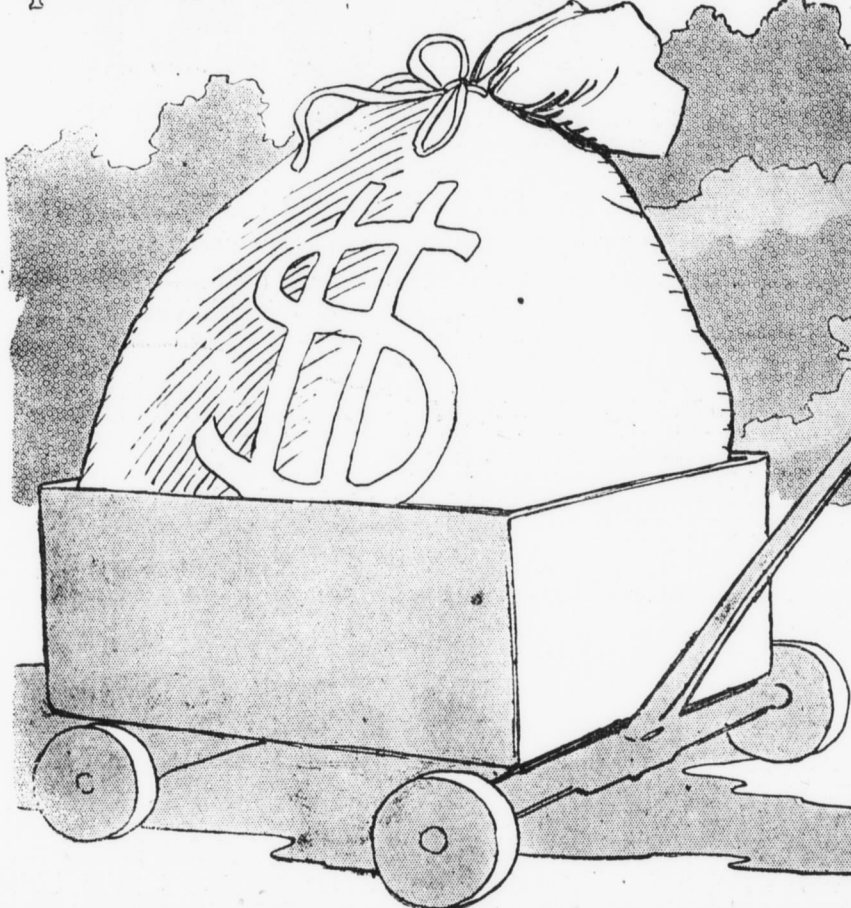


What Are You Going To Do When You Get Old?

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WHAT WILL IT BE AT 70? "HOME" OR CLOTHESLINE? MANY UNTOLD TRAGEDIES

WHAT are you going to do when you get old? If you are a man, will you peg rugs in many colors, like a certain artistic, octogenarian gentleman at one of the "homes?" or, if you are a woman, will you keep to the open by being a tottery nursemaid for babies? or will you try the clothesline route? Heaven forbid!

But, "If you haven't got money, you needn't come 'round" seems to be the growing sentiment (with a few exceptions) toward aged people on the part of their families. There are no longer golden-haired little girls with a disposition to lead grandpa around. Children are too busy "developing" at Montessori schools to waste their time picking up grandma's spectacles. Young matrons in America have to "lead their own lives," and their folding-bed apartments have scarcely space enough for the refrigerating plant, to say nothing of "his" or "her" parents. Any grandma who has such a thing as a rocking chair in her bedroom ought to count herself fortunate. There is nothing of China in American up-to-date society—China, where the young wife says "No one is worthy of respect who does not obey her mother-in-law."

So the aged man or woman is left high and dry to carve his or her own fate. It is just as well, in life's heyday, to anticipate the time when the sound of the grinding is low and the golden bowl is cracked at least, if not broken. So what are you going to do when you get old?

"Over the hill to the Poorhouse
I'm wending my weary way;
I, a woman of seventy,
And only a trifle gray."

