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[For the Journal.]
FUNERAL THOUGHTS.

Up to the village church the busy throng
Had bent their footsteps, and upon each face
There seemed to rest, a shade of saddened
grief,
That he whom all had known from earliest
youth
Had like a sun-gilt-cloud of evening passed
away.
Full well we knew the anguish of that hour
To mourning friends around whose hearth,
now lone
Had walked, ye thrice the Angel that destroys
Methought (as oft before) of lives strange mys-
teries
And changes multiplied, Thorn-paven is the
way
Through which we go, though thickly strewn
and rugged
Room is there still, for flowers perennial, to
bud and bloom.
Of-time so tiny are they, found they would
not be
But for their fragrance, and their beauty rare.
Alas! how we along this labyrinthine road
Do crush the smallest flowers in our haste.
To grasp the gay and great, which all too late
we find
Ere he no perfume. In this path are withered
flowers
And flowers that bend beneath the storms of
life,
Why do they come with such relentless power?
We ask with doubting heart, as if we fain
would scan
What mortal may not. An angel answers thus—
"Mourner I come to thee, with laden pinion,
Faith and hope I bring and words of cheer I
speak,
"Gods ways are not as thine," His omniscient
eye
Can penetrate the darkness of the future,
He, in kindness took thine own, and they were
not."
Thine own loved dead, are singing now the
songs
Of glad escape, from lifes impending storms."
Tis well that scenes like this, with sympathetic
cord
Doth draw us so together, one from his farm
Another from his merchandise, and constant
round
Of daily duty, which so oft with mammon's
voice
Doth bid us each secure, by anxious toil,
Of earthly treasures yet a goodly share.
Tis well that while 'tis ever thus, and Martha
like
We careful are and troubled, and like her forget
The "one thing needful" the immortal gem
To cultivate, and seek to deck, with costly
pearls
The outward easket, 'Tis well these admoni-
tions come
With solemn voice, "Oh man lay this to heart."
The funeral rites were o'er
Friends one by one had slowly passed them by
The narrow house, so soon, for all a habitation,
On the fair face within each cast a tearful look,
Of kindly love and parting, never more to meet
Till the arc-angels trumpet shall wake, the
myriad dead
To life immortal.
When all had done
The stricken mother bent her o'er, the tene-
ment
That held her dear boy, her first-born and
her pride.
Upon his manly brow so cold in death, she
left
A mothers kiss, the same as when a tiny babe
She pressed him to her breast, Then went up
a prayer,
For strength to bear this trial and for grace,
To drink, of "Marah's bitter water" this full
cup.
Tenderly, the grief-worn father kissed his no-
ble boy,
His hope for coming years, flitting shadows
came
Through times dim vista, when in manhood's
prime
To him a son was born. Aye, doth it seem
More than an April day of showers and beams?
Tis meet that thou should'st mourn, and yet
rejoice
That he came "Home" to die, where kindred
dear,
Could soothe his fevered frame, and cheer
His passage through the valley.
Rest thee in peace young friend, our early
memories

Of other friends, the living and the dead
Are inter-twined with thee, when spring shall
come
(The resurrection type) upon thy grave so new
We'll plant a flower, no emblem of dark grief
The cypress or acacia, but whose language
speaks
Of hope and joy, joy that thy wearied soul
Leaned with such humble trust upon a Savi-
our's arm
And now dost scale the "battlements of
Heaven."

Coudersport, March 24, 1856.

[From the Chamber's Magazine.]

THE CURATE'S WED- DING-FEAST.

