

THE
OLD AGE PENSION ACT :

A DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

FRED, a Woold Varm Leabourer

and THA SQUIRE'S BAILLIE

(IN THE WILTSHIRE DIALECT)



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A Dialogue in the Wiltshire Dialect.

BETWEEN--

FRED, a woold varm leabourer
and THA SQUIRE'S BAILLIE

BAILLIE

Marnen Fred. How be you ta day?
Yer pains I hopes be gone away;
Ya dwoant look now, not auver sprack,
Tho better, than a vew days back.
I zee you'm blig'd ta use yer crutches,
Zoo a tha screws still gets zim touches.
Ah! tis a nasty cruel complaint,
An nuff ta wurrit out a zaint;
I had a touch on't years agoo,
An't nearly drove I mad, that's true.
Var zix weeks I wur on me bade,
An offen wish'd that I wur dade.
I da trully hope you'll zoon be well,
Var you have had a longish spell.
Nearly dree months I think it is
You bin laid up we this rehumatiz.

FRED

Thank ee Baillie; I be better, true,

An Doctor zaays I shall pull droo;
If thase March month I can weather,
I'll zoon be better aeltagether.
Zoo as tha month be nearly out
I thought I'd try ta get about.
An tha day bein vine and warm
Vresh hayer wunt do I no yarm.
Tho vast ya zee I dere not waig
Acos tha pain in my liff laig.
As you zaays, tis a bad complaint,
Tha pains on't nearly meakes ee vaint;
Var night an day da tarment ee,
Not a nower vrom em you be vree.
At night, if anything, thame wuss,
An nuff ta meak a passen cuss;
Var jist as you'm got nice an warm,
An a leetle sleep, zart gins ta charm,
Tha racken pain gean starts ta shoot
Ael droo yer vrame frim yead ta voot,
An tha sharp tugs gooes droo yer bounes
Like zaain hood ar cracken stounes,
Which zometimes meaks ee roar an shout,
An var tha missus hollie out;
An mebbly you wunt get no sleep
Till daylight jist begins ta peep.
Then, waried out, ready ta zink,
Praps you med then, get jist a wink.
Bit thank God zoon I hopes ta be
Wonce mwore vrom its vile clutches vree.

BAILLIE

We ael me heart, I wish ee Fred
Rid a thick ar complaint za dred;

I'm plazed ta zee ee bout wonce mwoar,
An hopes till be a lastin cure.

* * * * *

Well now, I jist wants ta menshun,
If 'tis ael right, about yer Pinshun?
Cos Squire axed I tother day
If wife an you ad got tha pay;
Ya zee, he aelways av bin willin
That I should pay ache o'ee a shillin
Zunce ya cooden do no wirk var he;
If zoo, a thinks a shood be vree;
He've got za many on he's han;
An mist think a thay, ya unnerstan;
An rates an taxes now a day,
Be double what a used ta pay,
An vrom tha varms which he da let
Tha rents beant haaf a used ta get;
An as he beant a millionaire,
A what a got a mist teak keer,
An look out var he's vamilee,
Which is a girt expense ta he.
We vower zons an a daater
Ta eddicate an look atter;
An everything's now got za dear
Teaks ael tha money he can speer,
Ya mussen think as he's unkind,
Nar to yer interest be blind;
In's heart a hood tha pay continny;
Zoo dwoant ee think he's actin skinny.
Bit mwore expense a caant avoord,
That's zartin true, upon me word.
You still shill av yer cottage vree,
As long as you med live, zaays he.

FRED

O eece, thank god, I'm plazed ta zaay,
Me wife an I got Pinshun pay.
An main gratevul bwoath oance be
Vrom Parish relief ta be vree;
To tha good Squire I thankvul be
Var ael as he've a done var we.
Alzoo, ta he's good wife an daater
Who, in our zickness did look atter,
An which I an me poor woold wife
Ull bless em var ael droo our life,
Var have whatever vaats we may
Ingratitude beant one a thay.

* * * * *

Tis zixty year on Squire's lan
I av wirk'd as bwoy an man,
An till turned var zeventy
I toil'd var nabiddy bit he;
On he's estate I've liv'd me life,
An zoo av she, me dear woold wife.

