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Old Home Day in Plunket



Ward Macauley

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Old Home Day in Plunket

A Humorous Entertainment in One Scene

BY

WARD MACAULEY

Author of "GRADUATION DAY AT WOOD HILL
SCHOOL," "BACK TO THE COUNTRY
STORE," etc.



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Old Home Day in Plunket

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Wm. C. E.

Old Home Day in Plunket

CAST OF CHARACTERS

- HIRAM GREENE *The president of the village*
 MR. JOSHUA JONES *A successful city merchant*
 MR. U. B. RICH *A promoter*
 REUBEN OLDCHUCK *An oldest inhabitant*
 BILLY *A village cut-up*
 JACK BLACK *An artful dodger*
 SI HOPP *Leader of the Plunket Invincible Quartet*
 IRA BOBBERKIN *Director of the band*
 BERTIE BLOW *An unfortunate musician*
 JOE JONES } *Known as the Great Partling Team*
 EMMA JONES }
 MR. FRANK LEE SLOWE *Who prefers Plunket*
 MR. IRA SWATT *A famous ball player*
 MISS ANGELINA APPLEBY *Town poet, a genius (she admits it herself)*
 MISS EVERETT WRIGHT *A reformer*
 MISS JENNIE SMITH *Unmarried, but not by choice*
 MISS FRANCES SPEAKER *True to her name*
 MR. WILLIE BOYD } *A bride and groom, with emphasis on*
 MRS. WILLIE BOYD } *the bride*
 MRS. LIZZIE SCHLINTZMAN *Who got off the train by mistake*

A YOUNG LADY.

A Village Band. A Village Quartet. Villagers.

TIME IN REPRESENTATION :—One hour and a quarter.

GENERAL DIRECTIONS, COSTUMES, ETC.

The village of Plunket decides to hold an Old Home Day, and numerous former residents come from various places to join in the festivities. The platform and the front of the auditorium should represent the village gaily decorated for the occasion. A large flag and bunting should be draped over a rudely painted sign "Welcum Home to Plunket," at the rear of the platform. Barrels, boxes, crates, etc., should be properly distributed upon the stage.

"Old Home Day in Plunket" can be made a very effective entertainment if due care is given to details. As there are many characters and nearly all on the scene from start to finish, considerable clever by-play can be indulged in by others than the characters speaking at the time. It is well to have a good-sized platform, and in many cases it may prove advisable to use part of the front of the auditorium as well. The Plunketers should be uniformly dressed in pronounced country style. Hiram Greene should be in overalls, with visible suspenders and he should wear a large straw hat. He should be chewing constantly. His general conduct should be rural simplicity and innocence. The visitors should dress appropriately to their various parts; Mrs. Schlintzman to look very poor and very old-fashioned; Jennie Smith in bright and gaudy but not flashy attire; U. B. Rich in shabby genteel style. Mr. Slowe should wear trousers too short for him, also sleeves failing to entirely conceal his wrists. A queer hat will add to the part. Joshua Jones should wear a Prince Albert coat and a silk hat. Miss Appleby should not appear too prosperous. Reuben Oldchuck is an old man "practically ninety" and should be very bent and speak in a high rasping tone. He should carry a cane. Ira Swatt should wear a loud suit and startling necktie. The bride and groom should be attired in their Sunday best.

It is important that each person make a very careful study of the part assigned and carry out the idea of the character in all the by-play as well as when actually speaking. Local hits and allusions to persons known to the audience should be worked in as much as possible. A few of these are indicated in the text, but others can easily be added.

The parade must be carefully rehearsed and each character drilled to work in as many antics as possible. The band should consist of four pieces, using dummy instruments. In each, if possible, place a "kazoo" or similar contrivance and hum the tune desired. If musicians who can burlesque well are obtainable, genuine instruments may be used. The band and quartet should drill with great care.

The Partling Team do a vaudeville stunt, the man representing an English dude and the woman a pert Irish girl. The dude should wear a frock coat, silk hat and monocle. Any other suitable sketch may be substituted for the one given. The publishers will make suggestions for this upon request.

The girl who is auctioned off from among the audience should not be named in the program, so that her selection may be an entire surprise.

The "Bob, the Artful Dodger" game can easily be made a big feature. Get a blackboard frame and remove the board. Cover with cloth or stiff paper, cutting a hole in the centre slightly larger than a man's head. The balls should be made of soft rags loosely tied, so that there can be no possible chance of injury.

The piece calls for farcical treatment, and with a few exceptions the parts do not make great demands on those assigned to them.

PROPERTIES

Careful attention should be given the properties and a list made of articles required. There is nothing necessary that should prove at all difficult to obtain, but every effort should be made to have everything called for by the text ready at the proper time.

For HIRAM GREENE, paper, small coin, old note-book.

For IRA BOBBERKIN, a bunch of keys, small branch of tree, long-haired wig, carrot, old purse.

For the band, instruments, and boxes to stand on.

For SI HOPP, a small bottle.

For U. B. RICH, map, rolled up.

For BILLY, large bottle, with wide mouth, box, ice-cream freezer, spoon.

For JONES, wig and high hat.

For JACK BLACK, blackboard frame covered with canvas or stiff paper, with hole for head, rag balls.

For JENNIE SMITH, large corn plaster.

For FRANK LEE SLOWE, bag of pop-corn.

Old Home Day in Plunket

(Enter the band, playing "Auld Lang Syne." The characters [all except MRS. SCHLINTZMAN and BILLY] and villagers follow in suitable order for parade and march around the auditorium, singing.)

ALL: Shall dear old Plunket be forgot
 By those who've gone away?
 No! Plunket's home and it is not
 Forgot on Old Home Day.

CHORUS: For my old home and your old home,
 Though we've been far away,
 To us are dear, and so we're here —
 For Plunket's Old Home Day.

(Repeat stanza and chorus.)

(After the parade the characters and villagers dispose themselves suitably on the platform and the exercises open with the village president's address.)

HON. HIRAM GREENE. Fellow Plunketers, both ladies and men, I am praoud to stand before you on this most suspicious occasion, and praoud to hold the position that I do, granted me by your votes by a great big majority at the last 'lection. To you who've left dear old Plunket to seek fortunes in wider but not more pleasant fields, I extend greeting. I can only say to you, you don't know what you've missed. We've had an awful good time back here in Plunket, hain't we, friends? *(Approving nods and shouts, "Yes," "You bet," etc.)* Mebbe things ain't been as excitin' here as in New York *(or name place where entertainment is given)*, but we've had some pretty warm 'lections occasionally, except last year when I had an overwhelmin' major'ty. We've had some great ball games, an' we come

near having a bad burglary. At the last minit the burglars decided to try Sand Springs, six miles east o' here, if any of you don't remember. And now we've got one ottymobeel in the village. It was owned just outside the village, but by special 'nactment of our honorable leg'slature, we 'stended the village limits. Now Plunket has growed too. When Josh Jones left here, we only had—how many 'habitants did we have, Josh?

MR. JOSHUA JONES. Hundred and seventy-nine.