The bells of St. Mary's Church
rang merrily out, and their music
echoed pleasantly through the clear
atmosphere of a bright frosty day in
December. It was a marriage-peal
they rang; yet to those who sat round
an elegantly arranged table, they
brought thoughts of a mingled tex-
ture, for they were the signal to a
family that *she* whose presence had
made a perpetual sunshine in the oth-
erwise sombre house-hold, was no
longer all their own, and that her
brightest beams would henceforward
be shed over another home. They
were the signal, likewise, to a parish
that *he*, the valued friend, who, though
living amongst them but for two short
years, had made himself beloved by
all, was leaving them and going to be
the overseer of another flock. Yet
although there was secret sadness in
the hearts of some—as there ever
must be under such circumstances—
yet was there also much joy mingled
with it; for the good old Mr. Grey
exceedingly rejoiced that his darling
Ellinor had found such a guardian
and friend as the excellent young cu-
rate, Mr. Shenstone Greville; and her
loving sister Frances rejoiced, amidst
her own sorrow, that such blessing
had alighted on her beloved compa-
nion and sister; and as to public opinion
why, it was agreed by all, with the
exception of a few "disaffected spin-
ners"—who would fain have made the
handsome young curate their own
prey, and therefore pronounced the
match wholly unpatronizable—that
there could not have been a better-suit-
ed pair.

But of all the good folks of Fenton
Churchwick, there were none so merry
on the occasion, and none so loud
in their praises of the sweet bride and
her fine young bridegroom, as one
singular and amusing group, of whose
doings it is the special object of this
paper to report. In a quiet street of
that good old country town, there
stood close side by side, and hard by
the spot which in years past formed
the eastern boundary of the town, two
old almshouses. One of these, built
in the year 1835, by a good ancient
citizen of the town, for the accom-
modation of ten old women and six
old men, was considered the most aris-
tocratic. It consisted of a chapel, a
school-room, and seventeen separate
dwellings. Sixteen of these were
appropriated to the old people, each
of whom received a weekly gratuity
in money, as well as the use for life of
one of these comfortable dwellings,
and of a plot of garden-ground. The
seventeenth was provided for the home
of a man of better class, who was called
the "Reader," and for whom a
salary was appointed by the founder,
that he might read, in the chapel ser-
vice "daily throughout the year," for
the spiritual comfort of the aged peo-
ple located in the house. The same
reader was also enjoined constantly
"to instruct ten poor children in read-
ing and writing."

The other almshouse was of less
distinguished character, as it was unen-
dowed, and its inhabitants had no oth-
er benefit than that of the use during
life of a single room, and a spot of
garden-ground annexed to it. Now,
it so happened that these houses stood
almost opposite to Mr. Grey's, and
that the old men and women who
dwelt therein had for many years been
the special pets of Nelly Grey, and

her sister Frances. They had also
been objects of great and sincere in-
terest to Mr. Greville, whether solely
on account of the claims which old age
and poverty offered, or whether the
fact of their being favored by the
Misses Grey had any weight in pro-
curing for them his kind offices, "de-
pendent sayeth not;" certain it is, that
he was a regular visitor at both almshouses,
and that there were few peo-
ple in Fenton Churchwick to whom
the good curate was more important,
or who grieved more over his depart-
ure, than these did, their inhabit-
ants.

"When thou makest a feast, call
the poor, the maimed, the halt, and
the blind," saith the word of Holy
Writ; and thus was Mr. Shenstone
Greville disposed to act.
"I'll tell you what we'll do, Francie"
said he, a few days before his wed-
ding: "we'll give the old ladies and
gentlemen opposite some fun. What
do you say to giving them all a grand
tea-drinking on our wedding day?—
Do you think you could manage it, if
I give you money for the expense? Let
me give them a grand turn-out, Nelly,"
added he, "and make them all
merry together!"

The suggestion was voted altogether
suitable; and although poor Fran-
ces had her hands pretty full of busi-
ness in preparing matters for her
sisters' marriage, and her heart suf-
ficiently full of care in the thought of
the loss she was about to sustain in
parting at once with her beloved com-
panion and her revered sub-pastor,
preparations were instantly set on foot
for providing the material for a sub-
stantial tea-feast for the beadmen and
women; and when the bells rung out
the merry peal of which we have
spoken, they echoed notes of joy and
pleasure to many an old heart, as in-
dicating that the hour for perhaps the
last festivity in which they would have
a part, approached.

