

SURELY MAN'S GOLDEN AGE

As W. D. Howells Writes of It, the Best Years Are Between Fifty and Sixty.

After 61 one must not take too many chances with oneself, but I should say that the golden age of man is between 50 and 60, when one may safely take them. One has peace then from the different passions; if one has been tolerably industrious one is tolerably prosperous; one has fairly learned one's trade or has mastered one's art; age seems as far off as youth; one is not so much afraid of death as earlier; one likes joking as much as ever and loves beauty and truth as much; family cares are well out of the way; if one has married timely one no longer nightly walks the floor with even the youngest child; the marriage ring is then a circle half rounded in eternity. It is a blessed time; it is, indeed, the golden age, and no age after it is more than silver, writes W. D. Howells in *Harper's*.

The best age after it may be that between 80 and 90, but one cannot make so sure of 90 as of 70 in the procession of years, and that is where the gold turns silver. But silver is one of the precious metals, too, and it need not have any alloy of the baser ones. I do not say how it will be in the years between 90 and 100. I am not yet confronted with that question. Still, all is not gold between 80 and 90, as it is between 50 and 60.

In that time, if one has made oneself wanted in the world, one is still wanted; but between 80 and 90, if one is still wanted, is one wanted as much as ever? It is a painful question, but one must not shrink it, and in trying for the answer one must not do less than one's utmost, at a time when one's utmost will cost more effort than before. This is a disadvantage of living so long, but we cannot change the condition if we wish to live.

There is always the question whether one does wish to live, but for the average happy or unhappy man, I should say yes, yes, yes. We would ignore the fact that there are some men so unhappy beyond the vast average that they cannot wish to live. These kill themselves, but speaking without statistics, I do not believe these are often people of 80 and after. Apparently life seldom so unbearable with these that one almost never hears of their suicide.

Wanted Help.

Little Bobby had been learning his Sunday school lesson and was very much impressed with the idea of the omnipresence of God. A few nights after his mother asked him to bring her a bottle of milk from the back porch.

"Me can't," Bobby demurred. "All dark out there."

"But you're not afraid to go anywhere, Bobby," she reasoned. "You know God won't let anything hurt you."

"Is God out there on the porch in the dark?" queried Bobby.

"Certainly he is. Didn't you learn that God was everywhere?"

Cautiously Bobby opened the door a few inches and peering out, called: "God, will you please hand me that milk bottle out there?"—Everybody's Magazine.

Excess of Oil Production.

Conditions in Oklahoma when the great Cushing pool came in illustrated another aspect of the oil situation. The oil production, for a time was far in excess of storage and transportation facilities, so that oil was stored on the ground, behind earthen dikes, and run into dry creeks that were dammed up to form reservoirs. From sheer excess of production over local demand, the price fell to 40 cents a barrel, not because that was the value of the oil to the refinery at Chicago or Bayonne, but because there was no way at the time to get it there, and new wells were coming in by the dozen day after day.—Ray Morris in *The World's Work*.

How Strange!

Mrs. Jenkins was reading the daily paper. Presently she exclaimed, "What strange things these society people do, Jeremiah!" "What's up now?" asked Jeremiah, who was half asleep. "Well, it says here about the launching of a ship. 'With graceful ease the huge vessel slid into the water. Just after the duchess of Dumshire had cracked a bottle of champagne on her nose.' It must have hurt her! Why should she mutilate her face like that, Jeremiah?"

Hard-Boiled Philosopher.

"Fire water was the ruination of the man," remarked the stranger in Carson Gulch. "So it was," replied Three Finger. "Maybe it's just as well we've got prohibition. If there had been anything but total abstinence the pesky Injuns might have got right on bossin' the in-tire continent."—Washington Star.

Plenty of Hope.

"It seems to be a big run to the morrow," commented Yorick Hamm. "I wonder if I could make good?" "Don't see why not," declared Hamlet. "Hire a litter of puppies and a sick mule, and with your acting ability you're bound to make good."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

No Lightsome Exercise.

"I am told you are playing politics," protested Senator Sorghum. "You might as well use the word 'dancing' to describe the way a man gets over the field when an irascible bull is after him."

— The —  
Scrap Book

"MEMORY" TREES GOOD IDEA

Many Are Being Planted to Commemorate the War Services of Americans in the Great War.

A good many trees have been planted here and there over the country by way of memorializing American soldiers who gave up their lives in the war. Mostly they are for individuals—a single tree set in a place somehow associated in his lifetime with the one who is gone. A number of groves or parks and stretches of roadway are planned, however, where trees are to be planted in groups or in rows in honor of the fallen ones of certain communities. They call them "memory trees," which is a good name.

