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# THE CHRISTIAN TREASURY

## A FAMILY MISCELLANY

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## GROWING OLD.

BY J. R. MILLER, D.D.



SOLOMON'S picture of old age is a fit close for the lessons of the year. The young may think that they have nothing to do with this subject, but they are really the only ones who can gather any benefit from it. It is too late for the old to make lovely a life that has been marred through the years. The character of old age is determined and formed in the earlier days. If we would make it happy and beautiful, we must begin in youth. If we would have wood for our winter fires, we must gather it in summer days. If we would have lamps of joy and peace burning in our souls' chambers when the evening comes and it grows dark about us, we must have them filled and lighted before the nightfall.

Old age is the harvest of all the years that have gone before. It is a barn into which all the sheaves of wheat or of tares are gathered. It is a lake into which all the rills and rivers of life flow from the springs in the hills and valleys of childhood, youth, and maturity. It is a picture which the fingers of the years limn, a mosaic in which every day and hour sets its little bit of beauty or blemish.

We are each building a house in which we shall have to live when we grow old. We may make it very beautiful, adorning it with taste and filling it with objects that shall minister to our pleasure or comfort; or we may cover the walls with hideous images and ghastly spectres, which shall look down upon us and fill our souls with terrors, when we are sitting in the gloom of life's nightfall. We may plant lovely roses to bloom beside our doors, and fragrant gardens to pour their odours about us; or we may sow weeds and briers, to flaunt themselves in our faces as we sit in our houses.

Old age is not always beautiful; not all old people are happy. It is possible to live so as to make old age very wretched, and it is possible to live so as to make it very bright. Ruskin says: 'What fairy palaces we may build of beautiful thoughts—proof against

all adversity — bright fancies, satisfied memories, noble histories, faithful sayings, treasure-houses of precious and restful thoughts, which care cannot disturb, nor pain make gloomy, nor poverty take away from us — houses built without hands, for our souls to live in!' How can we live so as to build such palaces of peace to dwell in when we are old?

For one thing, we must take care of our bodies. When the laws of life are thoroughly understood and faithfully observed, old people will not be physical wrecks. We must take care of the house we live in.

We must also live a busy, useful life, if we would have a happy old age. Nothing pleasant ever comes out of idleness or out of selfishness. Sweet are the memories of good deeds done and sacrifices made for the Master's sake. Their incense, like heavenly perfume, comes floating up from the fields of toil and fills old age with sweet peace. When a man has lived through active years to bless others, he has no lack of friends when the feeble days come. Some one asks, 'What wouldst thou be?' and then answers:—

'A blessing to each one surrounding me,  
A chalice of dew to the weary heart,  
A sunbeam of joy, bidding sorrow depart;  
To the storm-tossed vessel a beacon of light,  
A nightingale's song in the darkest night,  
A beckoning hand to a far-off goal,  
An angel of love to each friendless soul.'

One who lives thus through life's bright years will find a rich harvest of blessing in old age.

We must live also a pure and holy life, if we would have a glad old age. Every one carries in himself the elements of his own happiness or wretchedness. It is the heart that gives colour to our skies and tone to the music we hear. Sins in earlier years put thorns in the pillow of age. Conscience violated heaps up sorrows for life's late days; but a well-lived life stores away memories which make celestial music to cheer the decaying years. Norman Macleod said that 'nothing makes a man so contented as an experience gathered from a well-

watched past.' We can insure full happiness only by living no one day whose memory will make us ashamed or give us pain, as we sit in the eventide shadows and recall it. An unholy life yields a harvest of wretchedness and misery in old age. But a life of obedience to God, of faithfulness to duty, of personal purity and uprightness, and of unselfish, Christ-like service, will make old age like a garden of fruits and flowers.

It must not be forgotten that Christ only can make any old age either beautiful or very happy. A life consecrated from its dawn to its close to Christ and His service will never fail of peace and joy in the late eventide. No other period of life is so beautiful or so fitted for usefulness. If the powers of the body have lost somewhat of their vigour and energy, the inner life has grown into a power never attained before—

'Rich in experience that angels might covet,  
Rich in a faith that has grown with the years.'

As a river is broadest and deepest toward its mouth, so a true and well-lived life flows with its fullest stream toward its close. The nearer heaven God's saints get, the more do the heavenly influences fill their lives.

'There is beauty Youth can never know,  
With all the lusty radiance of his prime,  
A beauty the sole heritage of time,  
That gilds the fabric with a sunset glow,  
That glorifies the work it soon lays low!  
There is a charm in Age, well-nigh sublime,  
That lends a new lustre to the poet's rhyme,  
As mountain peaks are grander crowned with snow.  
How gay the laugh of Youth! but, oh, how brave  
The stately weakness of a reverend Age;  
Be ours the task to solace and to cheer,  
To fondly guide its footsteps to the grave,  
To print a blessing on the final page,  
And cherish memories for ever dear!'

—*Westminster Teacher.*

## WHAT THE CHANGE WROUGHT.

BY ANNA D. WALKER.



**J**OHAN C— was a man addicted to vice: he gambled, drank intoxicating drinks, was profane in his language, and truly lived in sin and served Satan. What made matters worse, he was the father of several sons, and before them set an example ruinous if followed. Providentially, however, these boys were led to attend Sabbath school.

John lived in one of our large cities, and was quite prosperous in his worldly circumstances. At length he removed with his family to the West, where he bought land and entered into the farming business, without one thought of the God on whom he was dependent for seed-time and harvest.

In the new home the boys would walk a mile to attend the Sabbath school, and the father would harness his horse to the light buggy and ride to the little town to spend the Sabbath's sacred hours in the saloon. One of John's sons became deeply interested in religious matters, was appointed leader of the singing in the Sabbath school, and was exemplary in his deportment.

One Christmas-day it so happened that this boy and his parents ate the Christmas dinner alone, and at the table the son said, 'Father, come down to the meeting in our hall to-night; we are going to have such a good speaker, a man so good and interesting.'

John gave his son a coarse reply, and the latter went out. The wife looked very serious, and after a time said, 'Father, I have been thinking we ought to go to church and Sunday school with our boys. We are not setting them a good example, or living as we were

brought up to live. We were taught that it was our duty to go to church and Sabbath school. We are doing wrong,' and she sighed deeply as she spoke.

The Spirit chose this word to convict John; it went as an arrow to his heart, and though he strove to drive away the convictions, happily he could not do so. His misery increased until he cried for mercy. It was hard for him to humble himself before God, but he was brought to that blessed condition, and then the Lord gave him pardon and peace.

And now there was much to be done. When one has walked more than half the journey in the wrong path, it is a toilsome thing to retrace the steps and begin anew. John was sincere and longed to see his whole duty and do it.

Away in the Eastern city from which he had removed he owned two stores, which were leased to parties who sold intoxicating drink. The new birth John had experienced led him to see the great wrong of keeping stores of that description, and he wrote to his agent, who was a Christian man, and told him of the change in his views, and asked if the stores could not be let for better purposes. The agent replied that he was truly rejoiced that John had become a Christian, but bade him dismiss all anxiety regarding the stores, as there was no wrong done; if he did not sell whisky, others would.

John was not satisfied, but let the matter rest for a space. At length he and his wife with part of their family returned to the Eastern city, and when he alighted from the train his eye fell on the stores in question, for they were directly opposite the depot.