

### GROWING OLD.

The following beautiful poem by an unknown writer is sent by S. P. A. of Auburn, N. Y., to a New York paper:

Softly, O softly, the years have swept by  
Touching thee lightly with tenderest care,  
Sorrow and death they have often brought  
Yet they have left thee but beauty to wear.  
Growing old gracefully,  
Gracefully fair.

Far from the storms that are lashing the ocean,  
Nearer each day to the pleasant home light;  
Far from the waves that are big with commotion,  
Under full sail and the harbor in sight.  
Growing old gracefully,  
Cheerful and bright.

Past all the winds that were adverse and chilling,  
Past all the islands that lured thee to rest,  
Past all the currents that lured thee unwilling  
Far from any course to the land of the blest.  
Growing old gracefully,  
Peaceful and blest.

Never a feeling of envy or sorrow  
When the bright faces of children are seen;  
Never a year from the young wouldst thou borrow—  
Thou dost remember what lieth between;  
Growing old willingly,  
Thankful, serene.

Rich in experience that angels might covet,  
Rich in a faith that hath grown with the years,  
Rich in a love that grew from and above it,  
Soothing thy sorrows and hushing thy fears.  
Growing old wearily,  
Loving and dear.

Hearts at the sound of thy coming are lightened,  
Ready and willing thy hand to relieve;  
Many a face at thy kind word has brightened,  
It is more blessed to give than receive.  
Growing old happily,  
Censing to give.

Eyes that grow dim to earth and its glory  
Have a sweet recompense youth cannot know;  
Ears that grow dull to the world and its story,  
Drink in the songs that from Paradise flow.  
Growing old graciously,  
Purer than snow.

### TWO BAGS AND A BLUNDER.

"Yes, sir; No. 2375—Brown hat-box! There you are, sir! I think you'll find that all right!"

Sam Merry had good grounds for laying emphasis on the second word in the last sentence, as Col. Sowerby took the hat-box from his hands with a surly grunt and waddled off down the platform.

Sam had made so many mistakes of late that his mates in the Left Luggage office had dubbed him "Blundering Sam." However, Sam was of a hopeful disposition, and it would take a very long run of ill-luck to shake his faith in the future.

He had a wonderful way in getting into hot water, but a far more wonderful one of blundering out again.

"You do well to speak cautiously, Sam," remarked one of his fellow-clerks. "Are you sure you didn't give the old buffer a mangle or a feather bed?"

"Laugh away, you fellows," retorted Sam cheerfully. "I shall blunder into a fortune one of these days."

"Of course, you know," remarked another, "there's every excuse for Sam! When a fellow's head over ears in love, he can't be expected to—"

The speaker suddenly dropped the subject as the purple face of old Col. Sowerby appeared at the window.

"Here, you!" he roared, stamping his foot—the gouty one, as luck would have it—and glaring at his audience with a ludicrous attempt at dignity. "Where is the confounded jackass who dared to play this trick on me? You, you idiot!" he continued, stinging out the unlucky Sam; "what do you mean by it, sir? What is your name?"

"What is the matter?" faltered Sam, "Isn't that your property?"

"My property, sir?" roared the indignant old warrior, diving his hand into the hat-box, and producing therefrom a wig of the most fiery hue—possibly the property of a traveling comedian. "My property, sir? Does it look like it?"

And as the infuriated colonel removed his hat to wipe his perspiring forehead, Sam was obliged to admit that it did not look like it. No wig in the world would have stood against the aggressive bristles on the head of the Anglo-Indian.

In a few minutes Sam had discovered the colonel's hat-box, and handed it over with an apology.

"Don't apologize to me, sir!" stormed the colonel as he stamped away. "I'll report you, sir! By the Great Mogul, I'll report you!"

Like a dutiful lover, Sam mentioned this little affair to his sweetheart in the evening. Sally took a very gloomy view of the situation.

"It's another blunder, of course, Sally," admitted Sam; "but it's useless meeting trouble half way."

"Are you sure these mistakes are all the result of accidents?" asked Sally. "Wouldn't it be possible for somebody to change the checks on the articles without your knowledge?"

"Of course it would," responded Sam; "but I don't believe there's a fellow in the office would serve me such a trick. No, Sally, I'm in for a run of bad luck, that's all."

"The colonel is sure to report you, and whatever will you do if you lose your place?"

Sam was exceedingly thoughtful for a minute.

"Why," he said at length, "there's lots of things I've never tried yet. I could turn milkman, messenger, porter, private detective—by Jove; that's just the thing! Listen to this!"

