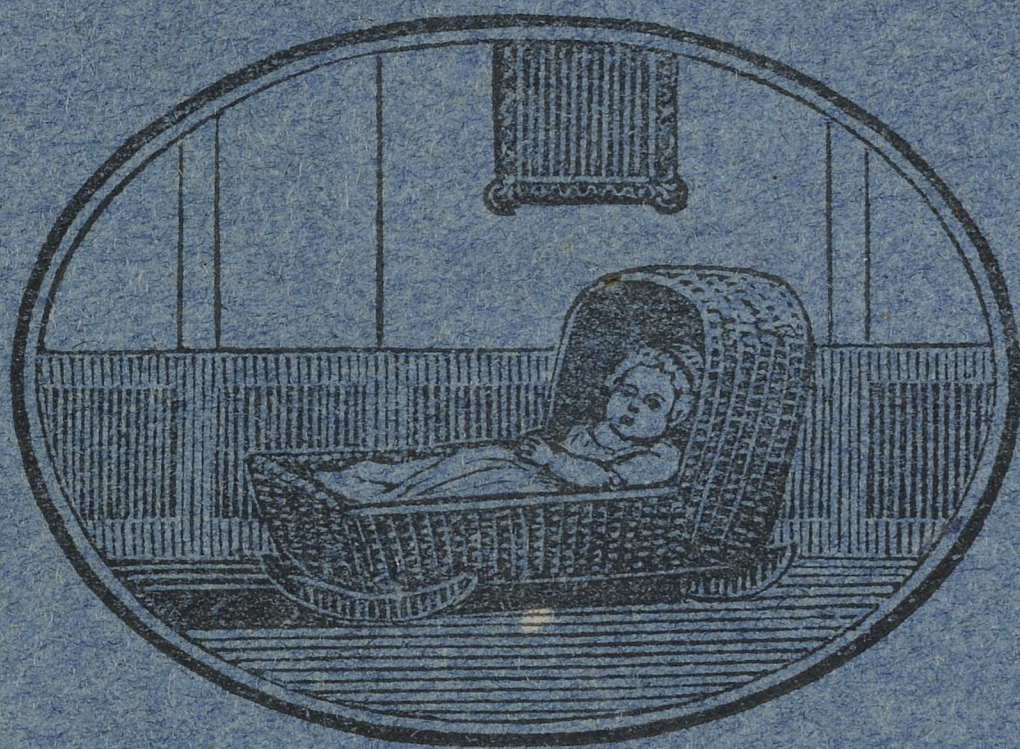


**Gray Hairs made happy.**

**AN INTERESTING STORY  
FOR CHILDREN.**



Providence;

H. H. BROWN, PRINTER.

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Youth has its pleasures, and age has its cares.





## GRAY HAIRS MADE HAPPY.



OPPOSITE to the house in which Mary's parents lived, was a little opening, ornamented with a grass plot, and overshadowed by a venerable tree, commanding an extensive view before it. On this delightful spot, Mary used frequently to sit in her little chair, while employed in knitting stockings for her mamma.

As she was one day thus employed, she saw a poor old man advancing very slowly towards her. His hair was as white as silver, and his back bent with age; he supported himself by a stick, and seemed to walk with great difficulty. "Poor man," said Mary,



looking at him most tenderly, “he seems to be very much in pain, and perhaps is very poor, which are two dreadful evils.”

She also saw a number of boys, who were following close behind this poor old man. They passed jokes upon his thread-bare coat, which had very long skirts and short sleeves, contrary to the fash-



It is very wicked for children to ridicule aged persons. See II. Kings ii, 23.



ion of those days. His hat, which was quite rusty, did not escape their notice; his cheeks were hollow and his body thin. These wicked boys no sooner saw him, than they all burst out a laughing. A stone lay in his way, which he did not perceive, and over it he stumbled, and had liked to have fallen. This afforded them sport, and they laughed loudly; but it gave great pain to the poor old man, who uttered a deep sigh.

“I once was as young as you are,” said he to the boys, “but I did not laugh at the infirmities of age, as you do. The day will come in which you will be old yourselves, and every day is bringing you forward to that period. You will then be sensible of the impropriety of your present conduct.” Having thus spoken, he



endeavored to hobble on again, and made a second stumble, when in struggling to save himself from falling, he dropped his cane, and down he fell. On this the wicked boys renewed their laugh, and highly enjoyed his misfortune.

Mary, who had seen every thing that had passed, could not help pitying the old man's situation, and therefore putting down her stocking on the chair, ran towards him, picked up the cane and gave it him, and then taking hold of his other arm, as if she had been as strong as a woman, advised him to lean upon her, and not mind any thing the boys might say to him.

The poor old man looking at her very earnestly, 'Sweet child,' said he, 'how good you are! This kindness makes me in a moment



forget all the ill behavior of those naughty boys. May you ever be happy.' They then walked on together; but the boys being probably made ashamed of their conduct by the behavior of Mary, followed the old man no further.