This was about the saddest story that Will Carleton could write, and the poem has doubtless kept a large population from going "on the county," as they say in New England.

Looking at it philosophically, there is a certain independence in going to the place which modern delicacy styles the "Infirmity." It is democratic. One has paid one's taxes, if not directly, at least through the landlord, who tacks on an extra rent dollar every time you

paint your own door sill or plant a tree in your yard. It is through taxes that the infirmity is kept up, and you have a right to its benefits.

But there is another side to this. A certain dumpy old man, who shrank lengthwise when he was "active," always digging ditches in wet mud, complains that they hang the tin cup too high in the infirmity. What a nuisance, always to have to ask some one to get the tin cup down for you, and there is nothing but water to drink, of course. Even before the war there was nothing but water.

Then the old women have to wear blue calico, which is a great irritation to some of them. People generally have a wrong impression that all vanity flees when failing eyesight comes on, and "a dullness in hearing," as Bishop Tuttle describes it. Not so with women.

Cosmetic Pedler Finds Eager Customers in Home.

If they ever did like to be pretty, they wish it more than before as old age comes on. A cosmetic pedler finds eager customers in an old ladies' home. Appetite may have failed, but rather than candy or custards in the roof of their poor mouths, would they like some magic to take the brown spots off their faces, or to make the gray hair more thickly, for "it comes out so in the summer, around the parting place, and it never used to."

There is a true story of a dear old lady. She had long been a widow, and never had children, but kept a little store, near a school, where the children spent one penny after another, for sweets and the like. All her trade was in pennies, and when it came to closing out and selling her "good will," the most that she could ask for this spiritual commodity was \$300—exactly the sum needed for entrance into this quiet pleasing "home," which is really a beautiful place. The old stone house, once a "tavern" in Lewis and Clark days, is set far back from Broadway, so that great beds of sweet williams and asters may flourish, with bright verbenas, and a background of tansy and tiger lilies and bouncing

AT 90, SHE LABORS FOR "DEAR SON" WHO IS 70

A VISIT to an old persons' home brings to light many small sorrows. One spry old lady past 90 knits sweaters and sells them so that "dear son," who is out in the world at the age of 70, may have added comforts in his "old age." But this unselfish soul, who has made everybody love her by her sunny nature, has received the reward of the brightest room in the house, and for this she is envied secretly by those of less happy disposition.

"I just wish you would write it up in the newspapers," says one gloomy-looking creature. "She purrs around the matron and flatters her, that's what she does. And then she gets the reputation of being 'so sweet.' Huh! Anybody could be sweet with all that sunshine coming in her room. I can't even get the dining-room girl to remember that I like a glass of water with my breakfast. And I mustn't get up and get it myself. Oh, no, that's against the rules. Bosh!"

betties, just as grandmother might have planned it.

No foolish honeysuckle or climbing rose shields the porch, for the old ladies like to see who goes by, and if the street cars are behind time. Even the delivery of a load of coal is an event. It is interesting to time the man and see if he is lazy.

So this one-time store-keeping old soul withstood other invitations and went to the home. Her sister, one has heard, was indignant over it, for the sisters' husband was a rich man, and she would gladly have given board and lodging to her relative. But that house was clamorous with adolescence. The girls and their beaux kept lights burning late. The parlor was dominated by youth, and the old lady said, "I refuse to be shut up like a dog." So she wrote her declaration of independence and went to the "home." The chain of subsequent events made her very happy.

Nephew Puts Ray of Sunshine In Old Lady's Heart.

A favorite nephew refused to let his aunt be forgotten, and he has made it a point, at frequent intervals, to drive his car to the "home," and take her out for a spin, with great pomp and circumstance. This is more of a joy than any person out in the world can realize. It gives the old lady a distinction. Her status is established. She hits the high places in life when her nephew comes for her, and she counts time by his coming. He is "My Nephew," of whom she can boast to all those without nephews.