Taking a copy of an evening paper from his pocket, Sam read aloud:

"\$500 Reward.—The above reward will be paid to any person—not being the actual thief—giving such information as shall lead to the recovery of Lady Manburgh's Jewels, stolen from her rooms at the Mount Hotel on the night of Friday last.—Chief Inspector Takem, Police Station, Midhampton.

"There you are," went on Sam. "Simple enough isn't it? Good pay, too!"

"If you get it," laughed Sally. "You would cut a fine figure as a detective. Just fancy yourself with false whiskers and a wig!"

"I wish you wouldn't mention wigs," said Sam grimly; "I'm beginning to hate the sight of 'em. The colonel's affair was bad enough, but goodness knows what the other will be!"

"What? Another blunder?" gasped Sally.

"Yes! Another one, and a wig in it, too! I didn't mean troubling you about it, but the murder's out now. There was a sudden rush of business this afternoon, and I happened to be the only one at the window.

"Everybody appeared to be in a hurry, and to save time I pushed the things, with the checks on top, to one side till the rush was over. In taking in the last package I knocked over a couple of brown leather bags, checks as well, of course.

"Now those confounded bags are as much alike as two peas, and the question is, which is which? The one was handed in by a dapper little fellow—gentleman, every inch of him, I should say; the other was a very suspicious-looking customer, who wore a straw-colored wig.

"I wouldn't trust that fellow any farther than I could throw him, and, as likely as not, he'll get hold of the other chap's bag, as there's nothing for it but first come, first served. Now, what is a fellow to do?"

Sally didn't know.

Sam was standing at the window of the Left Luggage Office on the following morning when a gentleman in a light overcoat hurried past.

"Hallo!" he muttered, "that's my dapper little gent of yesterday. Doesn't appear to be coming for his bag. By Jove! I've an idea, and I'll work it if I get the sack. Hi! Mister!"

The gentleman turned, and slowly retraced his steps. Sam, on the spur of the moment, had decided on a desperate expedient. Seizing one of the brown leather bags at his side, he hurriedly whispered:

"Quick, mister! Open it and satisfy yourself."

The gentleman merely stared, and made no effort to take the bag.

"For goodness sake, don't hesitate, sir," implored Sam. "I couldn't trust the other fellow for the world. If you don't take just one peep, sir, you may never have another chance. Lean over the window so that nobody will see you!"

"But, my dear fellow," gasped the other; "do you know—"

"I know it's not business," interrupted Sam; "but I'm desperate, and it's the only way. Everything depends on you."

"Well," laughed the gentleman. "I'll try, if you will stand all risks—"

"I'll stand hanging," said Sam fiercely, "only open it."

Thus urged, the stranger produced a bunch of keys; and at the third attempt the bag was opened. The result was hardly what Sam had anticipated.

The gentleman stared into the open bag as if he could scarcely believe his eyes. Then he closed it with the remark:

"You've done a good day's work, young man!"

And before Sam could get in a word, man and bag had vanished. Sam skipped round the counter with the agility of a monkey, but the platform was deserted.

"Good gracious!" he gasped. "The fellow's hooked it! It ain't his bag, I'll bet my life. What on earth did I trust him for? Done a good day's work, have I? I shall be lucky if I don't do six months for this job."

For the next few minutes Sam, sitting in the Left Luggage Office, gazed himself to despair. A horrible certainty had suddenly dawned upon him. The man who had carried off the bag was not the "dapper little gent" of the day before!

"Their voices ain't a bit alike," groaned the unlucky Sam, "and like a fool, I never noticed it till too late. It strikes me I'm the biggest ass unbrired."

"What's the matter, Sam?" asked a clerk who entered at that moment.

"What's always the matter?" demanded Sam fiercely. "I'm in hot water again, that's all!"

"Oh! Then you've heard?"

"Heard what?"

"The station-master wants to see you in his office. He's got a visitor—Col. Sowerby, I expect! Hope you'll come through all right!"

"Don't care whether I do or not," remarked Sam recklessly, as he turned towards the station-master's office.

"What's the colonel's affair now? A mere fleabite compared to this!"

The station-master's visitor was not Col. Sowerby, after all. To the unbounded astonishment of Sam Merry, it was the mysterious stranger who had walked off with the bag.

"This is the man," remarked the individual as Sam entered the private office of his superior. "If you don't mind, Mr.—er—Merry, I want to ask you a question or two."

Sam offered no objection; the cool impudence of this bag-snatcher had taken his breath away.

"By some means or another," went on the stranger, "you have discovered who I am."