Of the single trees an illustration is one planted by pupils of the Force school in Washington, which was attended by Quentin Roosevelt when he was a young boy. He was the only former pupil to lose his life in the world war. A committee of 12, formed by appointment of a member from each class, will have the care of the tree; as each member graduates from his class he appoints a member from the incoming class to take his place. Thus there will always be a committee at the school to look after this tree.

WHEN MULE WAS A NOVELTY

Sent as a Present to George Washington, It Created Something of a Sensation Here.

The first mule seen in this country was sent to George Washington by the king of Spain. The mule measured 15 hands high, and his ears were 14 inches long. His disposition was so ungrateful that General Washington remarked on the beast's inability to appreciate "republican enjoyment."

The mule was given much publicity. Washington sent him out on a tour of the South, where his long ears, peculiar voice and strange appearance drew large crowds and created much excitement. The attention lavished upon the mule forced the keeper to hurry him from place to place at such a pace that the animal reduced considerably. Washington having been shocked with his condition upon his reappearance in Mount Vernon.

It is said that Washington looked forward to producing a breed of mules suitable to draw the family carriage, but history does not record whether the first president carried out this plan. He was, however, at all times very enthusiastic over mules, and commented upon them in glowing terms as an excellent race of animals.

Woman Good Trapper.

Trapping predatory animals is scarcely the kind of occupation in which a woman might be expected to distinguish herself, even with the great extension of the range of feminine activity to which we have been accustomed lately. Mrs. Ada Tingley of Idaho is reported, however, by the Northwestern division of the United States biological survey to be so successful in this employment that her male rivals are finding it hard to keep up with her records. Her victims are mainly coyotes, bobcats, wolves, lynxes and mountain lions. At 8:30 every morning Mrs. Tingley mounts her cayuse and rides off to her traps, of which she runs six lines, of 50 each. She uses a fish bait prepared by a secret formula.

A GREAT CHANGE.

"Did your war article get by the News Censor?" "I believe it did, only I didn't recognize it after it passed."

Burglar-Proof Glass.

There is a glass of French invention which is intended to be proof against burglars. So many cases of burglary have been committed by the breaking of show-windows and snatching of valuables on exhibition that a special effort has been made to end this particular form of theft.

The French glass, it appears, is produced by a secret process, but the makers admit that thickness and care in its manufacture are its principal essentials. It is made about three-quarters of an inch thick and on test has resisted the blow of a ten-pound iron disk. The same blow would have shattered ordinary plate glass completely.

Eats Any Old Thing.

A wood-boring beetle in California, undismayed by lead or even by alloys that are harder than lead, has put hundreds of telephones out of use. The beetle bores into the cables that carry the wires, then water gets in and makes the wire useless until the damage is repaired. As yet no one has found a way to keep the beetles out. Perhaps some entomological Burbank will train wireworms to plug holes or tapeworms to wrap them.—Youth's Companion.

It was a few evenings after that Adrian was disturbed by the loud barking of Major. He noticed lights flitting about next door, dressed, thought of burglars, armed himself, and started to investigate just in time to find a man rushing from the back door of the Price home, a valise in his hand. Then as Adrian heard the voice of Price shouting for help he halted the man at the point of his weapon, backed him into the house and found its owner tied to a chair, the victim of a bold robbery. Adrian held the burglar until the police arrived, and learned that but for his timely assistance the marauder would have escaped with valuable bonds and money.

Jonas Price ceased to hate animals after that. The true friendship of the new neighbors caused him to emerge from his shell of surliness and suspicion. Then came the climax in the affairs of the Mills family. Their house caught fire one night and only a part of their furniture was saved. They were invited over to their neighbor's house, for there was not a vacant place they could rent.

"I am going away for my health," said Jonas Price, "and you people had better settle here permanently."

"I don't know what we would have done if your roof had not sheltered us," said Adrian. "If we could remain your tenants for a time—"

Jonas Price fondly kissed Daisy, clasped in his arms. "Tenants," he repeated. "You saved me a fortune, and this little angel has brought the first sunlight of years into my dreary old heart. As to the home here, with the agreement that I can come once in a while and pass a few happy hours with you—I give it to you."

THE GUIDING SPIRIT

By VICTOR REDCLIFFE

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The little suburb of Grassmere was so near to the city that the street cars ran out to it. Adrian and Cora Mills felt both proud and pleased when they signed a lease "for the loveliest little house in the place!"