GREENE (*proudly*). And that was only twenty years ago, and now we've got a hundred an' ninety-one. I have got it figgered out to home by algebra, geometry, trig'-nometry, astronomy and plain cypherin' that at the present rate of growth, Plunket 'll be ready to become a city in 2506, and we must all remember that we're building for posterity, tho' bein' a bachelor, I ain't got any m'self. Well, I got to quit. Space—er—er, I mean time—I was thinking of my ed'torials in the "Clarion," I guess—forbids me sayin' all the things that fill my heart. But I'm awful glad there's such a representative gathering here to-day, and when I heard you sing about dear old Plunket, my heart just swelled with pride like I did the day I et dried apples and then drank ice-water. But I wish to say, and with emphatic emphasis, that Plunket is at your service, and they've got some pretty fair ice-cream down to the butcher-shop, vanilly and some pink stuff, and you're all to have a big dish at my expense. (*Great applause.*)

JONES. Mr. President.

GREENE. Mr. Jones.

JONES. I sincerely and verily trust that there will be nothing of a theatrical nature in the program to-day.

GREENE (*hastily examining his paper*). Well, I ain't quite sure.

JONES (*severely*). If there is I advise you to cut it out—ahem, er, I should say eliminate it. I've managed to get along pretty fair in a big town and I never set foot in a theayter. That's how I got ahead, that and bein' honest and payin' strict attention to business.

REUBEN OLDCHUCK. Be ye doin' pretty well daown to the city, Joshua?

JONES (*proudly*). I own my business and it ain't the smallest in (*name near-by town*) and I own my house, and I got a bank account that runs into five figures.

OLDCHUCK. Well, you've done purty well for a boy. Mebbe when you get to the prime of life, you'll be rich. Let's see, how old be you, Josh?

JONES. I have passed my fifty-fifth birthday, Mr. Oldchuck.

OLDCHUCK. Well, you're a mere boy yet—lots o' chance to climb up the ladder. O' course no one s' young as you gets real respons'ble positions. Now, I'm practically ninety years old.

GREENE (*interrupting*). Practically ninety, Reuben?

OLDCHUCK. Well, I'm some past eighty ef I remember correct. Speakin' about bank 'counts, mine runs up to the four figgers, \$10.02, and gettin' thirty cents a year int'rest, too. I ain't sure whether I'll leave my money fer a lib'rary or a orphan asylum.

GREENE. Well, we've got to be gettin' along with the program. We will now be flavored by a mus'cal interplation by the greatest mus'cal organ'zation on the face of this here earth. Why, I paid one dollar oncet fer a gallery seat to a show that wasn't so good as the one they put up —

JONES (*interrupting*). I hope you didn't go to the theayter, Mr. Greene.

GREENE (*confusedly*). Well, not 'zactly the theayter, Mr. Jones. It was a concert.

JONES (*severely*). It was in the theayter. A man of your char'cter and attainments and position ought to keep away from such places.

GREENE. I only went onct. Well, now, we'll hear this here quartet.

(*The Plunket Invincible Quartet proceed to the front of the platform.*)

OLDCHUCK (*pointing to SI HOPP*). His great grandfather and me sung in the church choir oncet together.

HOPP. Give us the key, Iry.

IRA BOBBERKIN (*in the band*). Here's a hull bunch of 'em. That one there opens ma's med'cine chest, the big one unlocks my gar'age—where I keep my horse. That there little one, I can't 'zactly disremember.

HOPP. Cut it short, Iry. I want a key to sing by.

IRA. Oh, you want us to play.

HOPP. That's it.

IRA. Let 'er go, boys.

(Band plays "Yankee Doodle.")

HOPP. Stop, stop, stop. I don't want a tune. I just want a note. Can't you play the scale?

IRA. Certainly, Hopperty, hopperty, hop. Play the scale, boys. Give 'em about a pound and a half of the scale. *(Band plays "do-re-me-fa.")* There ye be.

HOPP. That's not the hull scale; we sing higher up than that.

IRA. Higher up?

HOPP. Sure, a lot higher. Twice that high.

IRA. Come on up, boys. *(Members of the band climb onto boxes, barrels, etc.)* Are you ready? Fire! *(Band plays "do-re-me-fa," again. IRA, triumphantly.)* Be that high up enough for you?

HOPP. You're a woodenhead, Iry Bobberkin. Can't you play the hull scale?

IRA *(excitedly)*. Who's—woodenhead? Me? I'll pound all the songs out of your head, Hoppy.

HOPP. Can't do it. *(HOPP and IRA stand facing each other in a menacing attitude.)* You're scairt.

IRA. You hit me and you see what'll happen.

HOPP. Don't you rile me up, Iry.

IRA. I ain't a-rilin' anybody. I'm the most peacablest man in Plunket.

HOPP. Not peacabler than I be.

IRA. You didn't mean I was a woodenhead, did you, Hoppy?

HOPP. I meant you were level-headed, Iry. *(They shake hands.)* Now, let's have our song, Iry; strike up about the middle of the scale. *(The band plays "fa." The quartet starts to sing "In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree" which HOPP ends in a terrific squeak.)* My voice ain't what it used to be. I guess I'll have to oil it.

(Takes out small bottle.)

IRA. What you got there?

HOPP. That's machine oil. Now, boys, let's try something else.

(Sing one line of another old song.)

THE OTHER THREE. We forget the words.

HOPP. And I forget the notes.

IRA. You sing the words and let them sing the notes.

HOPP. No, we'll try something else, something familiar. Let's sing "Where Is My Wandering Boy To-night."

IRA. No, that's out of date, since this here county went dry.

HOPP. We'll sing it so loud they can hear us clean over in the next county.

REST OF THE QUARTET. No, let's don't sing that.

HOPP. All right, then, we'll sing a love song. D'you know what love is, Iry?

IRA. I was quarantined for it for six weeks onct.

HOPP. Got over it, eh?

IRA. Yep, I was cured.

HOPP. How was that?

IRA. I got married.

HOPP. Let us all—I mean us four—join in singing that pathetic little ballad entitled, "He Loved Her But She Moved Away."

(Quartet should sing discordantly.)

“ He loved her
 He loved her
 He loved her
 But she moved away.”

HOPP. Ain't that fine, folks? Now let's have our love song. Love, you know, is a tremenjous emotion. I felt it m'self but I ain't a-sayin' for who—no, and I ain't going to till Mr. Sparsley gives up thinking his daughter's the only critter on earth.

(The quartet should here sing "A Little Bunch of Daisies" or some other old-time popular ballad in somewhat grotesque fashion. Before the chorus, HOPP should say "Softly" whereat they should sing louder than ever. At the conclusion, the quartet bows profusely.)

GREENE. Better'n Nordica or the black Patti and nigh as good as a phonygraft, say I.

MR. U. B. RICH. They ought to go into grand opera. I'll form a company and we'll sell shares at ten dollars each.

Let's get the Plunket Invincible Grand Opera Company started.

GREENE. Friends, that there individual that just made a remark in the form of a motion is our old friend U. B. Rich. Now, I ain't going to allow a hull lot of speechifyin', but it seems to me that one of the importantest functions o' a gathering like old home day is to hear from such as have left our midst and come back in 'fluence or poverty as the case may be. Just about a stickful from you, U. B.

