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GROWING OLD.

BY MARGARET E. HANGSTER.

Is it parting with the roundness
Of the smoothly molded cheek?
Is it losing from the dimples
Half the flashing joy they speak?
Is it fading of the luster
From the wavy, golden hair?
Is it finding on the forehead
Graven lines of thought and care?

Is it dropping, as the rose-leaves
Drop their sweetness overblown,
Household names that once were dearer,
More familiar than our own?
Is it meeting on the pathway
Faces strange and glances cold,
While the soul with moan and snivel
Whispers sadly, "Growing old?"

Is it frowning at the folly
Of the ardent hopes of youth?
Is it evincing melancholy
At the rarity of truth?
Is it disbelief in loving?
Selfish hate or miser's greed?
Then such blight of nature's nobles
Is a "growing old" indeed.

But the silver thread that shineth
Whitely in the thinning tress,
And the pallor where the bloom was,
Need not tell of bitterness;
And the brow's more earnest writing
Where it once was marble fair,
May be but the spirit's tracing
Of the peace of answered prayer.

If the smile has gone in deeper,
And the tears more quickly start,
Both together meet in music
Low and tender in the heart;
And in others' joy and gladness,
When the life can find its own,
Surely angels learn to listen
To the sweetness of the tone.

On the gradual sloping pathway,
As the passing years decline,
Gleams a golden love-light falling
Far from upper heights divine,
And the shadows from that brightness
Wrap them softly in their fold,
Who unto celestial whiteness
Walk, by way of growing old.

The HIDDEN PEARL.

THE Grand Trunk road is the main artery of India. It runs without a break across the breadth of the land from Karachi to Bombay.

A cyclist who had ridden round the world on his bicycle once described it as 1500 miles of the finest cycling track on earth.

It is made of kukkar, a kind of stony growth found on sandy ground and resembling sandstone. When ground fine and mixed with water, this yields a mortar-like substance which gives a surface to the road as hard and smooth as a billiard table.

But once this surface is worn through the kukkar reverts to its native sand. Hence the centre of the Grand Trunk road, which is always kept in repair for light traffic, is like asphalt, while on each side of this track is a broad lane for heavy country traffic, where the dry sand lies a foot thick and the broad-wheeled ox-carts raise a pillar of dust as they proceed and leave a trail like the wake of a ship behind them.

On each side of the main track is a row of trees, and on each side of the side track is yet another row. There are thus four rows of trees in all to shield the wayfarers from the intolerable heat and glare of the vertical sun.

Along this great highway the many-sided life of India flows and eddies. It is peopled almost entirely by the natives in their dirty cotton clothing, with bare brown legs showing beneath.

The sahib keeps to his iron railroad and leaves the people of the country to their prehistoric slow moving rate of progress. Here and there the crimson garments of the lower class women and the different hued trousers of the Mohammedan women in special, make a splash of color amid the crowd of white-robed pilgrims.

There goes the graceful figure of a woman, straight as a dart beneath her brass fohat of water. Better, however, not to look at her face; very few of the Indian peasant women have any beauty of feature, and the hard labor of work in the fields under an Eastern sun leaves them old and shriveled up before their time.

Here comes a native lady in a burka, and you could not look upon her features if you would. The burka is a long, shapeless garment of unbleached calico, which completely envelops the figure from the crown of the head to the feet; it has a lacework mask for the face, through which only the eyes are visible. It is astonishing how seldom this or any other native raiment seems to get washed.

A herd of goats struggle untended down the highway. Farther along some immense cattle with branching horns block the traffic. A fast trotting little bullock of the hump-backed breed, harnessed to an ekka, bumps merrily along the centre of the road.

A boy flying a kite cannons into the passersby. Two professional singers, surrounded by a small crowd of women and children, stand under a branching pipal tree, opening and shutting their mouths alternately as they give vent to a monotonous chant.

A fakir stalks by, clothed only in a loin cloth, with long matted hair and his head and body covered with ashes, a withered arm held straight in front of him. Look at those Pathan soldiers with their baggy white

breaches and huge black puggeris, swaggering through the crowd with the contempt of the warrior for the country bumpkin.

Along the portion of the Grand Trunk which lies between Allahabad and Benares, one day in late September two Englishmen were strolling at their ease. It was just at the change of the seasons when there was still some bite in the sun in the daytime, and it was not too cold to sleep in the open air at night. The two men were clad in native garb of dhoti and puggeri, partly for lightness and ease in traveling, and partly to conceal their fallen fortunes from their own compatriots.