When twelve months back thay mead a laa
As pooer voke shood a Pinshun draa,
Everybidy zed we wur ta bleam
If we diden goo an meak a claim.
We'd zure ta av it thout ado,
Cos bouath on ess wur zeventy two.
Zoo, ta Pinshun Hofficer in town
We went ta av out neams put down;
An diden we veel purty raa

When in ower kease there wur a flaa;
Var when a did begin ta look,
A vound ower neams in Parish book.
An bouath on ess wur vull a grief,
Cos we had got Parish relief.
This, a coose, I needen menshun,
Bar'd ess vrim avin thic ar Pinshun.
Me wife done nothin else bit zob,
Var to ess twur a baddish job,
Tha girttest trial we'd ever had;
Tha thought on't raaly mead ess bad.
Cos ower hard vates we did deplore,
Var twur a disapointment zore.
An atter ael me years a toil
As bwoy an man, apon tha zoil;
An who had never brought disgrace
Upon me parents nar me place.
Ta think, var a leetle Parish pay
We shood be turned empty away.
Var zixty years I'd had good health,
An ony wonce laid on tha shelf.
Twur when zim varm chaps play'd a trick,
An I vill off a barley rick.
An then tha lyen rascals zed,
It wur zim drink got in me yead,
An wur nabiddys vaat at all,
Wen I met we thic nasty vall.
Bit thay'd chang'd tha ladder, that wur true,
Var a rotten one as broke in two.
Well, on me back I had ta lay
Var dree months we tha Parish pay.
Tho var thirty years I'd pay'd me club
As wur held at tha Village pub;
Putten by var a rainy day,
Zoo's ta keep clear tha Parish pay.

Bit many years agoo ya zee
A baddish job happened ta we.
Ael on tha zuddent come a craish
An ower club went ael ta smaish,
Droo loosen mworn a thousan poun
In a consarn, voke zed wur zoun-
Ruin'd wur Clubs, an many a craater,
When ta pieces went tha 'Liberator,'
Thic smaish ull never be vargot,
Var thousans droo it went ta pot.
Coose, ower Club wur ruined, quite,
An never a member got a mite.
Zoo, when took bad, I had ta goo
On Parish. What else cood I doo?
Zooner than that, had I bin yeable,
Empty shid gone me shelf an teable.

Ah! twur a terryable grief
Var we ta av Parish relief.
Ache Zadderday abliged we wur
Ta zeck tha Parish Officer,
Who liv'd nearly two mile away,
Var ower leetle Parish pay.
No vaat we he we had ta vind,
Var as a rule a wur main kind,
An oft a wurd a zympathy
He gied ess in ower poverty.
It beant your vaat, he'd offen zay,
You'm blig'd ta av tha Parish pay.
Thase Pinshun Act is now ael wrong;
An mist be put ta rights vore long;
Thic pauper claas be swept away,
An everybidy av tha pay.
Thank god, thic act is now mended,
An tha girt injustice ended.

How wife an I did bless tha day
Thic obstickle wur swept away;
An ael a Pinshun now av got,
Whether thay've had relief ar not.
No parliament did ever pass
A nobler Act var wirken class.

BAILLIE

Well, zartinly I holds we't Fred,
Var tis right anuff what you've zed,
That ael pooer voke shood av tha pay,
As looked out var a rainy day.
An coose twis a baddish job var you,
When your Club vail'd. What cood ee do?
It wur no vaat a yourn I own,
An zympathy thay med a shown.
Bit coose, thay voun ther wur thic vlaa,
An boun ta carry out tha laa.
Twur a girt scandal, thout a dout,
Ta lave dezarvin paupers out.
Howzemever, things be riteed now,
An tis a goodish thing, I vow,
That voke as be dree score an ten
Should av a Pinshun to their en;
Var many a pooer zawl it will cheer,
As long as God their life da speer.
Aelthough tha Squire da zometimes zay
He's vraid ther's lots ull av tha pay,
Who their own childern shood maintain.
Cos tis their bounden duty plain
Ta help thair parents when past wirk,
An which thay never ought ta shirk.
An he da think thase Pinshun Act

Ull very zoon show tis a vact
That well off childern will discard
Ther parents, who've wirk'd var em hard.
Tell em ta get their Pinshun pay,
Nuthen thay wunt av out a thay.
An if zich duty thay relaxes,
Till be hard on thay as pays taxes.
Anodder thing as he da zaay;
Voke wunt seave var a rainy day.
Till keep em vrom bein provident,
An haaf their yarnins ull be spent
Gadden about, vine clothes, ar drink,
Ta seave a bit thay'll never think.
An if tha volly on't ya menshun,
Thay'll zaay O lar! ther's tha Pinshun,
Which Govermint's ablig'd ta gie,
If we da live till zeventy.
On this aloane thay will depen,
An every varden thay'll zoon spen.

