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Fear of Death.

The fear of death is natural. Even those who are decrepit with age and infirmities, in most cases, cling to life. Criminals gladly accept imprisonment for life in commutation of the death sentence. They bid a final farewell to loved friends; to look for the last time on the bright and beautiful world; to think of consciousness as utterly suspended in the grave—this, apart from the hopes of the Gospel, we cannot but shrink from.

But there is another fear of death to which many people are painfully subject. We do not now refer to the fear of what may follow death; but to the act of dying, the supposed suffering connected with it.

Dr. Trull Green discussed this subject at a meeting of the Pennsylvania Medical Society. He said: "I attended an excellent man, rector of an Episcopal Church, for disease of the heart. His wife said to me: 'Doctor, my husband has had a dread of death, believing it attended with great physical suffering. Excepting this he has no fear of death.'"

"I replied, 'Madam, I have no doubt that his fear of suffering will not be realized. He will pass into a gentle sleep, and unconsciously into that future life in expectation of which he has lived.' His prediction was verified by the event."

Even death from a false membrane in the larynx, as in croup and diphtheria, is affirmed by Dr. Rushmore, of Brooklyn, to be far less painful than he once supposed it to be. He says:

"When patients have died of laryngeal obstruction alone, the picture has always been the same—gradually increasing restlessness and dyspnea, with paroxysms of spasms added at times and threatening death. Then the spasm is in a few moments relieved, but a very considerable amount of distress continued, and then a rapid development of unconsciousness, the coma continuing for several hours, and the patient dying quietly, the breathing being still obstructed."

The doctor went to tell the friends that the patient will not choke to death, with great struggling and distress, but will die unconscious, and with comparative ease.

There are two other fears that trouble some persons. One is the fear of being eaten by worms; but worms cannot live at a depth of more than a few inches below the surface. As to the other fear, of that of being buried alive; although it is of course possible, and in some cases has occurred, yet Doctor Primo who investigated for years every reported case, found not a particle of truth in a single one of them.

YOUNG FOLKS.

THE MYSTERY IN THE BEST BED ROOM.

"Well, I am surprised," Aunt Hester came down from her upstairs apartment with a face which showed that what she said was strictly true.

"What is it, Hester?" asked grandma. "The looking-glass in the best room is broken. You don't say so!" Grandma's face lengthened itself to keep company with Aunt Hester's.

"Yes, indeed, and no telling how it came so, either," said Hester, "have you been in that room?"

"Not since Sunday, Aunt Hester, just before I went to Sunday school."

"And I went in just before I went to church, and it wasn't done then. Are you sure you haven't been there since, Susy?"

"Yes, Aunt Hester."

"Aunt Hester went to the kitchen and soon came back saying: 'I have been asking Jane Ann and she says she doesn't know anything about it. And everybody knows that the whole clean truth is anything but the whole clean truth.'"

"What was there in these words of her aunt's, that caused poor little Susy to flush up to the very roots of her pretty curly hair, and to bring the tears to her eyes? It could not be because Jane Ann was known to be a truthful girl. Ah me, it was the sad old story of Susy's heart, but its memory on the minds of others."

On one dreadful day, a way last summer Susy had told a lie. It had been done all in a minute, as so many wrong things may be, but the poor child had often wondered with a very sore heart how many days and weeks and months it takes for people to be done thinking of it. For, ever since, when Susy was asked about anything, Aunt Hester would look sharply at grandma half sorrowfully at her, as if doubtful whether she were really telling the truth. And if the matter was very perplexing indeed, Aunt Hester would say:

"If you had never been known to tell an untruth, Susy, of course every one would believe your first word."

"Nothing, though, I had ever looked so much against Susy as this breaking of the looking-glass in the best bedroom."

"How do you swing the glass so you can look into it when you go in there?" asked Aunt Hester.

"Sometimes I take the hair-brush and tip-toe up and push it back," said Susy.

"The break is higher up than she could make with the brush," said grandma, who had been up to look.

"Sometimes I take the long duster that hangs in the corner and push it back with that," said Susy.

"That would do it," said Aunt Hester.

"But I didn't do it, Aunt Hester," repeated Susy with a fresh burst of tears. "I didn't—I didn't. I haven't been there since Sunday morning."

"I believe the child is telling the truth," said grandma. "O dear," she said, putting a very loving arm around Susy, "if only she never had told a lie!"

"That's just it," said Aunt Hester, shaking her head and setting her lips together. "The looking-glass couldn't have broken itself, you know, mother. It couldn't have been broken without hands."