But though their faces were burnt to the hue of the natives themselves, their nationality was evident at a glance to the passersby. There is something in the swing of an Englishman's walk that distinguishes him from the down-trodden Hindu, while the size of his chest and calves alone would mark him out from the narrow built, red-shanked natives of the plains.

The simple villagers salaamed to them as they passed, the Mohammedan women with trousers tight from the knee to the ankle, the sign of "the oldest profession in the world," bestowed on them the leer specially reserved for the sahibs, and even the soldiers saluted them. Although they were but two penniless tramps, their progress was that of the conqueror through a conquered land.

The men, whose names were Spencer and Mitchell, were a conjurer and his advance agent. They had been engaged in an up-country tour, when the hot weather came on, audiences were not to be found, funds were exhausted, and finally they were obliged to take to the road.

With the homing instinct of Englishmen they were making for Calcutta and the sea. They levied their living from the country through which they passed. The fields of wheat and grain by the roadside furnished them with grain, which they ground between two stones and baked into chapatties. The mango tops yielded their luscious fruit to add a savor to the frugal meal.

As it grew toward midday and the heat of the sun became overpowering, the two travelers took refuge in a shady grove, while the villagers retired to their homes for their midday sleep. Spencer remarked as they sat down under a tree:

"I'm deuced hungry. A vegetarian diet doesn't satisfy me at all. I wish I had something more substantial to eat."

"Have a chew of opium," said Mitchell, producing a block of the drug about two inches square from his pocket.

"The natives say it's very staying."

"No, thanks," said Spencer. "A beef-steak's more in my line! Where did you get it? I didn't know you were a drug eater."

"I am not. I picked this up in the Lucknow serai the other day, and never thought of it again until this minute."

Presently only a single figure was left in the landscape, advancing slowly toward them along the centre of the roadway. As the man approached nearer, Spencer turned to his companion and said:

"Have you noticed that that man has been tracking us for the last three days, ever since we left Lucknow?"

"Well, I've not been an entertainer all these years without learning to use my eyes, and I've seen him watching us. And what's more, he's tried to disguise himself in three or four different ways, which looks suspicious."

"But," said Spencer, briefly, "it's only your imagination. As we haven't got a pie in the world, what can he get out of us?"

"That's just what I intend to find out," said Spencer, quietly; "it may be worth knowing."

"Salaam, sahib," said the man as he came up to them, and he produced a pack of cards and some coins from a calico bag, squatted down in front of them on his hams and arranged his voluminous draperies over his knees.

"A traveling juggler, by all that's holy," said Spencer, with a grin. "I wonder if he's any good. In spite of the traveler's yarns about the mango trick and the vanishing rope trick, I never met a native conjurer yet that I couldn't give points to myself."

"I don't think this chap's any good, anyway," said Mitchell, critically watching the exhibition. "I'm no expert, but I can see the coins dropping into those skirts of his and the cards disappearing up his sleeves in the most obvious manner."

"The worst fraud I ever struck," replied Spencer. "It looks as if he'd just started in this line for our benefit. Here, sonny, give he hold of that bag of tricks of yours, and I'll show you how it ought to be done."

The Englishman stood up in front of the astonished native, bared his arms to the elbow, and went through the same tricks one by one. But this time there was no bungling, the coins disappeared into the air, and the cards reappeared from the trunks of the surrounding trees.

As he watched the astonishing exhibition the native's eyes got gradually larger and larger, till at last he fell on his knees in the dust at Spencer's feet, beat frantically on the ground with the palms of his hands, and literally howled in Hindustani:

"Oh! sahib, protector of the poor, spare me, I see that you are a great guru, and know everything. Only curse me not with the evil eye, and I will confess all."

"This chap's got something on his mind evidently," said Spencer. "What did I tell you about those disguises? Say on, Macduff-Bolouthna, and he gave the native a kick to emphasize this last command.

"Oh, 'holy one,' whined the native. 'I am a poor man and the servant of others. Blame me not for what I am now about to tell you, and what a wizard like you must know already.'

"Of course I know it," said Spencer sternly, "but you must confess your crime before you can be forgiven."

"It was you honor's friend, babuji, that was the beginning of trouble. He picked up a pearl of great price in the Lucknow serai three days ago."

