

(editor's note: This paper was transcribed from a handwritten cursive copy with various difficulties. For a perfect rendition, the reader might wish to consult the original, itself a copy, in the volume entitled *Literary Club Papers I*, 1885 – 1886 Oct 3, '85 to May 29, '86) The original is very badly faded.

Budget – Hinkle editor
April 24, 1886

The Ages Of Woman

Mr. Editor:–

As I do not wish to be believed, I am going to tell the exact truth, the following poem is not original, yet to the best of my knowledge has never been in print. It came into my hands as the literary executor of a theosophist now working out one stage of a higher existence as disembodied matter, but no matter. This poem is one of his earthly crimes and he has to atone for it, and work it out. If this poem can deter others from doing likewise, then its presentation here will not have been in vain.

The Ages of Woman

“All the world's a stage, and man has seven ages,
So Shakespeare writes, king of poetic sages.
But he forgets to tell you in his plans,
That woman plays her part as well as man.
First, how her heart in infant rapture swells,
As the gay coral shakes its silver bells
The School-girl next, with pert and saucy look,
And eye defiant throws aside her book
Eager to tell you all she's taught to utter;
Lisps as she grasps, the allocated bread and butter
My governess is making such a fuss
About the death of her old tabby puss
Hah, hah, hah, what a pother.
One old cat's in mourning for another
Then riper miss, whom nature more disclosing
Now finds some traits of art, are interposing
Ogles, coquettes, and flirts with all she can,
And with blue, laughing eyes behind her fan
First plays her part with that great actor man.

Then comes that sober character the wife
With all the dear, distracting cares of life
Till spousey finds, though anxious to immure her
A patent coffin only, can secure her.
Then the dowager with frills and flounces
And snuff and spectacles, the age denounces.
And thus she moralizes,
'When I was young, my heart was always tender
And would to every spouse I had, surrender
Their wishes to refuse, I never durst.
And my fourth died, as happy as my first.'
But a truce to such splenetic rash designs,
And let us mingle candor with our lines;
Woman, the source of every fond employ
Softens affliction, enlivens joy
What is your boast, male rulers of the land
How vain, how worthless, all you can command
Vain your ambition, vain your pomp and power,
Unless kind woman share your trusting hour
Unless, amid the glare of pageant art
She adds her smile and triumphs in your heart.

Simeon M. Johnson