It had been settled by competent
authorities, that the meeting was to
take place, not in the aristocratic quar-
ters offered by the endowed almshouse
called "Curtis's Charity," of
which honorable mention has been
made, but in the older and less digni-
fied one, by name "Gill's-house;"
and the reasons for this were, first,
that at "Gill's-house" was a larger
room than any to be found at Curtis's;
and, second, that several of the old
ladies at Gill's were sick or lame, and
could not venture past their own
threshold, whilst it so happened that
all those of Curtis's were hale and ca-
pable. Invitations were therefore an-
nounced to all the good people of
both institutions, to meet in Mary
Higgins's room at four o'clock on the
wedding-day, where tea was to be re-
ady at half-past; after which meal, the
ancient dames and sires were to amuse
themselves as they listed until seven,
when a bowl of negus and a supply of
sweet-cake were to wind up the festi-
vities of the evening.

Preparations on no niggard scale
were forthwith set on foot. One of
the first steps taken, was to send in a
good supply of coal and wood to Dame
Higgins's abode; and the second, to
hire a stout young damsel to take all
the burden of smartening up the room
wherein the festivities were to take
place, and to perform all the house-
hold offices that were required on the
occasion. There was a time of bustle
and excitement, if ever there was one!
How the little old women did bustle
in and out, after Jenny Slope (the
servant *pro tempore*) had scrubbed the
floor, and every chair and table, and
other articles of furniture in the room,
till they were, if possible, even cleaner
than usual. How the old ladies, all
who could walk, did bustle in to be
sure! one bringing her best white mus-
lin curtain to hang up at the window;
another clattering in with her boarded
set of showy tea china, that she had
bought when she was in service forty
years ago, before "her John," now
in his grave, had claimed her as his
wife; whilst another, from the aristo-

cratic Curtis's toddled in with the
handsome tea-tray and tea-china which
the squire and his lady had given
her when she was married to "Frank
the gamekeeper;" and the six tea-
spoons the dear little children had
given "nursie" on the same grand oc-
casion—cherished treasures, calling
up a thousand tender and sweet re-
membrances, and destined by and
by to form the theme of the good old
dame's discourse to her assembled cro-
nies. But two sets of china, however
well preserved, would be nothing for
such a party; for at least twenty-five
old people were expected to appear,
and tea was to be sent to all those
who were unable to attend in person;
so that besides Nance Goodall's grand
equipage, and Mary Gale's less mag-
nificent, but equally prized set, each
old lady produced her own store of
cups and saucers, tea-pots and spoons,
and a motley assemblage, in truth, was
there. All day was the bustle going
on. Frances had directed a carpenter
to take in some planks and tressels,
and erected a suitable table, and sent
some white linen to cover it; and this
was done early in the day; so as to
give plenty of time to the ancients to
delight themselves in laying out the
preparations for the feast. And a
pretty scene it was; for those amongst
the party who had friends in the coun-
try, had been supplied by them with
rare branches of bright leaves and ber-
ries, with branches of the late fuchsia
and China-roses, which linger in our
western country long after they have
perished in other parts; and Mary
Higgins's room was beautiful to behold
with its clean boarded-floor, its bright
fire, and pure white muslin curtain,
and every shelf where a beanopt would
rest, glowing with these brightest of
all adornments; and the white covered
table, gay with its party colored china-
ware, interspersed with cups and
and glasses of flowers.

And now the time of meeting is
arrived; and as soon as all are assem-
bled, the hampers, which have been
brought over from Mr. Grey's, are to
be opened in full conclave, and the
provisions for the feast displayed; this
having been the plan arranged by their
"dear curate and Miss Nelly," now
far away on their road to their distant
home.