"That's a lie," said Mitchell. "I wouldn't be traveling on shank's mare now if I had." But Spencer said quietly:

"The pearl was concealed in a piece of opium. Say on, who was the owner of the pearl?"

"Its owner was a rich merchant from Ceylon, whose servant I am. He was taking the pearl to sell to a great rajah in Punjab."

"Oh, holy one, the sahibs are sometimes zabbardasti, angry men. My master feared that if he asked for the pearl the sahibs might beat him and take it away. But if you did not know the value of what you had found, he might get it back by craft."

"Therefore you came as a juggler to search our clothes under pretense of looking for coins. And if you failed to find the pearl?"

"Then my master has hired four bad-matches with lathis, and they will come in the night and beat you on the head and take away the pearl by force."

"Achha, it is well. You are forgiven, Go," said Spencer.

"And the pearl?" suggested the native, humbly.

"The pearl," roared Spencer at the full pitch of his lungs. "Soor ke butcha. You come here and confess to a plot to rob and murder us, and then expect to get back your accursed pearl. Jao nikal jao, son of Satan, before I destroy you!"

At this sudden outbreak the native turned hastily and fled for his life, leaving the two Englishmen convulsed with laughter under the trees.

"Well, our fortunes are looking up," said Spencer. "Let us have a look at this pearl of great price."

Mitchell produced the block of opium once more, and cutting it open they found a pear-shaped pearl about half

an inch long and of great luster reposing in the centre.

"By Jove," exclaimed Spencer, "that's something worth having. It's worth a cool five thousand, or I'm no judge of gems."

"What shall we do?" asked Mitchell.

"Do?" echoed Spencer. "Why, what should we do but hurry into Benares to-day and take the train for Calcutta. The price of this pearl will set us up in business again in style. And I have no desire to have four thugs after me on the Grank Trunk."—Calcutta Mail.

Spotting the Married Men.

"There's a married man," said a man who stood in front of a department store in Brooklyn, on Saturday night. The one to whom he pointed was standing on the corner.

"How do you know?" the man with the detective instinct was asked.

"Oh, it's easy to pick them," he replied. "There's another, and there's another." He pointed to two others who were sauntering back and forth.

One young, the second gray-haired and smoking a cigar. "Now, that fellow there, with the baby buggy, is easy," the speaker continued. "You can't make any mistake about him. Their wives are in the store, spending the week's allowance and the men are waiting for them. You know men hate a department store."

"There! Wasn't I right?" he asked as a woman came out of the store and walked away with one of the men. After a time another woman appeared and was joined by one of the sauntering men. Then out came the woman who belonged to the baby buggy, and after depositing an armful of small packages at the feet of the baby that party moved on.

"How did you come to notice this?" the student of human nature was asked.

"I learned it by experience," was his answer.

Just then he lifted his hat to a woman who came out of the store. She slipped her hand under his arm and they walked away together.—New York Press.

Must Work Out West.

The moment that winter breaks—and save in the high altitudes, winter west of the Mississippi is a mild and comfortable thing in comparison with our Eastern weather—the police of St. Joseph, Kansas City, Denver, in fact of all the towns and cities, wage relentless war on vagrants. The wide roaring prairies, the railroads, the mills are all insatiable in their demand for unskilled labor. Crops rot in the fields for lack of harvesters, mills are idle for lack of men to drive the heavily laden wagons to their doors. The idle will not work so long as they can beg or steal. In the West they have little chance for either.

On the average fifty men a week are arrested in Kansas City during the months of June, July and August. The police wisely refuse to burden the city with their support, and instead give these men the alternative of going to work honestly, and for high wages, or breaking stone for the improvement of the abominable Western roads. The choice nearly always is for the better paying labor. Great wisdom is shown in the distribution of these men. Only one or two of a gang are sent to any one camp.—Leslie's Monthly.

The Irishman's "Ad."

General A. R. Chaffee, who commanded in the war game of Maine, the Department of the East, was talking one afternoon to some reporters in Portland. The hypothetical loss of the fleet had been discussed, and this subject reminded General Chaffee of a story. He said:

"Speaking of losses, there was an Ohio Irishman once who lost a gold watch. He told one of his friends about it.

"It is a fine Swiss watch," he said, "full jeweled, adjusted to three positions, and to heat and cold. It's worth \$325."

"Well," said his friend, "I hope you get it back."

"Oh, I'm likely to get it back," said the Irishman, "for I've advertised it in the lost and found columns of eleven papers."

