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Yesterday and To-day.

WE hear a great deal about the forwardness of young people—how they crush heedlessly along without respect for their seniors, but not enough blame is meted out to the old men who cling tenaciously to the topmost rungs of all the ladders up which men climb, long after the period when they should have moved out of the way into comfortable retirement. Mr. J. T. Clark, discussing these phases of life, says: We see old men on every side of us going through the motions that have occupied them all their days, vainly imagining that they are producing the same profitable financial results that once attended their labors. Here is one who in his prime built up a great business, and now in his senility deems himself shrewder than ever. He must be consulted about every little change, every altered item of routine, every new venture. He will not allow this; he insists upon that. The employees call him "the old man," and while fearing and hating him, humor him as they would a child. There is a tacit understanding between the hands and the old man's son, or the junior partner, as the case may be, that whatever the old gentleman says must be taken as law for the moment, but as drivell so soon as his back is turned. And thus the potent business man ends his days—pottering about the scene of his former activity; hampering the permanent success of the enterprise he so ably founded; trying the patience of those who respect him for what he was; earning the ridicule of those who only know him as he is; discharging employees out of one door who re-enter by another and resume work; worrying his softening brain to no purpose; complaining, interfering, until on his final removal there is a sigh of relief.

Here is another old man, not so old as the first, but old enough and wealthy enough to retire, yet if he lives to be a thousand years of age he will run his own business, and treat his sons as irresponsible boys. They are steady men, as safe and shrewd as he was in the best of his life, yet his will is law—his changing, peppery, dyspeptic will is final, undebatable law to them. They have spent too many years with him building up the trade which he calls his own, to cut loose now and get nothing, so they submit when he bullies, turn a deaf ear to him when he badgers, and never fail to read any item in the papers telling how some fat old man has died suddenly. Before them lies a cheerless prospect, or—the loss of a parent. The family is engaged in a test of endurance; can the sons endure the unjust treatment accorded them as long as the father can endure against the fate that overtakes hot-tempered old men? And when at last there is a paragraph in the papers about their own particular old man, even though they have out-stayed him in the test of endurance, can these sons weep over his clay? If they do, will it not be because of the memories that will be called up?—not that late ties have been broken, but that memories will crowd on them of what the father used to be, and thoughts of what their relations might have been had he been different.

There are old men similar to the types mentioned. There is the old man whose temper has soured so gradually that he still considers himself a model of compatibility, and because his son will not submit quietly to his crabbed nagging,

expels the young man from home as incorrigible. There are young men being ground under the wheels of adversity in all parts of America as I write, who are in their present extremity because in hot anger they rushed off anywhere to escape surly fathers who never thought it necessary to be carefully fair with their boys. When father and son fail to agree, the fault nearly always lies with the father. When a family is a failure the fault is in its head. When father and son quarrel the father begins the row, for a son trusts and respects his father until he finds his trust misplaced. Original sin may be strong in a boy, but it is hereditary. It is not necessary to refer to the way in which old men cling to offices once they get them. I wonder if any man over sixty years of age—except Gladstone, and he pouts if his gratuitous advice to his party is not taken—ever resigned an office without compulsion? Let a man of sixty once get the reeveship of a township, and he will never leave the chair until death pulls him out. The desire to die in harness is a mulish virtue—its realization a mule's fate.

What is the matter with our old men? How is it that good humor withers within most men as middle life is passed? Is there any creature that can compare with a cheery old man? He would be none the less admirable if less rare. Education for the young is beneficial, but the reformation of the world must begin at the other end. We can never attain to the millennium until we generate old men who are fit for it. They must cross the edge of the dawn before the middle-aged and the children, and the present variety would not know a millennium if they stood in the middle of it. Age should be respected, but it should be respect-worthy.

The inveterate pursuit of gain might be illustrated in allegory somewhat after this fashion: In the glad morning a young man entered a berry patch with a cup and pail. Depositing the pail in a cosy shelter he picked the luscious fruit into his cup, pausing to eat every other berry with evident signs of relish. Once the cup was filled he emptied it into the pail and began again. Still he enjoyed the berries as he plucked them; he heard the birds singing and sang himself, cheerily calling to his fellow-workers. But when he emptied his cup again the bottom of the pail could not be seen, and his ambition bade him try to fill the vessel. He picked harder; he observed where the berries grew thickest, and cunningly misguided others to the places thinned by his hand; he spoke less, filled and emptied, filled and emptied his cup. The heat of noon came and went, the pail was filled; his children sat around it, eating and wasting, picking nothing for themselves. Still back he came with his cup, and emptied it on the ground until piles of berries were on all sides, through which his children crushed and pranced. They gathered up handfuls, and cast them far and wide. They traded them off for colored leaves, thistledowns and valueless nothings. Coming back with his cup the father reproved them, but they said: "Well, we have no need for all these. We cannot eat them with cream; we cannot preserve them. You are gathering them for fun; let us have our fun in scattering them, and treading the red juice out of them." He had no time to argue, for he had just found a rich patch and hurried back to it. He fell over a log and spilled his cupful, slipped into a brush heap and got his hands and face torn, yet persevered with fiercer desire than before. But now he had grown deaf to the songs of the birds, insensate to the odors of the woods. As night fell he was still floundering among the brambles, and at last

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