"We are the luckiest people in the world," declared Adrian. "Surely there is one landlord who is not a high-rent vampire. We were to be raised 80 percent on our city flat if we stayed."

"Double the space, with all the glories of country life at less than our old rent!" added Cora.

The owner, a rich widow, was not of the profiteering kind, and little Daisy, four years old, acted so prettily and her parents were so grateful, that Mrs. Deane felt it a pleasure to help on their happiness.

They were to move to Grassmere the following week. One evening Adrian came home with news that somewhat marred the radiant future. "I was out measuring the rooms," he observed, "and I got talking with the man living opposite. Did you notice the home just next to ours, Cora?"

"You mean the cement two story that met my fancy?"

"Just that—our nearest neighbor. His name is Jonas Price and he lives all alone. My informant says he isn't a very pleasant kind of a man—rich, grasping, a regular misanthrope. The former tenants left because they couldn't stand him. He complained of the noise their children made; he poisoned their dog."

STRANGE CLIENTS

By ALDEN CHAPMAN

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It was a good deal of satisfaction to Lucius Mangold to reckon up profits and prospects at the end of two years' practice of the law. There had been a progress that was gratifying and encouraging.

"It is a reward for good hard work, faithfulness and self denial," he complimented himself.

Mangold looked up as a step echoed at the office threshold. The doorway framed a modestly dressed young girl of about nineteen. She had a face that showed character and true womanliness. At a glance he noted that her attire, while neat, was somewhat worn. Her gloves were mended and the handbag she carried was old and faded. To his analytical mind here was a young lady of quite superior mold, but with certain traces of care in the shadowed eyes.

"I come as a client," she spoke. "I noticed your name as a lawyer, but I have no money to pay for your services."

"Be seated, please," invited Mangold, settling a chair for this plain speaking visitor, and they faced one another, she slightly embarrassed, he endeavoring to set her at her ease.

"I am Elita Vayre," she spoke, "and need advice. I have to work for a living as a stenographer and live with an invalid aunt. About a month since a firm of lawyers, Parker & Merton, wrote me to call at their office. Do you know the firm?"

Mangold simply nodded. He indeed knew the discredited pettifoggers and nothing good of them, but he did not commit himself verbally.

"They were looking for one Elita Vayre, heiress to a portion of the estate of Robert Vayre, they told me. Was that the name of my uncle? It was, I informed them. The rest was easy, they said. If I would sign a contract awarding them twenty per cent and swear to my identity they would secure for me a legacy of over \$10,000. I was quite stunned at the proposal, but I did not like the secret, sinister way of those two men. I asked time to think it over. I have come to you."

"To see that your rights are conserved? Yes," submitted Mangold.

"No, for I have no rights at all in the matter," was the amazing reply. "For I am not the rightful Elita Vayre, and I believe they know it. By accident I noticed among some notations they had that their Robert Vayre died two years ago. My uncle has been dead five years."

The wonderment and interest of Lucius Mangold were alike aroused. "And then," hurriedly went on his fair client, "there came to me a singular suggestion of memory. A year since, when I was living at Columbus I incidentally heard of a young lady working in the same building where I did whose name was the same as mine. I can give her address of that period. The surname is not a common one. I believe that she is the rightful heiress of the rightful Robert Vayre, and I wish you would ascertain if this is not true. She was a poor girl like myself, and the legacy would probably mean great joy and happiness for her."

The nobility in the mind of this conscientious, unselfish girl awoke the deepest respect and admiration in the mind of Mangold. He showed it so clearly in his face that his caller flushed.

"Please tell me further details if you can," he suggested. "Your address, and I will let you know the result of my investigation in a few days."

Mangold wrote at once to the Miss Vayre at Columbus. Four days later an animated, buoyant young lady called in person, announcing herself as the recipient of his letter.

"I can scarcely realize that I am the person you have described," she said, "but my uncle was Robert Vayre and I can establish other points of which you advised me."

Within two days Mangold fully established the fact that his present client was the real heiress to the Vayre legacy, but he did not work through Parker & Merton, but with the administrator of the Vayre estate, and his vivacious and delighted client lasted that she who bore the same name should be sent for at once.

Mangold's first client happened to come to the office when he and her double as to name were conversing pleasantly, and the picture of a young girl of means and an attractive young man, seemed to cause the visitor to contrast her own forlorn condition depressingly.