There were some interesting speci-
mens of old age amongst these almshouse
folks. Amongst those who as-
sembled that evening, there was not
one under seventy, if we except the
young woman who acted as assistant,
and a little fair girl, the grandchild of
one of the old women, who was per-
mitted to live with her because she
was blind and lame, and needed the
little one's help. Then there were
several of the party who exceeded
four-score, at least four were between
ninety and a hundred years old. But
we must give our readers a sketch of
some of these worthies as they appear-
ed on this memorable occasion. The
room in which they assembled had one
of those open fireplaces which are cus-
tomarily found in old dwellings, and
it was surmounted by a good old mantel-
piece of solid *holm-wood*—the ancient
name for *holly*—on which were carved
the crest and arms of the founder.
On one side of this fireplace, and di-
rectly facing the door, stood Dame
Higgins's usual seat—a high-backed
carved oak-chair—and in it was seated
Mrs. Mary Higgins, relict of Mr.
Charles Higgins, whilom *hind*, or as
some would term it, *bailiff* to Sir Giles
Pomfret, of Pomfret Gifford. Mrs.
Higgins had been in her early days
tire-woman to my Lady Pomfret, Sir
Gile's mother; and in virtue of her
office, had been the recipient of sundry
curiously-wrought aprons, ruffles,
&c., such as were worn in days of yore;
also, of some worn, but originally
splendid lace. These belongings, care-
fully hoarded through her days of
youth, the good old lady had, in the
winter of her life, carefully reproduc-
ed and manufactured after the fashions
which she had been used to execute
for "my lady," into headgear, &c.,
for herself, which she wore on high-

days and holidays only. On the pres-
ent occasion, therefore, she sat arrayed
in a flowered chintz open gown over
a quitted crimson silk petticoat, the
color of which was subdued by the
pale, embroidered, clean muslin apron
which hung before it. The sleeves of
the gown reached just below the el-
bow, and was finished by ruffles of
fine lace, whilst over her shoulders
and chest was pinned a white muslin
neckkerchief. Her snow-white hair
was gathered up in the fashion of
ancient days, and strained back from
the face over a cushion, so as leave
her fine high forehead exposed; and a
cap of rich old lace formed a suitable
apex to this quaint dress. But Mrs.
Higgins's manner was, as remarkable
as her attire; she was tall, and must,
some seventy years before, have been
very beautiful; but as she was now
near ninety-six years old, decay had
of course destroyed almost all traces
of beauty save that her fine clear blue
eyes and noble brow told of what had
been. But although in personal charms
she was not what she was of old, in
manner she was. Although born in a
cottage, a servant in youth, a farmer's
wife in maturity, and an almshouse
woman in her age, she was, and must
in each stage of life have been a *lady*.
There was a native grace and dignity
of manner, and a propriety of accent
and speech, that set her at the head
of her little society; and the air with
which she received her guests on this
evening, was an amusing mixture of
the stately and dignified reception
which she had seen observed at Pom-
fret Court, and the frank and cheer-
ful hospitality which had pervaded
her own household at the farm.

And now half-past three was struck,
nay, the chimes will soon sound three
quarters, and Jenny, the stout young
woman helper, has vanished to "put
on her gown," and Mary Higgins sits
as we have described by her hearth,
when "tap-tap" with a set of knuckles,
is heard at the door. "Come in,"
says the hostess, and the door opens
to admit visitors No. 1 and 2. It is
old blind Polly, and sweet Lillias
Charity, her gentle grand-child. Polly
is a strange contrast to her ladylike
relic. She wears a plain brown
stuff-gown, white apron and kerchief,
Holland mob-cap, with a straight un-
frilled border, and a black ribbon pin-
ned round her head. Polly is always
neat, but never alters her dress for
any one. Sweet Charity, a tall fair
child of six years old, with rich brown
wavy hair, cut almost close to her
head like a boy's, leads "grammy"
by the hand; but the moment they ap-
pear, up starts the fine old nonagenarian
with the alacrity of a girl, lays
hold of poor Polly by the hand, and
holding her under the elbow of each
arm, aids her feeble steps, and soon
has her seated in the warmest corner,
with little fairy on a stool (which the
young thing had been provident enough
to bring for her own use) at her feet.
But before Polly is seated, two more
guests are in the room—one, a fine old
gaybeard from the other house, a hale
ruddy-cheeked old gentleman as you
would wish to see; the other, a fat
dumpy old woman, a perfect heap of
finery, flowers in her cap, flowers on
her gown, a necklace on her throat,
and a glittering paste-brooch stuck on
the front of her head-dress.