While the boys were turning about, one of them fell down also, and all the rest began laughing, as they had before done to the old man. He was very angry with them on that account, and as soon as he got up, ran after his companions, pelting them with stones. He instantly became convinced, how unjust it was to laugh at the distresses of another, and formed a resolution for the future, never to laugh at any person's pain. He followed the old man he had been laughing at, though at some distance, wishing for an opportunity



to do him some favor, by way of atonement, for what he had done.

The good old man, in the mean time, by the kind assistance of Mary, proceeded with slow but sure steps. She asked him to stop and rest himself a little, and told him, that her house was that before him." "Pray stay," said she, "and sit a little under that large tree. My parents, indeed, are not at home, and therefore you will not be so well treated; yet it will be a little rest to you."

The old man accepted Mary's offer. She brought him out a chair, and then fetched some bread and cheese and good small beer, which was all the pretty maid could get at. He thanked her very kindly, and then entered into conversation with her.

"I find, my dear," said he,



you have parents. I doubt not but you love them, and they love you. They must be very happy, and may they always continue to be so."

"And pray, good old man," said Mary, "I suppose you have got children." "I had a son," replied he, "who lived in London, loved me tenderly, and frequently came to see me; but alas! he is now dead, and I am left disconsolate. His widow, indeed, is rich; but she assumes the character of the lady, and thinks it beneath her to inquire whether I be dead or living, as she does not wish it to be known, that her husband's father is a peasant."

Mary was much affected, and could hardly believe that such cruel people existed. "Ah! certain I am," said she, "that my



dear mother would not behave so cruelly." He then rose and thanked Mary with a blessing; but she was determined not to leave him, till she had accompanied him a little way further.

As they walked on, they saw the little boy who had been following them; for he run on some way before, and was then sitting on the grass. When they looked upon him he cast his eyes downwards, got up after they had passed, and followed them again. Mary observed him, but said nothing.

She asked the old man if he lived alone. "No, little lady," answered he, "I have a cottage on the other side of that meadow, seated in the middle of a little garden, with an orchard and a small field. An old neighbor, whose cottage fell down through



age, lives with me, and cultivates my ground. He is an honest man, and I am perfectly easy in his society; but the loss of my son still bears hard upon me, nor have I the happiness to see any of his children, who must by this time have forgotten me.”

These complaints touched the heart of Mary, who told him that she and her mother would come and see him. The sensibility and kindness of this little girl, served only to aggravate his grief, by bringing to his mind the loss he had sustained in his son. Tears came in his eyes, when he pulled out his handkerchief to wipe them; and instead of again putting it into his pocket, in the agitation of his mind, it slipped aside, and fell unnoticed by him or Mary.

The little boy who followed



them, saw the handkerchief fall, ran to pick it up, and gave it to the old man, saying, "Here, good old man, you dropped your handkerchief and here it is."—"Thank you heartily, my little friend," said the old man. "Here is a good natured lad, who does not ridicule old age, nor laugh at the afflictions that attend it. You will certainly become an honest man. Come both of you to my habitation, and I will give you some milk." They had no sooner reached the old man's cottage, than he brought out some milk, and the best bread he had, which though coarse, was good. They all sat down upon the grass, and made a comfortable repast. However, Mary began to be afraid her parents might come home, and be uneasy at her absence; and



the little boy was sorry to go, but was sadly afraid, should he stay, of being scolded by his mother.

“This mother of your’s,” said the old man, “must be very cross to scold you.”

“She is not always so,” replied the boy; “but though she loves me, she makes me fear her.”

“And your father?” “Oh, I scarcely knew him, he having been dead these four years.”—“Dead these four years!” interrupted the old man, and fixing his eyes attentively on the boy. “Is it possible that I have some recollection of your features? Can it be little Lemuel!”—“Yes, yes, Lemuel is my name.”

For a few moments the old man stood motionless, and with an altered voice, his eyes swimming with tears, cried out, “My dear



Lemuel, you do not recollect your grandfather! Embrace me! You have got the very features of my son! My dearest child, you was not thinking of me! My son affectionately loved me, and his son will love me also. My old age will not be so miserable as I expected, and the evening of my life will not pass without some joy. I shall depart in peace!—But I forget that by detaining you, I may expose you to your mother's anger. Go, my dear child, for I do not wish that my joy should cost you tears. Go, love your mother, and obey her commands, even though you should not come and see me. Come and see me if you can; but do not disobey or tell a story on any account.”

He then turned to Mary, and



said, though he then did not wish her to stay, for fear of offending her parents, yet he hoped she would come again. He then dismissed them, giving them a hearty blessing, and the two children walked away hand in hand.

Mary got home safe before her parents, who were not long after her, when she told them every thing that had passed, which furnished an agreeable conversation for the evening.

The next day, they all went to see the good old man, and afterwards frequently repeated their visits. Lemuel also came to see his grandfather, who was rejoiced to hear him speak, and to receive his affectionate caresses. Lemuel, on his side, was equally rejoiced, excepting when he did not



meet with Mary; for then he went home sorrowful and sad.

The nearer Lemuel arrived to manhood, the more his affections for Mary increased; and accordingly, when he was old enough to marry, he would think of no other woman, though she was not rich. The old man lived to see them married and happy, and then finally closed his eyes in peace.