Nobody could dispute this. If tears could wash away a wrong-doing or a remembrance, surely Susy's lie would never be thought of again. But how many of us have sadly found that all the tears in the world cannot do that.

Susy went up to see the dreadful queer-looking round hole. There it was, just above the reflection of her fear-stained little face as she looked in. She had never seen her face look so before. She scarcely ever saw it in that glass except when she went in on Sunday morning. Her face had then looked very different, in its contentment with her Sunday clothes. She had worn a straw hat with a wreath of daisies and a blue ribbon, a white dress with a full waist a little short and three tucks in the skirt. Around the waist was a blue sash tied in a bow behind, which Aunt Hester always made with very short loops and very long ends. This glass in the best bedroom was the only one in which she could see down to the ends of the ash and to the turtin boats which Uncle George had brought her from the city; the first she had ever had, her pride and joy. Now, if she should ever stand up to the glass so as to see them, it would bring her face just where the dreadful hole was. But Susy felt sure she should never look into it again. There seemed no prospect of finding out how it had been broken and no one would ever believe she was telling the truth about it.

When grandpa wished her good-night he said: "I'd rather every glass in the house was broken than that my little girl should do wrong."

That was bad enough, but it fairly broke her heart when grandma came to her bed-side and talked to her about her mother, who was dead and who would be grieved if she could know. Grandma begged, she would confess her fault, promising that every one would forgive her at once. And when she went away at last Susy could feel the tears on her dear face and felt half wild as she turned on her pillow.

"I'd better say I did it," she sobbed to herself. "Then it would be over sometime. But oh, that would be telling a real lie."

She lay thinking about the bitter punishment she was suffering. It seemed too hard for even such a dreadful thing as a lie. But then she remembered hearing some one say that we are not permitted to choose or to measure our punishments—that we must leave that in the hands of our Father who deals with us always in tenderest love. And the thought came, like a message of peace to her poor little heart, that she might please him by bearing patiently this hard punishment. With this reflection, after lying awake what she thought must be nearly all night but was really only about half an hour she went to sleep.

It was a very gloomy week which followed. It was hard to bear the stern look which Aunt Hester put on whenever she came near her, but that was nothing to grandma's sorrowful face and grandpa's never taking her on his lap, or waiting for her to run out to the big gate for a ride in when he came home from anywhere. But one morning Susy's heart gave a leap when she heard that Uncle George was coming that day. He was always very kind to her and she could not help thinking that if she could only see him before anybody else told him about the mystery in the best bedroom

he might believe her. Uncle George always walked across the fields from the railroad station, and without telling anyone Susy went to meet him.

"You'll little one, what's come all along to meet me? But, what's the matter? They are getting out of hearing of the other people by the time Uncle George asked this, and as well as she could between her sobs Susy told him her story.

"They all think I did it, Uncle George, because I told a lie before. But I didn't, Uncle George, I didn't. And don't people ever believe me again all my life? Oh, Uncle George, you'll believe me, won't you?"

"Yes, I will," he said, taking her hand in a firm clasp, which gave Susy great comfort. "I don't think there is any need of looking on as long to an old fellow. We'll see what can be done about it, dear."

Of course he had not been long at home before he heard the story of the broken looking-glass. "Let's take a look at it," he said, and they all went up with him. Susy, too, unable to imagine how Uncle George could help her out of her trouble, but feeling quite sure that if anything could be done he was the one to do it.

There was the queer round hole with the cracks running out from it. "Lock's exactly as if something had hit it or something been thrown at it. I don't say for a moment that anyone could have done it on purpose. Accidents will happen; and if accidents are told of at once of course they'd be forgiven; if only the truth was told."

Susy shrank behind grandma to escape Aunt Hester's glance, as Uncle George tipped the glass as far over as he could in order to look at the back of it.

"Couldn't have been done without hands, you know," continued Aunt Hester.

"I don't know about that," said Uncle George, beginning very deliberately to turn the screws which held up the glass. In half a minute he had taken it down and was carefully examining the thin board which covered its back.

"I think this is one of the things which are done without hands. The looking-glass has broken itself, Susy."

Susy was very much puzzled, almost wondering if Uncle George was not making fun.

"See here," he said, pointing to a thin place in the board. "The unusual dampness of the season has warped this so as to bring a pressure upon the glass which has broken it. It is a thing which rarely happens, I believe, and would not have happened now if the room had not been kept so closely shut."

