wine; rub it over the glass, dust it with some powdered blue or whiting sifted through muslin; remove it lightly and quickly with a clean cloth, and finish with a silk handkerchief. If the glass be a large one, clean one-half at a time, otherwise the spirits of wine will dry before it can be removed. If the frames are gilt, the greatest care must be taken to prevent the spirits of wine from touching them. To clean such frames, rub them well with a little dry cotton wool; this will remove all dust and dirt, without injury to the gilding. If the frames are varnished, they may be rubbed with the spirits of wine, which will take out all the spots and give the varnish a superior polish.

## LEMON TART.

To the grated rind and the juice of one lemon add a teaspoonful of sugar; stir into a teaspoonful of warm water one teaspoonful of corn-starch and two finely-powdered Boston crackers, and add to the lemon and sugar; whip to a froth the white of one and the yolks of two eggs. Add these to the foregoing, stirring briskly, and pour into a plate lined with a white crust. While the above is baking in a moderately-heated oven, whip the remaining white of egg to a froth and stir in three teaspoonfuls of powdered sugar. When the tart is done remove from the oven and spread the beaten white over the top; then return to the oven and allow to brown slightly.

## A GOOD OMELET

Take five or six eggs, one tablespoonful of milk to each egg. Beat the whites of the eggs to a stiff froth. Mix the yolks, well beaten with the other ingredients, whites last, and add salt after it is in the pan. Grease the frying-pan, and pour the mixture in a thin layer; turn one half over upon the other as it thickens, and roll it up. Cook to a delicate brown—it requires close attention. Finely-minced or grated meat stirred into this omelet varies the dish.

In trading, he gets most by his commodity, that can forbear his money the longest; so does the Christian; that can with most patience stay for a return to his prayer. Such a soul shall not be ashamed of its waiting.—*Gurnall*.

The longer a believer hath neglected prayer, the harder he finds it to pray; partly through shame; for, the soul having played the truant, knows not how to look God in the face; and, partly, through the difficulty of the work, which is doubly hard to what another finds who walks in the exercise of his graces. It requires more time and pains for him to tune his instrument, when all is out of order, than for another to play the lesson.—*Gurnall*.