FRED

Well coose, zom childern got no veelin,
An teant no use ta zich appeal'n.
Bit then, tha laa should still compel,
Ael childern as be doin well:
Foose em a weekly lowance gie
To their parents in necessity.
As var mezelf, hooden gie a straa
Var a zon who wur compel'd be laa
Ta help I in me poor distress,
Aelthough a did much wealth possess.
Var if a cooden gie a peart
Out a tha kindness of he's heart,

He'd grudge it, and praps wish ess gone,
When foor'd duty he did think upon.
No! if a wealthy zon a mine,
To help I diden veel incline,
I'd raather pinch then foorce un to;
Ar starve, begar, thats zartin true.
Zich a zon idden worth regardin;
I hooden teak vrim zich a vardin.
Bit in my kease, ya zure can zee,
Noon o me childern caant help we.
Me wooldest zon, as you da know,
Died, nearly leven year agoo.
Varm wirk we he zart went atwist,
Zoo var a Zawljer he did list,
An jined tha Willsheer Regeyment,
Which out to Africker wur zent,
When thic ar dredvul war broke out,
What thic woold Kruger brought about.
Girt ardships thay'd ta unnergo,
An my poor bwoy wur zoon brought low.
We teric faver laid azide,
An in a week tha poor chap died.
An when tha news did come ta zaay
As ower poor bwoy wur passed away,
He's mother had a vaintin vit,
Twur wonder she got auver it,
Var twur a terryable blow,
She aelways doteded on un zo.
As to me tother zon, Urier,
Ya knaa he's wirkin var tha Squire.
An out a vourteen bob a week,
We've never had tha heart ar cheek
To ax un anything ta gie
Out a zich pay, var ta help we.
A hardly can he's zelf zustain,

We wife an childern to maintain,
Bezides a shillin var he's cot,
An vive a year var gierden plot.
An clothes an boots da run away,
We ael he's extry harvust pay.
Then as ta my dree daaters, too,
Thay got as much as thay can do,
Two on em, ya zee, is married,
Tho I wish thay'd longer tarried,
Var goodish plazin bouath ad got,
An main comfertable their lot.
Bit sweetarts thay pick'd up one day,
Who wanteed wives athout delay.
An tho good usbins bouath av got,
Their incomes beant a girtish lot,
An a beaby comin wonce a year,
Nar varden thay haant got ta speer.
Bess, me youngest, she's at zarvice
As cook, long we Missus Jarvis.
A nayshun good maid she is too,
An we a leetle helps ess droo.
A coose, her wages idden much,
Wich we'd be zarry var to touch,
Var tis her duty, we da zaay,
Ta put by var a rainy day.
Zoo zurly, Baillie, you can zee,
Me childern caan't do much var we.
Tho anything ael o'm hood do,
Var ta help their woold parents droo
If thay'd got tha manes ta do it,
Cos thay knaas thay'd never rue it.

* * * * *

Ah! tis a blessin, zartin zure,

Thease Pinshun Act ta ael we pooer.
Goo down ta Pwoast Office an zee
How gratefull ael tha pooer things be,
Zoo happy ael on em da look,
As thay hans in ther Pinshun Book.
As we nod, an smile, an 'Good Day,'
Pwoastmeaster he hans out ther pay.

* * * * *

Well, thank God I av liv'd ta zee,
A Pinshun Act var zich as we,
An I thank ael tha gennelvoke
As var poor wirkin people spoke.
An thank God var tha Government
As mead thic laa in Parleyment;
Oomen an men, at dree score ten
Droo life shood av thic are God sen.

BAILLIE

Well, good day Fred, I hopes as you
Tha reumatiz ull zoon get droo,
An that you an yer good woold wife,
Ull av many years a happy life,
Var to enjoy, I need'n menshun,
Yer well desary'd WOOLD AGE PINSHUN.