RICH. A stickful?

GREENE (*apologetically*). There I go again with my ed'torial speechifying. I mean a couple of minutes.

RICH (*bowing profusely and speaking in a wheedling sort of tone*). Dear friends, ah, my very dear friends, I might say my very dearest friends, I am delighted to be with you again—simply delighted. I only hope the pleasure is mutual, yes, indeed, mutual. I am glad to see you all looking so well and happy. Yes, indeed, I just love to see folks looking happy.

JONES (*abruptly*). What line o' business are you in, Mr. Rich?

RICH (*tactfully*). My dear sir, in fact all of you, my very dear friends, my business in life is this, to give folks an opportunity to become rich and happy. I spend a great deal of time going from place to place and all for what?

OLDCHUCK. That's what I say, young man, for what? Ye'd ought to stayed right to home.

RICH. Yes, no doubt you are right, looking at the matter from a selfish standpoint. Now, I am always thinking of the other man. I am afraid sometimes I am too unselfish. Just now I am working on a little scheme that is going to make millionaires of some people. I have an option on a few thousand shares of stock in a gold mine in Arizona. (*Unfolds map.*) This is our mine. (*Points.*) There are paying mines on both sides of us, and we know that we are in the vein of ore. We have dug five hundred feet and when we dig six hundred feet, we are certain, we feel sure that we will strike ore, good, rich ore, as pure as the air in Plunket. Then, my dear friends, these shares will be worth one thousand dollars each. And now I can let you have them for only five dollars a piece.

OLDCHUCK. I'll buy ten shares, U. B., and pay you when I sell them for a thousand.

RICH. My dear Mr. Oldchuck, I am afraid—I am quite assured, in fact, that you do not grasp the point. A little later I will explain to you the complete details.

GREENE. How many shares have you bought yourself, U. B.?

RICH (*hesitatingly*). Ahem, well, that is to say, I must confess that I have not purchased any. That is not my purpose. I am not seeking to get rich myself. No, indeed. That would be selfish and I detest selfishness. I remember when I left home, father said to me, "My boy, get rich. Get rich honestly, but, my boy, get rich." But my object is to help others and as I walk hither and thither among you, I hope to have an opportunity to put many of you on the road to fortune. Dear friends, dearest friends, I thank you for your attention.

JONES. Mr. President, may I say a word?

GREENE. Certainly, Mr. Jones.

JONES (*pompously*). I want to warn each and all and every one against the evils of speculatin'. Be honest and pay strict attention to business! Now, I know all about these things. I went down to the race-track once, and I lost seventy-five cents, and that has been a solemn warning to me; I have sowed no more wild oats since that time. Having been through the mill, I hope you'll remember all I tell you.

GREENE. I don't believe in bettin' except on my bein' elected village president, and that's a sure thing. (*Enter BILLY, R.*) Now, you behave yourself, you little tantrum.

BILLY. Ha, ha, ha, I got to get some fun out of this. (*Produces bottle from pocket. Removes hand from over top.*) Ha, ha, ha, look out.

GREENE. What's the matter?

BILLY. Bees! Look out, everybody. (*A wild scramble ensues.*) There's one. (*Points to JONES' coat-tail.*) There's another. (*Points to MISS JENNIE SMITH'S apron.*)

(*Everybody should run around brushing the air and BILLY should keep running from one to another saying, "There he is," and "Watch out." After the excitement is all over, BILLY walks behind JONES and dexterously removes his wig, disclosing a bald head underneath. JONES in embarrassment runs to the back of platform, wig in hand.*)

GREENE (*sternly*). Stop your nonsense, boy; this here

ain't no 'casion for such unseemly levity. Ain't your parents 'ere?

BILLY. Naw, they're home cannin' tomatoes. They sent me to the grocery, but it was shut up so I came over here.

GREENE. 'Course it's shut up. This here's a legal holiday—in Plunket.

BILLY. Get up a minute, Mr. Greene.

GREENE. What on airth for? (*Rises. BILLY deftly places JONES' plug hat, which was dropped in the excitement, on the seat. GREENE sits on hat, then rises abruptly.*) Mumblypeg, but that makes me mad. If I wasn't a church-member and president of Plunket I'd say "Shoot it." (*Makes a dash for BILLY, who deftly places a box in the way.*) If I ever lay hands on you —

BILLY. But you won't, and I'm going now and tell pa, and he won't never vote for you again.

GREENE (*pretending a kindly tone*). Ah, I was only joking, Billy. I wouldn't hurt a dear little chap like you. Here, Billy, here's ten cents. Buy some candy to-morrow, and be sure and come back in time for the ice-cream.

BILLY. All right, I'll be back and I'll bring pa and ma and the twins and grandma and the cat—she just loves ice-cream.

(*BILLY emits a shrill whistle and exits, R.*)

OLDCHUCK. When I were a boy, I never hearn of ice-cream. If I had I wouldn't have the voice left that I've got.

GREENE. Can you sing, Reuben?

OLDCHUCK. I can sing better'n half these primmy-donnys that get a thousand dollars a night. I don't sing bass, nor bar'tone nor tenor, nor nothing. I jest sing the air, same's I have for ninety year or more.

JONES. I thought you was only pract'cally ninety.

OLDCHUCK (*with assumed dignity*). I date my singing c'reer back to m' first birthday. I think I sang some b'fore that, but I can't 'zactly rec'lect.

RICH. Possibly Mr. Oldchuck might be persuaded to favor us with a selection.

OLDCHUCK. I'll sing whether I'm axed to or not, young man. (*To IRA.*) Give me a note, young man.

(Band plays a note, and OLDCHUCK sings in a very high tremulous voice a verse of "The Old Oaken Bucket." Great applause at the conclusion.)

GREENE. I am now about to interduce to you a brand new game, as far as I know. It's just out in N' York. It's called "Bob, the Artful Dodger." *(Arranges the piece of canvas and JACK BLACK puts his head through the aperture.)* Now, then, ladies and gentlemen, three throws for five cents. If you hit 'em you get a cigar or a glass o' lemonade.

(RICH, MISS SMITH, MR. FRANK LEE SLOWE, OLDCHUCK are among the first to throw. All the others watch closely, waiting a turn.)

OLDCHUCK. I'm on the free list, ain't I?

GREENE. There's no free list, Reuben, but I'll buy three throws for you.

OLDCHUCK. Thanks, Hiram, I've got no change less'n a ten dollar bill. *(Sotto voce.)* And I ain't got that.

(OLDCHUCK succeeds in throwing about half way. MISS SMITH then takes a try.)

MISS SMITH. Do I throw underhand or overhand?

GREENE. We don't want any underhand work in this here prop'sition.

(MISS SMITH tries to throw overhand and hurls one of the balls out into the audience. Another hits OLDCHUCK, at which he moans audibly. MISS SMITH allows her third throw to go by default. RICH and SLOWE should each throw with measurable accuracy, but JACK deftly dodges each time.)

