

## A BEAVERMENT IN THE FAMILY

“See here, Dorothy, it’s old Jenny Jones.”

“What’s that, May? Old Jenny Jones - where? I must get these glasses cleaned, can’t see a thing. The obstetrician was closed on Wednesday.”

“No, Jenny Jones, you remember her - old Mrs Jones at the ballroom-dancing. There’s been a beaverment - she’s dead.”

“Never was very good at dancing, May, was I? It was that Jenny Jones’ fault - her and her fancy ways.”

“Well, she’s dead now, Dorothy.”

“Serve her right, then says I. What’d she die of, then?”

“Let me see - I just read it in the paper here, let me find it again - under the Obituaries, you know. I’d like an Obituary when I die - so nice and respectable.”

“My poor George had a Pituitary once. Poor man - quite cut him off in his prime.”

“Now, then: *‘Relatives gathered at the Parish Church last Friday to celebrate the life of Jennifer Jones. It is understood that many of them had obtained compassionate leave from their employment to attend the funeral, and that the commercial life of the town was halted temporarily.’* Isn’t that wonderful, all those people?”

“Ah now, my poor George. He took leave of his passions once or twice. Started on our wedding-night, it did, and he never stopped until he was seventy-eight. Would you credit it? Such a skinny man too.”

“*‘A eulogy was given by Mrs Jones’ grand-son who is understood to be the main beneficiary from Mrs Jones’ Last Will and Testament, which will be read on Monday next.’*”

“That was the place - I told you, May - where I went last month: Urology. The doctors were very off-hand about all my troubles, though. Might as well not have bothered. What’s an old woman like me to them, is what they think. They were more interested in the young housewives who were waiting to see them. Oh, don’t give me your urology, it ain’t worth a tinker’s curse! And while I’m about it, getting back to my poor George - oh, I was Willing too, I was his first and last willing vestiment, so I was, he never looked at another woman all his life, so he told me. Not like that

friend of his, Benny...Benny Fiskally, was that the name you mentioned. Benny, he chased after every skirt except his poor wife's."

*"After the Eulogy and the remainder of the Service, the body of the Deceased was taken to the Cemetery and interred."*

"But for all that, May, I was deceived once. Oh yes, was I deceived! George and me, we'd only been married a year, and then I find him deceiving of me in body as well as mind. The body of the deceived, that was me. And do you know who it was, May? - it was that Jenny Jones, little Miss Innocent, as she was then, scheming little hussy. I caught her in bed with my poor George, you know. It was lucky George was always a bit low in the Seminary Department, otherwise there might have been a love-child for them to deal with. But I forgave him, May, I forgave him. It's what a woman's got to do, eh? He saw sense and came back to me."

*"A period of mourning is to be observed by Mrs Jones' surviving daughter, Mrs. Smith? Well, isn't that lovely, Dorothy, a period of mourning? Like you did for poor George, isn't it?"*

"Oh yes, May, there was always moaning. George liked me to moan. He was a good man in his way, although he had a roving eye. He looked after me,

he did, right up until that Pituitary came and took him away. I was quite laid low in my beaverment.”

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