"You dear, sweet friend," spoke the heiress warmly, "do you comprehend what you have done for me? I have just told Mr. Mangold that you shall have a generous recognition of your thoughtfulness."

"Thank you," spoke the other distantly, "I could accept none."

"Oh, but you must! Think of it! Now Burney Rolfe and I can marry! Oh! such a happy fortune, and you must share it."

Instantly the dulled face of Mangold's first client unclouded. The young lawyer possessed a new thought that gave him comfort. Was it because she was relieved at the discovery that her double already had a fiancé that she at once grew more gracious?

He surmised it and his first impression of something more than friendly esteem for his first client quickened into a deeper sentiment that the future developed into love.

Three rewards came to me from my adventure. One was for Lyman Britt, badly wanted, a second from The Goldsmiths Company for saving them a large loss, the third—

A wife, Margaret, to whom I had been engaged for a year, and whom now I was able to present with the home we had so planned for.

Poor Approach.

"If I ask you to marry me, I s'pose you'll say no."

"I'll if you make your approach in that feeble way. That ain't salesmanship, George."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

A VITAL MOMENT

By T. B. ALDERSON

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He was not the man I was after, yet I experienced a glow of satisfaction as my eyes fell upon him. It was in a slip of the San Francisco harbor, and he was working about the deck of a trim little schooner, bearing the name "Neptune." The man I had been seeking for the detective agency with which I was connected was Lyman Britt, a notorious criminal. The man before me I recognized as his close friend, Martin Brierly.

I did not think he noticed me as I strolled towards the craft, but he had shrewd, alert character that he was, as I was to learn to my cost later. It chanced that I was acquainted with the captain of the Neptune. I went aboard, but Captain Moultrie was absent until noon. I returned to the Neptune about noon. The captain was there, received me cordially and I asked about Brierly.

"You call him Brierly," he said. "We know him as Matson, assistant to the cook. But he gave up his job two hours ago. Said a dying relative had sent for him. Paid him off, and that's all."

I doubted not now that Brierly had recognized me and had been scared away by my appearance. I wondered at his being in the humble employment of a cook, for he was not given to hard work. As an expert coiner he had always been able to secure plenty of money.

"We are to carry to the island of Baranta, in the South Pacific, a new coinage for its king, amounting to something over a million," Captain Moultrie told me. "It has been heads and shells for current money there heretofore. The coin is a thin silver one of small denomination, and while they have no metals at Baranta they have plenty of diamonds, and we are to deliver the boxes of coins and receive back for The Goldsmiths Company the pay in the sparklers."

Although the suspicion that Brierly was up to something was strong in my mind, I could not connect him up in a tangible way with the same. I was considerably put out, however, in losing sight of a man who in time might aid me in finding Lyman Britt. I was gratified the following day to run across Brierly entering a drinking place. I had assumed a disguise and felt safe in mixing in with the crowd, keeping a close eye upon him.

When he left the place I shadowed him cautiously. He took a roundabout course to the waterside and went aboard a trim little craft there. I hung about the dock and observed two men finally leave the vessel. They passed me without paying any particular attention to me, but, turning quickly, knocked me senseless.

I awoke a close prisoner in a room in the hold. The craft was afloat. Water and food were brought to me for ten days. I was fed, but left to my own devices. One night I heard voices beyond my prison door. They belonged to Britt and Brierly and I was fully enlightened as to their purposes from what I caught of their conversation.

It seemed that Brierly had been a spy aboard of the Neptune to learn the details of the coin shipment. He and his confederates saw a clever opportunity to profit by what he had learned. Expert coiners that they were, they had duplicated the ordered coinage, except that they had employed a cheap baser metal, and with it boxed in their hold were on their way to get first to Baranta, impose themselves as agents of The Goldsmiths Company upon its king, receive their pay, divide, and disappear. There was not the slightest prospect of escape for me. For five weeks I was kept a close prisoner. I could trace the arrival of the craft at Baranta, the unloading, a departure, and one morning was apprized by the overhead talk of two of the crew in the hold that we were at anchor at Proda, a town on the Chilean coast. The men were under the influence of liquor and one of them, unlocking the doors of several below-deck apartments, by mistake turned a key in the door of my own.

I waited until they had disappeared, and then stole forth. After some cautious wanderings finding myself at an entrance of the cabin. There, regaling themselves with liquor and gloat-ing over a snakeskin bag before them which held the diamonds paid for the coins, they discussed glowingly a future of opulence.