JONES. I don't like this here performance at all. It savors too much of the theatrical, and gets a man away from strict attention to business, but just to add to the fund, I'll buy three throws. *(JONES should throw accurately but JACK dodges well.)* Give me three more. I'll hit him yet.

(Again he fails.)

JACK *(tantalizing)*. You can't hit me, boss.

JONES. Give me a dollar's worth of throws. You watch me. (*Throws with great rapidity. Enter BILLY, R., behind the Artful Dodger's screen.*) I'll hit that grimacing monkey if I stay here till midnight. Give me another dollar's worth.

(*In the midst of the excitement, BILLY sneaks behind JACK.*)

JACK (*screaming*). Ouch, ouch, ouch, murder, help!

(*Runs around holding arm as though in great pain.*)

ALL. What's the matter, Jack?

JACK. Somebody stuck a pin into me. Ouch, ouch!

GREENE. It's that Billy again. Always interfering with gentlemen having a little innocent recreation.

JONES. I want to say, Mr. President, that I don't approve of these goings on at all, and this throwing at that poor defenseless man is absolutely barbarious. I hope it may never occur again.

GREENE. As I was formarily remarkin', this here occasion wouldn't be a fit and proper Old Home Day 'nless we heard from a bunch of the folks. Now I see my old friend Frank Lee Slowe over there in the crowd. Come on up, Frank, and let's take a look at you.

(*SLOWE approaches the front of platform slowly, bowing profusely and saluting in all directions with his hat.*)

SLOWE (*timidly*). Howdy, everybody. Gee, it do seem good to get back to Plunket. I never said a word agin Plunket to man, woman or child or other domesticated or wild animal. You remember a year ago, I left here and went down to the city. I'd like to be back right to home in Plunket. It fits me better, biffed if it don't. I guess I ain't fast enough for a big town. Wrong kind o' inner working to make me step up lively like them city folks do.

JONES (*interestedly*). What town did you go to, Mr. Slowe?

SLOWE. I went to (*name near-by small town*). I don't seem to fit in somehow. I can't make my way 'round their busy streets. You try to cross the street and first thing happens one of these here autymobiles goes "honk, honk" right back of you and scares y' out o' your wits and you jump to get out o' the way and most likely step right in

front of a street car or a rig or one of these new-fangled motor bicycles that makes a noise like forty circus calliopes. And you can't stand still—sure's you do some cop comes along and says, "Hey there, move 'long," and if you don't move, he'll give you a start. Gee, it's too lively for me. I like Plunket. Hello, Sal.

(Waves hand at a face evidently recognized in the audience.)

GREENE *(looking in same direction)*. I'll 'point Sally Whopple a committee o' one to endeavor to induce Frank to stay to home in Plunket.

SLOWE. Say, biff me, but it do seem good to see you folks. Gee, in town I'd walk around during my noon hour and I'd scarcely ever see any one I'd ever see before—except the cop and delivery boys.

JONES. I trust you obtained remunerative employment, Mr. Slowe.

SLOWE. I don't quite catch what you're alluding at, Mr. Jones, but I got a fine position in Finkheimer's wholesale store. I 'tended to all the goods that came in and all the goods that went out.

GREENE. An important job, I should say.

SLOWE. I should say so; they couldn't get along 'ithout me, 'cause a firm can't do no business if no goods came in or went out and I looked after all that. They gave me five dollars a week for doing it, and it's pretty close work to get 'long on that. I paid four dollars a week for board and a dollar a week for laundry and car fare and what I had left, I spent on my good clothes. *(Indicates his costume.)* Guess that was why I didn't make a hit with the girls—I didn't have no money to take them to the show or out to swell dinners or anything. One week I took a girl to the theayter, only had quarter seats, too, but I had to walk to work all week and came near havin' to send to Plunket for money. Gee, Plunket's the place. I did run short one week when I was off three days because I stepped on a nail and they docked my wages. I wrote home for money and they sent it to me—sent it to me in two cent stamps. I offered 'em to my landlady to pay my board bill, but she couldn't take 'em, said she didn't write that many letters in her whole life. I tried to sell 'em, but land, everybody seemed to think that I'd got some counterfeit stamps or something. But one day the boss sent me out to buy some

stamps and I worked in mine. They were kind o' mussed up from carrying 'em a week, but he took 'em. I only wish I could get a job here and get married and settle down right here in Plunket, but I expect I'll have to go back to the city.

(Great applause.)

GREENE. Frank ought to marry a Plunket gal, eh, Sally?

MISS SMITH. She ain't partic'ler.

RICH. That's fortunate for Frank.

GREENE. We are now going to be flavored by a selection by our band. (*Band makes preparations, imitating tuning up, and IRA puts on a long-haired wig.*) What are you putting on that there wig for, Iry Bobberkin?

IRA (*adjusting it carefully*). All us real musicians has long hair, Hiram.

GREENE. Now everybody get his or her spectacles on straight so's to give good attention.

(IRA, *the leader, ostentatiously climbs onto a barrel, waving a small branch of a tree which he uses for a baton.*)

IRA. Let 'er flicker, boys.

(*Waves branch excitedly from one to another. The band should start in on "Marching Through Georgia" or some equally familiar piece. IRA valiantly waves his baton. Band stops suddenly.*)

BERTIE BLOW. Ouch, ouch, ouch, help!

ALL. Why, what's the matter?

BLOW. Oh, oh, oh, he stuck that stick in my eye. Oh!

(GREENE *examines the injured eye very carefully. Everybody else in suspense.*)

GREENE. A turble bad case.

IRA. I didn't go for to do nothin' to him.

GREENE. It sure's a turble bad case. Anybody got any med'cine round here?

(*A searching of pockets ensues, but without avail.*)

MISS SMITH. I don't suppose this is any good.

(*Passes small package.*)

GREENE. What is it?

MISS SMITH. It's a corn plaster.

GREENE. It can't do no harm, Jennie. We'll try it.

(BLOW faces audience and moans piteously while a large corn plaster is fitted on his eye.)

IRA *(with concern)*. Can you play your part, Bertie?

BLOW *(heroically)*. Sure and I'll play it as I never done before.

(The band tunes up again and starts the same tune. IRA signals for a pause.)

IRA. You left a note out, Bertie Blow.

BLOW. It's on the wrong side of my music. I can't see it.

(Band starts again. This time the entire verse should be gone through with, winding up in a whirlwind of enthusiasm. IRA should wave his baton excitedly and finally hurl a carrot, taken from his pocket, at one of the players who displeases him. Great applause, IRA bowing profusely.)

GREENE. Ain't our band the fricasseed chicken, though? I wish I could afford to have them playing for me all the time.

(Enter BILLY, R., bearing ice-cream freezer, which he sets on a box and starts eating ice-cream with tablespoon.)

ALL. Stop him, stop him. He's got our ice-cream.

(BILLY runs off the platform, bearing the ice-cream freezer and trying to eat at the same time. Several should pursue him, attempting to rescue the freezer.)

GREENE *(calmly)*. Don't be upset, folks—though Billy will be, if he eats all that ice-cream. There's more where that came from, and all at my expense. *(Applause.)*

OLDCHUCK. That boy's a tantrum. I never did the like when I was a boy.