Sam, of course, had discovered nothing of the kind. By a strange stroke of luck, however, he did not feel called upon to speak.

"Now," went on Sam's questioner, "when was this bag left in your charge?"

"Three-forty-five yesterday afternoon."

"Can you describe the man who left it?"

Sam hesitated. He had good reasons to doubt his ability to do so. Matters were getting complicated, and for the moment he hardly knew whether he stood on his head or on his heels. Fortunately, the station-master came to his rescue.

"Don't be afraid, Merry," he said encouragingly. "You have full permission to speak in a case like this. Detective Denham will betray no business secrets."

Detective Denham! Sam had heard his name mentioned more than once in connection with the Manburg jewel robbery. Where on earth was this blunder going to end, he wondered.

"I don't know whether I can describe the man exactly," Sam remarked at length, "but I think I should know him again if I saw him. He was a tall, thin fellow, clean shaven, and wore a straw-colored wig."

"A wig?" ejaculated Detective Denham.

"That's so," replied Sam, "though not in twenty would have noticed it." Just as he handed in his bag an old farmer lurched heavily against him and knocked his hat off. As he stooped to pick up his hat, I caught a glimpse of the dark hair under the edge of his wig."

"Hum!" mused the detective. "Dark hair—that's all right. You say you would know the man again if you saw him?"

"Yes."

"Very well! We'll take a cab to the police station. If you find the fellow there, all the better. Anyhow, you're entitled to the reward. The jewels, in all probability, would never have been discovered but for your clever, though somewhat risky expedient."

As one in a dream, Sam Merry heard and accepted the hearty congratulations of the detective and station-master.

"Hanged if I can understand it!" he muttered to himself on the way to the police station. "Luck appears to be rolling on me just at present. I've done something clever—that's certain; but what, bow, when, where, and why, everybody seems to know but me. I'd better say nothing."

At the police station Sam had no difficulty in picking out his man from a dozen others, to the delight of Detective Denham and the chagrin of the prisoner.

"Don't give way, Peters," said the detective to the prisoner. "You'll have company as soon as your mate turns up at the Left Luggage Office with the check for that brown bag."

Little by little Sam came to realize the clever thing he had done.

At the office he was "Blundering Sam" no longer. At one stroke he had secured a small fortune—for the hundred pounds reward was duly paid over—and a much needed reputation for smartness.

Only Sam and Sally, his wife, know the true facts.—Saturday Evening Post.

**Three Good Liars.**

The men who utilize the corner grocery for a club room in the evening and on stormy days had just been discussing a fox hunt, about which one of their number had read aloud, when the conversation naturally took a reminiscent turn.

"Nothing cuter or more cunning in the world than a fox," said Goggs, by way of introduction. "I remember one night when I was a boy that we heard a great fuss among the dogs that were chained up. It took us about half an hour to get dressed and armed to sally forth for the purpose of investigating. Not discovering anything, we loosened the dogs, and they darted off on a trail, yelping as they went. We didn't know whether it was man or varmint, but after a long run the dogs brought up at the hen house and tried to tear it down. Well, sir, an old fox had deliberately showed himself to the dogs, so as to excite them, made that run while we were getting ready for trouble and, circling round, was robbing the roost while the dogs were off the premises."

"I walked up one moonlight night," volunteered the man on the wood box, "and seen a fox under an apple tree where a fat pullet was roosting. I knew the thief couldn't climb, so I just stood at the window laughing. The fox barked to wake the chicken, and then began circling around the tree, slow at first, but going faster and faster. Of course the terrified pullet followed him with her eyes and got so dizzy that she fell out of the tree."

"I see something like that once," said the lank individual on a paint keg, "only that the chicken I was watching wrung its own neck, 'cause the fox was going so darned fast."

Then, by common consent, the crowd took up the subject of fowls.—Detroit Free Press.

**A Small Painting.**

Perhaps the smallest piece of painting in the world is that executed by a Flemish artist. It is painted on the smooth side of a grain of common white corn, and pictures a mill and a miller with a sack of grain on his back. The miller is represented as standing on a terrace, and near it is a horse and cart, while a group of several peasants is shown in the road near by.

### THE MAKING OF A PLAYER.

Training a Lad for the Stage in the Days of Shakespeare.