"Well, neighbors," said she, "how's
you? I've brought a *comfack* cheer
for Mr. Top. I knows he ain't himself
if he don't sit easy;" and suiting the
action to the word, she set down her
own cushioned arm-chair behind the
new-comer, and with a merry laugh,
noisy enough, but genial and good-
humored, she seized the old man, and
before he was aware, had squabbled
him down on the cushion, and taken
up her own quarters on a stool at the
side the room. There is no fear of
those who are not overdone with en-
gagements being late for such appoint-
ments as this. Long before the clock
had struck the hour of meeting, all
the guests were assembled. There
was the old shoemaker, John Lacy, and
the former carter, Humphry Coles,

and he who had been for thirty years
parish-clerk, Philip Greaves—these,
with John Top, the old man whom we
have described, were all the gentlemen.
Then there were our hostess, and blind
Polly, and the roundabout merry wid-
ow of Staines the harness-maker, in
her finery; there was Ann Dyer, the
thin pale old maid from the next ten-
ement, and Jane Potter, the sexton's
widow, who will no doubt tell her
competes some of the many stories of
ghosts and goblins she has inherited
from her grave-digging husband, and
amuse them all with the accounts of
the ghosts he saw himself! There
are besides these many others—too
many to describe individually; but of
them all there are none more notable
poor old Goody Grey, whose entry
took place when nearly all the party
were seated. There was a sort of
low couch erected in the chimney-
nook; it was formed of boxes, pilcra
together, and with cushions, pillows,
and cloaks, as if for some special inva-
lid; and upon a bustle was heard in
the open corridor, which, running
round the outside of the house, formed
a passage from room to room. The
signal was understood, and the door
opened by those within for the en-
trance of the new-comers. These were
two of the youngest and strongest of
the old women, who bore on their
crossed hands, king's-coach fashion,
a third, much older than themselves.
She was a diminutive little creature of
most remarkable appearance. Her
aged features were almost buried in
wrinkles, and her snow-white, huc-
cung round them in weird-locke,
making her altogether not an unrecog-
nizable representative of a witch. This
singular-looking female was warmly
received by all. They greeted her as
"Miss Any"; every one made way
for her; one shook up her cushioned
arm; another took off the cloak in
which the Goody had been muffled,
and spread it on her seat; while two
of the men, relieving the tottering old
women of their burden, placed her
carefully on the reserved couch, though
not without many a groan from the
poor old rheumatic woman, who had
not before left her own fireside in
many a year.

But the clock has struck four, a
the hampers from Mr. Grey's wait-

"Here, Molly, let's pull'n up home
to Miss Any's place, that her may
zee," said bustling Mrs. Staines;
and this being done, the string was cut,
and the cover lifted. There, indeed,
was a store of good things! There
were noble loaves of fine white bread,
and goodly pounds of the richest fresh
butter; there were huge seed-cakes,
for such as were too delicate to partake
of the more attractive large pound
cakes, as full of raisins and currants
they could stick, which next marked
their appearance. There was a supply
of tea and coffee, enough to make be-
verage for twice the number of guests;
and sugar, beautiful loaf-sugar, enough
to sweeten four times the quantity.
Then there was a heap of tea-cakes
for the goodies to toast and butter, and
looked, when they were piled up, near
the church-steeple for height. These
were the contents of the first hamper;
but what could be in the second was
the wonder, for surely everything
needful for a grand feast had been
produced from the first, except milk,
and of that two large cans had been
left by the milkwoman half an hour
before.

"Well, bless my heart, and may
God bless their dear hearts, that plan-
ned it all!" exclaimed Dame Higgins,
who, in virtue of her hostessship, had
preceded to lift the cover of hamper
number two. "Why here's grandeur,
indeed! Oh, bless the pretty little
fingers that made 'em!" said she,
chuckling as she opened a cardboard
box that lay on the top, and displayed
a host of white stain favours, each
ticketed with the name of one of the
old people present or absent.

"And what's this?" said old Polly
fumbling about with her finger