RICH. Did you ever have any children, Mr. Oldchuck?

OLDCHUCK *(meditatively)*. Well, not exactly what you would say m'self, no, but my son, he had a lot of 'em.

GREENE. It's all in the family, anyway.

OLDCHUCK. Well, young folks ain't what they used to be—nor old folks neither. Here 'm I pract'cally ninety, the oldest man in Plunket! Why, I can remember old man Whiskover. Ef he was livin' to-day he'd be a hundred and twenty. That's what I call livin' to a ripe old age, I do.

RICH. But he didn't live that long, Mr. Oldchuck.

OLDCHUCK. He would 'ave, ef he hadn't just happened to die, young man. How old are you, anyway?

RICH. I'm about forty.

OLDCHUCK. I suppose you're in the high school then, or will be pretty soon?

RICH. No, I'm through school.

OLDCHUCK. Hadn't oughtn't to do it. Ef I'd quit school, where'd I 'ave got my learning?

GREENE. At this point in our ceremoneals, we are to have the priv'lege—I say it advis'dly—of listenin' to Frances Speaker, said by some of these here higher critics to be the best yellocutionist in the world. She used to live in Plunket, and I git her by very special request to come back and help us celebrate.

MISS FRANCES SPEAKER. Believe me, my friends, that this occasion is one of the most agreeable that has thus far marked my career on this mundane sphere.

(All look up in perplexity.)

SLOWE (*aside to GREENE*). I've been in the city a year and I can't translate that.

FRANCES. I am thoroughly convinced that the happy environment of one's adolescence is never equaled by the riper experiences of one's maturer years, and thus I felt a certain measure of obligation in responding in the affirmative to your honored president's (*GREENE looks pleased*) very kindly epistle of invitation. Man—and that term includes the gentler sex as well—is a gregarious animal and craves association with others of his kind. I shall be glad now to acquiesce in your honored president's (*GREENE looks around proudly*) expressed desire that I shall interpret for you something in the realm of classic literature.

GREENE. Quite so. (*FRANCES should here render some well-selected recitation, with encore if necessary.*) I'm now goin' to introduce to you a few of the folks that used to

live in Plunket and 've come back home special for this Old Home Day. That there feller in the store clothes that looks kind o' up to date or ahead of it is Iry Swatt, the great baseball player. (*IRA SWATT bows all around.*) That there lady that looks something like a man is Miss Everett Wright. She's a reformer, and she's got a hull lot of ideas under that derby o' hern, some of 'em pretty good. She's sellin' books on some big subject. I don't know 'xactly what 'tis.

MISS EVERETT WRIGHT (*coming forward and interrupting, with brisk, businesslike air*). Municipal Administration Problems, a work invaluable to every voter and citizen, bound in real morocco, and sold for this month only at the low price of——

GREENE (*pulling her back and pushing her down in seat, while she continues to talk*). There, that will be about all to-day, Miss Wright. You're all right, but you're in wrong. Now, let's see. (*Looks around.*) That short, thick-set, slender chap is Jerry Lammer, who got as far away as Sacktown. Jerry got away to side-step the girls; but he's married and got a big fam'ly, so he might just 's well have stayed to home.

(*At this point MISS WRIGHT and SWATT have a heated personal encounter, at the conclusion of which MISS WRIGHT succeeds in making SWATT retreat.*)

JONES. Separate them, separate them! This is a very important occasion, and fisticuffs are most improper.

MISS WRIGHT. He disagreed with my views, but now I think he will confess his error.

SWATT. Yep, I was in dead wrong.

GREENE. You shouldn't strike a poor, defenseless baseball player, Miss Wright.

MISS WRIGHT. I merely asked him to buy my book, and he said, "It ain't no good."

GREENE. I ain't much on shows—never was, never expect to be. I can't afford it, and I'm too busy, but two of our Plunket folks has made a big hit in the line o' shows. They used to be Joe Jones and Emma Smith, but land, now they call theirselves the great Partling Team—called 'em-selves that ever since they ran away and got hitched up. They are going to give us absolutely free, gratuitously and

without charge, one of their most specialist stunts—just like they pay a dollar to see in N' York.

JONES. Is it something in the theatrical way?

GREENE. Well now, really—that is, well, I suppose it is.

JONES. I guess I'll have to go. (*Starts, and stops.*) Still, on second thought, perhaps I had better stay so that I may know whether it ought to be stopped or not.

(*JONES should show the liveliest possible appreciation of the performance, and should laugh heartily. The Partling Team should enter from opposite sides of the platform.*)

JOE JONES. Deah me, ah nevah was in such a fix. Ah can't find my way. Deah me, and not a soul in sight. Weally, it's most embarrassing.

EMMA JONES. Begorra and phwat's the matter wid axing me, Mr. Dudley Dude?

JOE (*surveying her in astonishment*). My good creatuh, we have never been introduced. My name is Lord Alger-non Amblethurst, not that plebeian one you just applied to me. I wondah, could you tell me wheah I wish to go.

EMMA. Begorra, I know the town from ind to ind.

JOE (*joyfully*). Good! Gweat luck! Bah Jove, you can tell me wheah I want to go.

EMMA. Well, where?

JOE. That's it, my good creatuh.

EMMA. Phwat's it?

JOE. I thought you might be able to diwect me wheah to go.

EMMA. Where do you want to go?

JOE. I don't know, my good creatuh. Like a blooming hidiot, I lost the paper. I thought maybe you could tell me.

EMMA. Ef Oi had no more sense as you have, I know where I'd go.

JOE. Where?

EMMA. I'd go put me head in the lake.

JOE. Gwacious, I don't see what good that would do. Weally, I had a shampoo, only yesterday. I leave all that to my valet.

EMMA. Your phwatee?

JOE. My valet—me 'ired-man, you know. A worthless

rascal! 'E allowed me to go without me morning bawth yesterday.

EMMA. Yisteddy wasn't Saturday.

JOE. Ah, no, but I say I take only two bawths on Saturday the same as any hother day. Bah Jove, you're a clever girl.

EMMA (*indignantly*). Don't yez come any of your flat-ironing over me. I haven't any money to spare.

JOE. My good creatuh, I nevah mentioned money. My valet takes care of all that. (EMMA and JOE sing a duet, each singing a verse in the dialect of the character and both joining in the chorus. Choose some popular song of the moment, with extra verse for encore. JOE, suddenly.) Ah, bah Jove, I remember where I want to go. I've got a lettah to mail. My valet forgot it.

(*Holds out letter, which has been in his hand all the time.*)

EMMA. Here's fifty cents, sor.

JOE (*amazed*). Gwacious, my good creatuh, what for?

EMMA (*pointing to monocle*). To buy another spectacle wid, so you can see out of both eyes.

JOE (*alarmed*). Gwacious, the creatuh must be crazy.

(*Exit hurriedly, R.*)

EMMA. That man needs a guardeen. Oi'll kape me eye on 'im.

(*Follows R. Both bow at R. exit.*)

JONES (*suddenly stopping laughing*). A most reprehensible performance. I hope there is nothing else of the sort on the program.