John Bennett's serial story, "Master Skylark," running in St. Nicholas, has many pictures of life and scenes in Shakespeare's time. The following account of the training of the hero for the stage by the masterplayer is from the June number:

He had Nick learn no end of stage parts off by heart, with their cues and "business," entrances and exits; and worked fully as hard as his pupil, reading over every sentence twenty times until Nick had the accent perfectly. He would have him stamp, too, and turn about, and gesture in accordance with the speech, until the boy's arms ached, going with him through the motions one by one, over and over again, unsatisfied, but patient to the last, until Nick wondered, "Nick, my lad," he would often say, with a tired but determined smile, "some little thing done wrong may spoil the finest play, as one had apple rote the barrelful. We'll have it right, or not at all, if it takes a month o' Sundays."

So often he kept Nick before a mirror for an hour at a time, making faces while he spoke his lines, smiling, frowning, or grinning, as best seemed to fit the part, until the boy grew fairly weary of his own looks. Then sometimes, more often as the time slipped by, Carew would clap his hands with a boyish laugh, and have a pie brought and a cup of Spanish cordial for them both, declaring that he loved the lad with all his heart, upon the remnant of his honor; from which Nick knew that he was coming on.

Cleely Carew's governess was a Mistress Agnes Anstey. By birth she had been a Harcourt, of Ankerwyke, and therefore she was everywhere esteemed fit by birth and breeding to teach the young mind when to bow and when to beckon. She came each morning to the house, and Carew paid her double shillings to see to it that Nick learned such little tricks of cap and cloak as a lady's page need have, the carriage best fitted for his place, and how to come into a room where great folks were. Moreover, how to break out again, bowing, and not fall over the stools—which was no little art, until Nick caught the knack of peeping slyly between his legs when he bowed.

His hair, too, was allowed to grow long, and was combed carefully every day by the tiring-woman; and soon, as it was naturally curly, it fell in rolling waves about his neck.

On the heels of the governess came M'sieu' De Fleury, who, it was said, had been dancing-master to Hatton, the late Lord Chancellor of England, and had taught him those tricks with his nimble heels which had capered him into the Queen's good graces, and so got him the chancellorship. M'sieu' spoke dreadful English, but danced like the essence of agility, and taught both Nick and Cleely the latest Italian coranto, playing the tune upon his queer little fiddle.

Cleely already danced like a pixie, and laughed merrily at her comrade's first awkward antics, until he flushed with embarrassment. At that she instantly became grave, and when M'sieu' had gone, came across the room, and putting her arm about Nick, said repentantly, "don't thou mind me, Nick. Father said the French all laugh too soon at nothing; and I have caught it from my mother's blood. A boy is not good friends with his feet as a girl is; but thou wilt do beautifully, I know; and M'sieu' shall teach us the galliard together."

**Burial Places.**

The ancients looked on Death as "the daughter of Night, the sister of Sleep and the friend of the unhappy." Their artists pictured the grim messenger who knocks with equal foot at the coats of the poor and the palaces of the rich, as a drowsy, poppy-crowned youth, not as a fleshless monster, such as horrifies us moderns. The Greeks called their burying ground Cometrion, "the sleeping place," from which comes our word cemetery. The old Jews, who had no horror of the grave, called it Bethaim, "the house of the living." The Germans, with poetical simplicity, call the graveyard "God's Acre," or "field." The Arapahoe Indians call the grave "The Spirit's birthplace." In Morocco they never say a man is dead, but that "his destiny has closed," and the grave is "where he ponders." The burial grounds of to-day are the most beautiful parks near the cities of civilized lands, but there are those who believe that burying must soon give place to cremation; indeed, societies are formed for that purpose, and we are told that cinerary urns will take the place of tombstones. But the fashions of burial seem to be as unchangeable as death itself.

**Cigarettes.**

It is not true that cigarettes are commonly charged with opium and other injurious drugs. But they are flavored with essences of various plants, such as vanilla, stramonium, coffee, valerian, and tea. Occasionally a few tea leaves are mixed with the tobacco. These flavors are matters of fancy, and women particularly select their cigarettes with reference to them. Scarcely a plant that will yield an agreeable flavoring escapes employment by the manufacturers of tobacco. Among those most used are the lemon, the orange, geranium, sassafras, thyme, anise, mint, and cinnamon. Honey and maple-sugar are utilized for sweetening. A decoction of hay is sometimes applied to smoking tobacco.



WHAT A WOMAN CAN DO.

Ob BURDETTE, who was once upon a time noted as a humorist, has taken to saying and writing good common sense. "A woman cannot sharpen a pencil," he says, "and outside of commercial circles she cannot tie a package to make it look like anything save a crooked cross section of chaos; but, land of miracles; see what she can do with a pin! I believe there are some women who can pin a glass knob to a door. She cannot walk so many miles around a billiard table with nothing to eat and nothing to speak of to drink, but she can walk the floor all night with a fretful baby without going sound asleep the first half hour.