"What reward have you offered?"

"Four dollars."

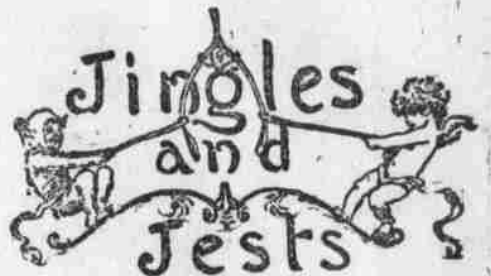
"Four dollars? Why, man, that's not a fair reward for a gold watch worth \$325," the friend exclaimed.

"Whist," said the Irishman, "that's where I'm foolin' them. I'm advertisin' it as a silver watch."

A LINE TO CARRIE.

Oh! Caroline 's so very sweet,
From rippling curls to twinkling feet,
No magiery of rhyme is meet
To sing her beauty near divine;
A Venus as to form is she—
Her waist 's slender as can be—
To lend it more of symmetry
I would not care to add a line.

It 'en a Chesterfield behooves
To note the grace with which she moves,
And grace and form and face but proves
I do no wrong to thus enshrine
Her in my heart of hearts, and say
With all a lover's naivete:
"One charm along improvement's way
I would not add to Caroline."
—Roy Farrell Greene, in Puck.



Bad Man—"Have you killed your man?" Cholly Gotrox—"Aw, no. Me chauffeur attends to all that, ye know."
—Judge.

"Grandpa, what is a morganatic marriage?" "A morganatic marriage? H'm. That must be a marriage for money."—Life.

"Bah! Her husband is only a cheap duke." "Don't be uncharitable. Perhaps he was the most expensive duke to be had at the time."—Puck.

This new locomotion they say is quite dear, though unlikely to injure or kill. It isn't the automobile that you fear so much as the automobilist.
—Washington Star.

"I don't want poverty, and I don't want riches," said Brother Dickey. "All I want is plenty of political campaigns, an canderdates-a-runnin' all de year round!"—Atlanta Constitution.

"One of Scharper's friends was telling me he is in financial straits!" "Ah! Some of his friends are charitable." "How do you mean?" "The uncharitable ones call them 'financial crooked.'"
—Philadelphia Press.

A Scot in a kiltie of plaid
Fell sick and exceedingly sad.
"Hoot! 'tis funny," he said,
"I've a cauld in my head,
When 'tis only cauld legs I have had."
—Philadelphia Press.

Spartacus—"Dear, dear! Another man ends his life with a bullet!" Smartacus—"Well, it seems to me that life with a bullet would be a thing most anybody would want to end—so lonesome and uncongenial."
—Baltimore American.

"Yes," said the bank official, "we need a runner for the bank. Have you had any experience?" "Well, sir," replied the applicant, "I've lived at Lonesomehurst for years, and I've caught the 7.39 train to this city regularly, each day."
—Philadelphia Press.

Drummer—"Let's see! There is a show of some kind in the town hall to-night, isn't there?" Landlord Pettyville Tavern—"Sure thing! Miss Agnes Ammidon appeared here in 'East Lynne' in 1874, and pleased the people so well that she's consented to play a return date to-night."
—Puck.

"Aren't you going up in it yourself?" asked one of the spectators. "No," answered the inventor of the flying machine. "This is merely a trial trip, and I have decided to send one of my assistants. At this critical stage of the invention I cannot afford to run any risks. Are you all ready, Jacobs? Follow the directions I have given you and you will be perfectly safe."
—Chicago Tribune.

"No, I am not in favor of this movement to have all the automobiles numbered," asserts the first citizen. "But it seems to me to be a wise provision," argues the second. "Not at all. What should be required is that all pedestrians wear a number. Look how much trouble there is every day over identifying some of them who have obstructed the path of the automobilist."
—Judge.

The French Telephone Service.

The telephone system of France seems to be in a most inefficient state, and complaints are coming in from all quarters. Communication with Paris from the suburbs is said to be practically impossible, one man having waited twenty-four hours in order to get a connection from Trouville. The central office in Paris is utterly unable to cope with the great increase in the number of subscribers. It is now proposed to raise \$2,000,000 for the purpose of enlarging the entire system.

The income tax returns show that citizens of Great Britain have invested abroad \$5,630,540,500.

One-third of the college graduates now are women.