IRA (*excitedly*). My family's Irish, and I tell you I don't like to have them insulted that there way.

GREENE. Never mind, folks. It's pretty good fer a free show—better'n I could do anyway.

JONES. It's very, very reprehensible.

GREENE. Well, we got to have something excitin' on Old Home Day, when all the folks have come back to see how Plunket's gettin' along. We are now goin' to listen to the readin' of the Old Home Day poem by the town poet, Miss Angelina Appleby. She's writ some first-class stuff.

O' course not as good as Browning or John Greenfield Whittier or Ella Wheeler Wilcox, but still pretty good.

(MISS ANGELINA APPLEBY bows sadly.)

MISS APPLEBY (*speaking slowly, with long pauses between sentences*). Dear friends, when I have passed away, I know that my efforts will be appreciated. Then the critics will know that I was one inspired of the Muse and my little verses will be bound in gold and white and sold for Christmas presents. I will now read the poem I have composed especially for this occasion. (*Recites tragically.*)

How dearly I love Plunket,
The place of my birth.
I love its lanes and meadows.
It's the best place on earth.

(*Great applause.*)

GREENE. That's going to be printed in the next issue of the "Clarion," so you can frame it and hang it in the parlor. Now, Angelina, you've been given an anchor.

MISS APPLEBY (*bowing profusely*). You don't know what your appreciation means to me. I will now recite a pathetic little thing. I thought of it while peeling potatoes yesterday. I hope you will excuse me if I lose control of myself. (*Very pathetic tone.*)

The little boy sat on the door-step
Waiting for father or mother.
They'd gone. They'd left him alone.
Just he and his little brother!

(*All look sad. MISS APPLEBY hides her face in her hands and retires, L. Applause and remarks, "Ain't that sad?"*)

GREENE. Bless my soul, ef there ain't Jennie Smith, that ain't said a word; and she can talk more to the square minute than any one you ever see. Come on up front, Jennie.

MISS SMITH (*coming forward*). Well, you see, it's been seven long years since I left Plunket, but I guess I'm back for good. I went down to Boston and got a job in

one of their department stores. I heard tell that beaus were as thick as grasshoppers in Boston, and all a girl working in a store had to do was to take her pick. But I didn't see any, and I'm not so awful partic'lar either. I never was finicky about anything. I would have been happy with any good man, but I waited seven long years and never even got invited out to dinner, to say nothin' about a man poppin' the question. I guess I ain't Boston kind, so here I'm back in Plunket, and I guess I'll stay. Come up and see me, boys.

(Shouts of " We will " and applause.)

GREENE. Friends, marriage is a honor'ble estate instituted in the period of man's innocency and reco'nized by every church and government in creation—leastways all I ever read about, and I'm now in the sixth volume of Upmann's Universal History, and I ought to know. So when I see two folks gettin' married, I says to the girl, you're lucky. Being a bachelor I don't know what to say to the feller. A couple of ex-Plunketers got married a week or so ago and they're here on their honeymoon. Escort the bride and groom to the front.

(The band gives an imitation of a wedding march as HOPP escorts MR. and MRS. WILLIE BOYD to the front of platform.)

MRS. BOYD. This is my husband. Isn't he a nice boy, though? They say marriage is a lottery. Well, if 'tis, I won a first prize. You're glad you're married, aren't you, Willie? (BOYD *nods a little doubtfully.*) We are just as happy as we can be. It's just like the story-books say it is, and I'm real sorry for the girls who haven't got a nice husband.

JONES. Who did the proposing, you or him?

MRS. BOYD. Why, he did, of course. You're absurd! Do you think I would be so unmaidenly? You did propose, didn't you, Willie? (BOYD *nods obediently.*) He made a lovely little speech, and I asked for time to consider it.

BOYD. Yep. You made me wait a couple of minutes.

MRS. BOYD. Why, Willie, you proposed at seven and I didn't consent until just as you were leaving.

BOYD. I know, but by that time we had all our wedding

trip arranged and everything. Still you know best, my dear, I'm sure.

MRS. BOYD. Of course I do, my dear. I gave the matter very careful consideration, and I decided that it would be best to accept. We are going to live in New York, and Willie is going to have an office in Wall Street and be a broker.

RICH. He looks broke.

MRS. BOYD (*tearfully*). Some one is very rude to my dear boy, but we don't care, because we're all the world to each other and don't care what any one else says.

BOYD. Except pa. I hope he won't say he's going to stop my allowance. Married life's fine.

OLDCHUCK (*interrupting*). I can't exactly remember whether I was married three or four times.

MRS. BOYD (*triumphantly*). And you've lived through it all. I think woman—poor, weak, delicate, fragile woman needs a man's strong protecting arm.

BOYD. I always believed a woman should obey her husband.

MRS. BOYD. Yes, I tell Willie what he is to want me to do and then I do it.

BOYD. I advise all of you boys to get married.

OLDCHUCK. I'm thinkin' some on it.

(BOYD turns back to audience revealing sign "Just Married." Great commotion at R., as HOPP and IRA bring forward MRS. LIZZIE SCHLINTZMAN, struggling violently.)

GREENE (*calmly*). My good woman, whatever is the matter?

MRS. S. (*angrily*). I don't know anything about Plunket. I don't want to know anything about Plunket, but I want to visit my nephew and his eleven little ones which live in Squawket, and I want to get there quick, because I'm expected for dinner and Susan Jane has got a New England biled dinner all ready and a punkin-pie and it'll get cold and they'll be so disappointed, and they'll think I'm killed, and it'll be in the newspapers, and they'll be looking for me in all the hospitals and everywhere, and here am I tormented about something I don't know anything about. What do I care about Plunket! I never heard tell of it before 'til the

conductor set me onto the platform at the depot. I know I told him Squawket. I guess I know. I'll sue the railroad company. A person ought to be paid money for being made to get off at Plunket, especial as I said Squawket just as plain as anything.

GREENE. Are you sure you said Squawket?

MRS. S. I guess I know what I said. I never had such a time in all my life. It's disgraceful; it's uncivilized, when a poor forlorn old lady can't be allowed to go to Squawket without being made to go to Plunket.

(Breaks down and is led to seat by MISS SMITH.)

GREENE. We're now goin' to auction off some of the girls for the priv'lege of 'scorting them fer ice-cream—all free and at my expense. The proceeds is to go to Plunket Old Home Day funds. First, I'm going to auction off Emma Jones. Come here, Emma. *(EMMA goes to front of platform.)* How much am I offered?

HOPP. A peck of potatoes.

IRA. A dozen oranges.

SWATT. A first-class baseball bat.

RICH. I'll give a half share in Peanut and Metropolitan R. R.

GREENE. I ain't sure which is bidding highest.

BOYD. I'll bid eleven cents in real money.

MRS. BOYD. You come back here, Willie.

(BOYD retires obediently.)

GREENE. How much am I offered, how much for this splendid performer's company to the ice-cream?

SWATT. I'll give a ball, too.

MRS. BOYD. If you do, give me a bid. I love to dance.

SWATT. I meant a baseball.