"She can ride 500 miles without going into the smoking car to rest (and get away from the children). She can go to town and do a wearisome day's shopping and have a good time with three or four friends without drinking a keg of beer. She can enjoy an evening visit without smoking a half dozen cigars. She can endure the torturing distraction of a houseful of children all day. Her husband cuffs them all howling to bed before he has been home an hour.

"Every day she endures a dress that would make an athlete swoon. She will not, and possibly cannot, walk 500 miles around a tanbark track in six days for \$5,000, but she can walk 200 miles in ten hours up and down the crowded aisles of a dry goods store when there is a reduction sale on. She is afraid of a mouse and runs from a cow, but a book agent can't scare her. She is the salt of the church, the pepper of the choir, and the life of the sewing society, and about all there is of a young ladies' school or a nursery."



ROSE HAWTHORNE LATHROP.

In the New York slums. In this work of mercy, which she took up to gain relief from the loss of an only child, she has shown the courage and single-minded fidelity to her convictions which one would expect from a daughter of Hawthorne.

**Sightless Woman Farmer.**

There lives in Oak Hill, Texas, a blind girl who has from a few acres of land, cultivated by herself, cleared about \$200 each season for several years by the growing and sale of vegetables. She began with no capital and an unfenced piece of uncultivated land. There is now a neat fence about her domain, a well and a pump in the center, and she has, in addition to purchasing these, paid for a piano and a hack to take her vegetables to the market, which is twenty miles from her home. Every evening during the dry season she waters a certain number of plants until she has gone over the entire piece, when she begins and goes over it again in the same way. Insect life she detects from her acute sense of hearing, and grass and weeds are easily distinguished from plants by the sensitive fingers of the blind gardener.

**Rich Riot of Rest.**

At a recent wedding, hangings of red gauze, veiling mirrors, and at doors and windows, draped over mantels, and, in fact, wherever opportunity presented, were accessories that were not as theatrical as it sounds to tell of them. The flowers were splendid red tulips and magnificent Jack roses, and, as the drawing-rooms and halls to begin with were done in pale empire colors, this riot of red really gave a very rich and imposing effect.

**Bolero and Cape.**

This elegant combination of bolero and cape is the invention of Paris modistes to have the filling gathered and buffed sleeves of the season. The bolero is confined at the waist in this model by a wide-draped waist-



MISS CORA B. HERTZELL.

draws a man's salary. Other women have spent time talking about the advancement of the sex—Miss Hertzell studied law and worked for it. She was admitted to the bar in Wisconsin and Illinois and practiced independently in Chicago, conducting many cases and preparing numerous legal documents for other lawyers. Her recent appointment was secured because she was capable of filling the position, according to Counsel Thornton, and not because of a "political pull."

**The Matchmaking Mamma.**

Judging by modern fiction, the mother, as such, does not exist in English society, say Munsey's Magazine. The female parent is not extinct, but her attitude to her daughter seems to be that of business manager or advance agent rather than guardian angel. The ambition which in the American mother might be labeled "My daughter's happiness," becomes, in the practical code of the British matron, "My daughter's establishment." One seldom picks up a novel of English society that one does not meet the scheming, lynx-eyed mamma, working diligently at the matrimonial grab-bag with one hand, while with the other she pushes forward her gentle little ladylike daughter, who is some day to be metamorphosed into a British mamma herself. She shoos off the detrimental and gathers in the heir with unabashed frankness, asking intentions and bustling around very much like a steam tug at a launching. And when a parti suitable in the matter of lands and family has finally been secured, she heaves a sigh of relief and prepares to do her duty by the next.

This picture is not merely the caricature of a few cynical novelists. Nearly all fiction that deals with social life in England shows the same figure. To be sure, all the worldly and ambitious parents are not on that side of the water. We have plenty of our own, but society gives them only a passive part to play and the national dread of the ridiculous keeps them from open



hand, but can be cut short and left free if preferred. The material is satin or more below, also the exquisite transparent canvas goods showing the bright silk lining. The sleeves are kilted frills over a plain silk foundation.

**To Keep the Skirt Down.**

The wheelwomen find it necessary to resort to various devices to keep the skirt down in front. Four dress weights sewed across the hem in front is good; a strap on either side with a button-hole to button to the top button of the leggin is another way, and still another, when high boots are worn, is to have a loop of narrow rubber on the principle of a garter fastened on each side and slip it under each knee.