I acted on a wild impulse. I hardly knew how quickly and well, until I had sprung between them, snatched up the precious treasure, was on deck, then ashore, then making for the business part of the town. I was pursued, but I ran like a deer. A sign showed me the official police office of the town. I dashed in breathlessly, told my story, saw the snakeskin deposited in a safe, several officers sent out to apprehend my recent captors, and—collapsed.

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A DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH

By CECILLE LANGDON

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It was not a very pretentious room that Norma Ellis occupied, but its rent was low and there was a sense of protection in having Mrs. Judy Porter for a landlady. Then, too, there was her twelve-year-old son, Jerry, always in mischief, but amenable to the pleasant ways of Norma, who believed there was lots of good in him.

For five years Norma had been an orphan. She had secured a position as a typist at a very moderate salary. Another employee had told her of Mrs. Porter, who rented out rooms to an entirely respectable class, and something motherly in the manner of the hard-working landlady had attracted Norma. The interest became quite mutual, and very often Mrs. Porter invited Norma to tea to talk over her manifold troubles, finding a sympathetic listener.

The main complaint of the distressed mother was Jerry, "in hot water all the time!" He was a natural born fighter, and came home at least once a week with a bruised lip or a blackened eye. He annoyed many of the roomers whom he disliked with his elfish tricks, was sent home permanently from school, and this led Norma to taking up his education. He would study for her, and she devoted her evenings to giving him instruction.

"You look, tired, dear, and, excuse me, but sad, too," remarked Mrs. Porter, after noting a certain depression in her favorite roomer.

"Yes, there is a rush of work at the office just now," evasively explained Norma.

There had been at the office a young man named Roscoe Burt who had shown her some pleasing attentions, and she treasured the same. They had become very friendly and he had said:

"They are sending me on the road, Miss Ellis, and if I make good it will probably place me in a position where I may want to say to you what I would not until sure of a business future."

Just then some friends approached and he half whispered to Norma:

"If I write to you, you will not deem me presumptuous, and will reply?"

"Yes," she assented, and flushed and trembled, as was natural with a girl feeling that her first love was about to culminate.

A week went by, and there was no word from the young man. Norma genuinely sorrowed.

Norma took up her cross and tried to be cheerful and happy. Mrs. Porter was going away to visit a sister, and Norma was glad to keep melancholy thoughts at bay by occupying her spare evenings in helping to arrange her landlady's wardrobe.

"I have a friend who will take charge of the rooms while I am gone," she told Norma, "but Jerry I leave entirely in your care."

"I shall be glad," said Norma sincerely. "It will keep me from being lonely. He will behave himself splendidly while you are gone, won't you, Jerry?"

"I've got to if I keep my promise to you, Miss Ellis," declared the lad seriously. "I'm not going to miss being educated, when you tell me that within a year you will have me trained so I can run a typewriter and get a good job as a clerk," and he kept off the streets, studied his lessons conscientiously, and at the end of the week Norma said:

"Now, Jerry, we've worked hard and will enjoy a little pleasure. There is a fine movie down at the Orpheum. There is my pocketbook. Please pay for the tickets. And we must have some soda after the entertainment."

"All right, and some of these fine days when I get working I'll pay you back by taking you to a swell opera."

They had a very enjoyable time, and Norma was quite proud of her well-behaved escort. He bade her good night as she reached her room.

"Oh, Jerry!" she called down the stairs after him as she opened her pocketbook, "the key to my room—it is gone."

"Then I must have lost it," Jerry chided himself. "Say, I'm awful sorry. Look here," and he returned to her side. "It's a catch lock, isn't it? All right, I'll just climb through the transom and unlatch it. Mrs. Willis has gone to bed, but I'll let you in here and bring a duplicate key first thing in the morning."

The transom had been always kept open for ventilation and Jerry was soon on the other side, released the lock, and departed. As Norma turned on the gas she noticed lying upon the carpet an envelope. It was slightly creased and soiled, brushed by the body of Jerry as he crowded through the space overhead. It was clearly discernible to Norma that it had been brought by the postman when she was away, who had sought to fling it through the transom, but it had caught on the ledge and had been dislodged by Jerry in his descent.

It was postmarked three weeks previous. She opened it, unfamiliar with the handwriting. Her color rose, her pulses fluttered as she read the signature: "Roscoe Burt."

In the body of the missive was the expressed hope of the writer that when he returned she would consent to become his wife.

Blessed Jerry! Rough-and-tumble Jerry! What sunlight and joy he had unconsciously brought into her lonely life!