MRS. BOYD. Oh, I wouldn't attend that kind.

GREENE. How much, going, going, gone to Mr. Swatt, for a ball and bat. *(SWATT takes EMMA by the arm and stands at R. during conclusion of auction.)* I'm now going to auction off Jennie. *(MISS SMITH comes forward.)* How much am I offered? How much am I offered for this beautiful maiden?

JONES. I'll give you a due-bill for thirty-nine cents, good at my special sales.

BLOW. I'll give a bushel of turnips.

GREENE. I'll give a bushel and a half m'self.

JOE. I'll give a pass good at Woods' Theatre in New York.

GREENE. I'll give a seat at the Grand Opery.

JONES (*reprovingly*). Mr. Greene.

GREENE. I meant to a lecture on perventing Cruelty to Animals.

SLOWE. I'll give seventeen cents.

GREENE. I'll give nineteen cents m'self.

HOPP (*aside to IRA*). Let's have some fun. He wants her. Let's bid up.

IRA. I'll give four dollars.

GREENE. I'll give four dollars and one cent.

HOPP. I'll give five dollars.

GREENE. I'll give five dollars and one cent.

IRA. I'll give ten dollars.

GREENE. Going, going, gone to Mr. Bobberkin for ten dollars.

IRA (*in alarm*). But I haven't got ten dollars.

GREENE. Shouldn't bid then. It's ten dollars or thirty days. I declare martial law and sentence you.

IRA (*pleadingly*). But I ain't got ten dollars.

GREENE. How much have you got?

IRA (*examining very ancient purse*). Eleven cents.

GREENE. Well, I fine you eleven cents. Give it here and I buy the lady's company for five dollars and one cent. We will now bid on Mrs. Willie Boyd.

HOPP. I'll bid a tooth-pick.

IRA. I'll bid a burnt fried cake.

GREENE. You're disqualified, sir.

RICH. I've got a share in a company that failed that I'll bid.

SLOWE. I'll give a bag of pop-corn not to have to take her.

GREENE. Give us the bag, sir. (SLOWE *produces a bag of pop-corn and hands to GREENE.*) How much am I offered? (*No answer.*) Sold to —

MRS. BOYD. My gracious! Why don't you bid, Willie?

BOYD. I'll bid four cents.

GREENE. Going—going—gone to Mr. Boyd for four cents,

HOPP (*pointing to girl in audience*). There's the girl I want to bid on, right over there.

GREENE. Bring her up. (*The young lady at first refuses to come, but finally accompanies IRA and RICH who go to get her.*) How much am I offered?

HOPP. I'll give forty-nine cents.

IRA. I'll give my baton. (*Holds up baton.*)

GREENE (*sternly*). You're disqualified, sir.

RICH. I'll give a share in N. G. Consolidated.

JONES. I disapprove of the entire performance, but I want to contribute something, so I'll bid a dollar.

GREENE. Cash or merchandise?

JONES. I'll give a dollar in cash or \$3.49 in merchandise.

GREENE. How much, how much?

HOPP. I'll give a dollar an' a half.

JONES. I'll give two dollars.

HOPP. I'll give two and a quarter, if I have to mortgage the old farm.

JONES. I'll give four dollars.

GREENE. How much am I offered—going, going, gone to Mr. Jones for \$4.00.

(*Enter BILLY excitedly, R.*)

BILLY. The butcher says the ice-cream 'll melt if you don't come down pretty soon. Come on.

(*Runs out, R.*)

GREENE. Well, I guess we had better be going. Don't forget a big free b'loon 'scension and par'chute drop this afternoon at five fifteen and fireworks to-night at eight. I got a dozen four ball roman candles, two gross penny sky-rockets and a pinwheel. It's all free and gratuitous.

(*Exeunt all R., those in couples leading the way, except GREENE and MISS SMITH, who linger behind. Band strikes up a comic selection and brings up the rear of the procession.*)

MISS SMITH. Come on, Hiram. Ain't you going to have any ice-cream?

GREENE (*shyly*). I don't know's I care for any ice-cream.

MISS SMITH. Oh, go on, Hi, there ain't nothing as nice as ice-cream.

(Enter BILLY R. as though about to call GREENE. He stops abruptly when he sees the others, laughs, claps his hand over mouth, and runs out R. Reënters during next speech, with IRA and HOPP. They all stand smiling at GREENE and MISS SMITH, who are unconscious of them. BILLY runs out, R.)

GREENE. There's one thing nicer.

MISS SMITH. What's that, Hiram?

GREENE (*softly*). Love, Jennie.

MISS SMITH. Oh, laws, I don't know anything about that.

(Enter, unobserved by GREENE and MISS SMITH, BILLY, followed by all the others, by twos and threes. They group themselves at back of stage, motioning to each other to keep quiet, laughing, pointing to MISS SMITH and GREENE, etc.)

GREENE. Can't I learn you, Jennie?

MISS SMITH (*blushingly*). Oh, land, I don't believe you know.

GREENE (*boldly*). You learn me and I'll learn you.

MISS SMITH (*shyly*). We might try, Hiram.

GREENE. Hurray! (*Puts his arm around her.*)

ALL (*coming forward*). Hurray! Congratulations! Glad ye got her, Hiram! Good for you, Jennie! etc. etc.

MISS SMITH (*hiding face on GREENE'S shoulder*). Oh, Hiram!

GREENE (*laughing*). Never mind, Jennie. I don't care if you don't. What's the odds? They'd all know it in a few hours, anyway. But to think, Jennie, you went away off to the city for a man with me waiting here for you all the time.

MISS SMITH. You never told me, Hiram.

GREENE. Guess I didn't, Jennie. I'm awful forgetful. Guess I'll write it down in my mem'randum book. (*Produces greatly mutilated paper-covered note-book.*) What day will we make it, Jennie?