But the apex of this choice consideration, which has made the old lady's heart fairly burst with pride, came in the amending of her scanty locks of hair. Many store-keeping men go

bald-headed, and nobody thinks the worse of them, but for a woman, oh, my! Women who had no nephews could nevertheless possess good heads of hair, and the condition was hard to bear. Her nephew had never spoken of the subject, being a young man of kindly tact, but he knew it was grinding, so he thought out a way.

How He Gave Her the Wig Her Heart So Craved.

When one of his giggling sisters was about to be married, he wrote a subtly flattering note to his aunt, telling her that he wanted her to look "very beautiful" at the wedding (which he insisted she should attend), and he sent her, without any undue reference to it, a wonderful suit of silvery white hair, the very most expensive on the market (because least plentiful), all made into a "transformation." Then when the day of the wedding came, he did not make the mistake of going for her himself, but sent a hired taxi, just as if she had been a society belle, with a great bouquet of pink roses on the seat. Her appearance was so improved that her own sister scarcely knew her, and in the excitement of the wedding proceedings she became speedily unconscious of the "transformation" and was soon holding her head high.

This little instance is one way or "taming" old people. It is often heard, in intimate family conversation, that Uncle So-and-So is so peevish. He criticizes the children, and he is untidy, and being deaf, he suspects other people are talking about him. Oh, he is absolutely "unlivable." Or the same traits may be mentioned of "Pa" or "Ma," who are "getting so childish." All of which could be very different if

the rising generation would only remember that "Pa" and "Ma" and "Uncle" need a little "gentling," after they come into a household. Hagenback, the animal trainer, says that when he takes in a new lion or elephant or other supposedly intelligent animal from the great outdoors, he always devotes several weeks to "gentling" before he tries to get any response from his "dumb" pupil.

The old person coming into his son's or daughter's household gives up liberty. The old people who went into the Altemheim of St. Louis, when that institution was built several years ago, gave up their feather beds. The new mattresses were so much better and more sanitary. But the old people cried, many of them, when they left the feather beds behind. They were "poor things, but their own."

Old People Not So Fond of Other Old Folks.

Old people, as a rule, are not very fond of other old people. If you have toothache yourself, you do not particularly relish some one else telling you about his toothache.

Old men seek young wives and old women seek young husbands. There is a link to life in having youth about. Superficial friends at a St. Louis infirmity have bestowed much unnecessary sympathy because these old people were removed from their home, where it was "so nice and quiet." But it is not the old people who are complaining. They may be seen today, peering out joyously into the world which they once knew from the garden benches in the park around the institution.

Old people are wisely brought to a place where they are diverted from



No Cup More Bitter

FROM an admiral of the United States Navy down, no one likes very well to be retired, willy nilly, at a certain age, even though a compensation goes with it. Worse than this it is to be "fired," without warning, so many a worker has been in civil life as he grew old. Worst of all it is to be pushed aside by members of one's own family, "all his faults observed, set in a notebook, learned and conned by note, to cast into his teeth."

No More "Nightcaps" for Him When Bedtime Comes.

No cups of hot milk between meals, no "nightcaps" to make grandpa sleep well. Stairways must be descended and mounted again, doors opened and closed with every meal. Only now and then is there a bright young spirit to hop about like a birdling, saving steps for the old folks. In this home there is no elevator in operation, and no chance exists of evading the steps up and down, so painfully taken three times a day.

The Little Sisters of the Poor come nearest perhaps, to home care of the old people. Every "Little Sister" regards her old people as one of many parents, and she looks for idiosyncrasies in order to humor them, rather than to resent them.

The "Little Sisters" have the insight to shield their aged "children." They do not tell strangers the names of those in their homes; forsaken old King Lear, deserted by their children, have been grateful here for a home.

her husband's pride, to see these plants admired. But here, too, is the sorrow of not being in one's own home, for the poor lady sees the carelessness of the gardener in putting pots of plants on the edge of the porch, in cold, late winter, where the blasts bring death to all things unprotected. "And if I were to go out and put something around them, I'd get a scolding," she says.

The "rule" it is, which is hardest on the old people in "homes." Where there are many, there must be regulations. All must dine at the same time, and all must take luncheon at the same time.

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