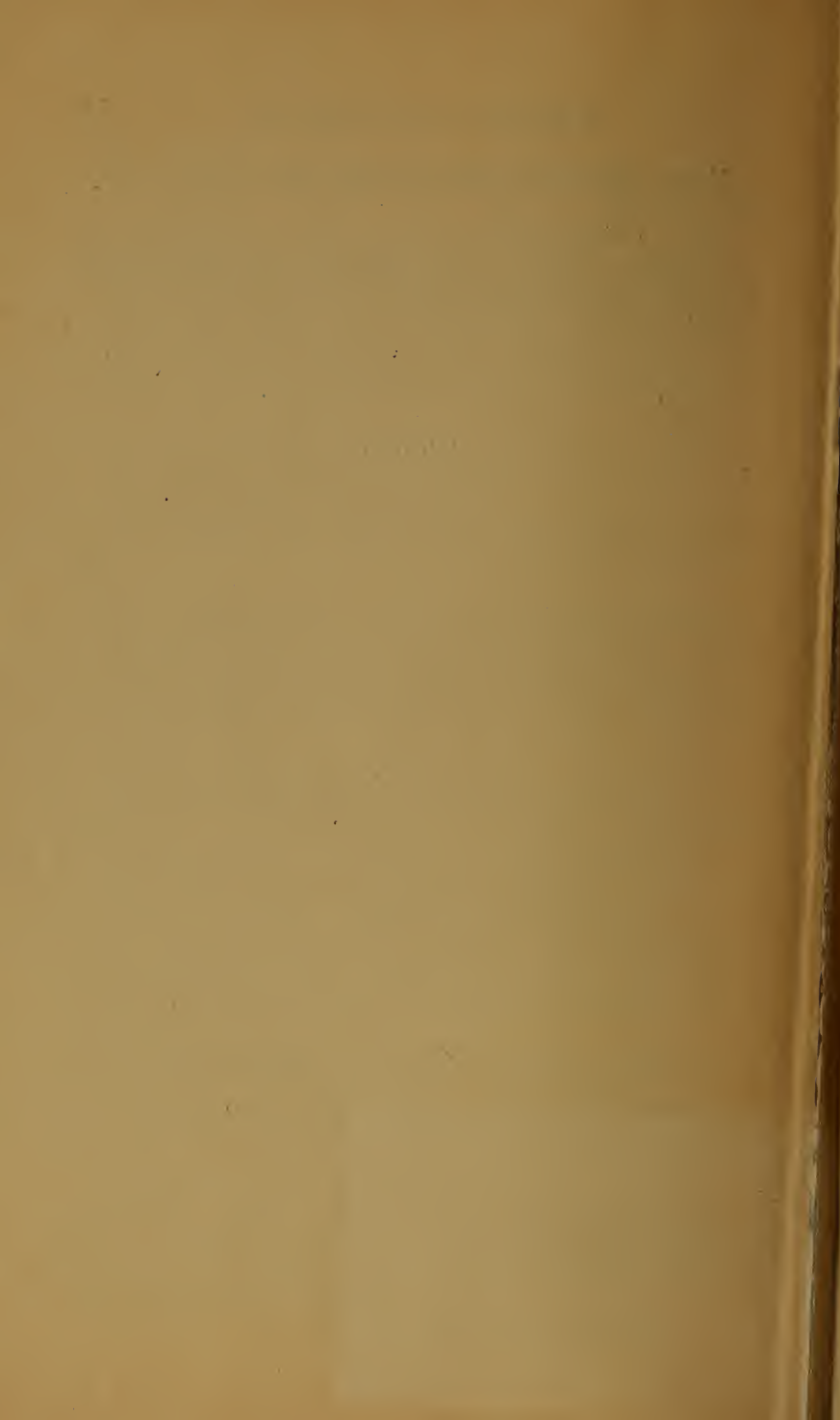
MISS SMITH. Put down any day you like, Hiram.

HOPP. Hurray for Mr. and Mrs. Hiram Greene. Now then, hip, hip.

ALL. Hurray, hurray.

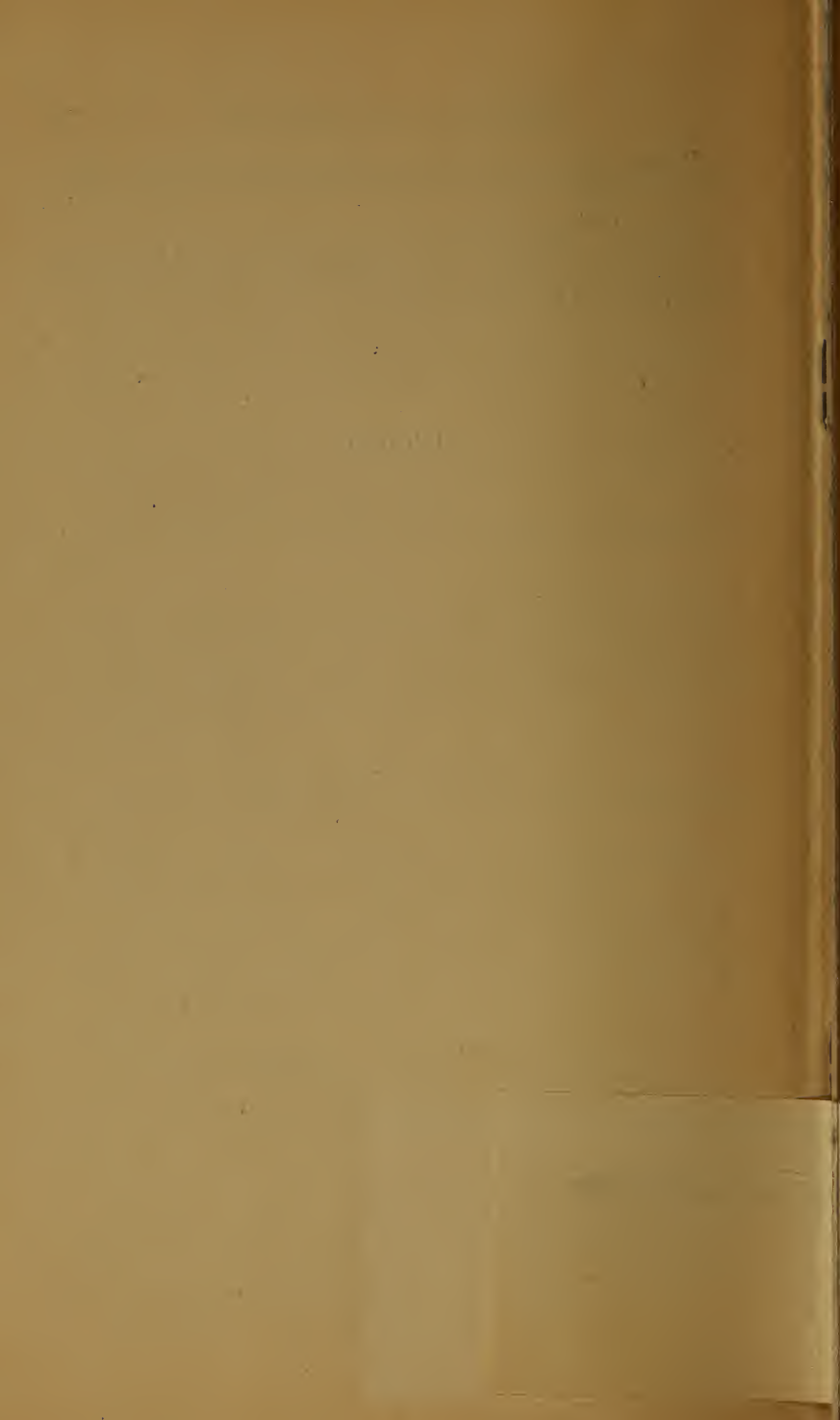
GREENE. Thank you, friends. At any rate there will be two of us who will always have good cause to remember "Old Home Day at Plunket."

CURTAIN



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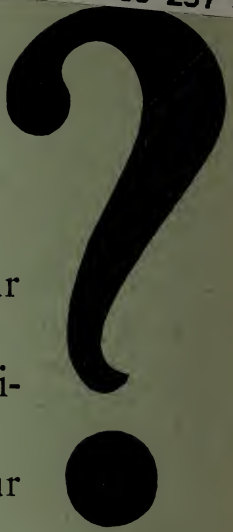
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