"Then the darling did not do it," said grandma, taking Susy in her arms.

"I'm glad as I can be, Susy," said Aunt Hester, and Susy knew she really was.

"What can we do to pay you for having made you suffer for what you did not do?"

"Susy was so glad her little self that she thought she was going to laugh, but she cried instead, as she said:

"Oh—if you'll only, only believe I'll always tell the truth."

"Dear little children, try always to keep yourselves on the right side of an ugly sin—the uncommitted side."

A Weighty Matter.
I dreamt the whole thing out as I was sleeping.
May I confide in you?
I spend my days in wailing and in weeping.
For fear my dream come true.
I thought that with no kindly word of warning,
No hint of coming trouble,
Some cause mysterious one awful morning
Made gravitation double.
The branches snapped from all the trees
around me,
A fierce, terrific sound.
I fain would run away. Alas! I found me
Fast fixed upon the ground.
The birds fell down like feathered stones
from heaven;
The sky was all bereft.
Ten houses were before; behind me, seven;
And not a house was left.
It rained, and every little drop down rushing
Cut like a leaden ball.
The air grew denser; pressing, strangling,
crushing.
I tottered to my fall.
And then awoke from out my fearful sleeping.
And now, what shall we do?
I spend my days in wailing and in weeping.
Might not my dream come true?
—[St Nicholas.]

FUNNY LITTLE STORIES.

Bbb has been told how wicked it is to hurt the birds. He has also heard of the "detective society" and its way of dealing with offenders. He could not make up his mind, however, that the birds were quite under this protection. He saw one day Charley throwing stones at the birds in a tree, and stood at the window for a long time perfectly quiet. At length, with the tears in his eyes, he said in a gasping voice: "Charley will have to look out, or God will arrest him for dat bizness."

Little Margie had walked a long distance with her papa. He thought she was too far away from home to know just where she was, and to test her knowledge asked: "Margie, do you know where you are?"

"Yes, papa."

"(Well, where are you?)"

"On the sidewalk."

The small boy's father is a doctor, an allopath. He took his small son out for a walk, and they passed a house upon which was a sign, "Dr. Small boy, Homoeopathic Physician." The small boy looked at it, and walked on about a block in a brown study. Suddenly he brightened up.

"Papa, I know why they call that doctor a homoeopathic physician."

"Why, my son?"

"Because he makes all his medicines at home."

A TRAVELLER'S VIEWS.

The Coal Interests of Vancouver Island and its Neighbours.

It is not only on the eastern side of the Rocky mountains that Canada is growing and trade is being opened up. On both slopes of that mighty range, ranching is now the principal occupation, and this is one that Scotchmen do not seem to take kindly to; but the mountains and all the districts adjoining abound in minerals, of which use is just beginning to be made. At present the most extensive Canadian mining is for coal, of which more than four-fifths comes from Nova Scotia, and most of the rest from Vancouver Island. The Nova Scotian coal-fields have been worked steadily and without rapid increase of the output for a long time. It is in Vancouver Island that there is most fresh enterprise.

The enterprise is mainly due to a Scotchman, Mr. Robert Dunsmuir, reckoned the wealthiest and in some ways the most influential man in British Columbia. Mr. Dunsmuir hails from Hurford, in Ayrshire, where his father and grandfather were coal-masters and where he was born in 1825. At the age of 25 he entered the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, to which Vancouver Island then belonged, and during the next fifteen years he was busily employed in prospecting for coal and bringing his discoveries under notice. To him especially the Vancouver Coal and Land Company—prosperous as regards coal, but not in its land dealings—owes its existence, and after he had assisted in the foundation of that company he started another, practically his own concern—the Wellington Coal Company—which, like the former, has its collieries some eighty miles to the north of Victoria, B. C. There the flourishing town of Nanaimo has grown up, having fine harborage at Departure bay, and being connected with the capital by a line of railway, of which Mr. Dunsmuir is almost sole owner. The yield of the Nanaimo coal fields was 81,000 tons in 1874 and 113,360 tons in 1887, considerably more than half coming from the Wellington colliery. Last year was a bad year, however, as business had been hindered by strikes and explosions, and, besides anticipating a much larger production at Wellington, Mr. Dunsmuir intends next spring to open another and better coal field, which he has just purchased at Comox, 45 miles farther north, where he tells me he will have work for several hundred fresh hands in addition to the 700 or 800 employed on the older property.

In view of the great increase that is thus likely to take place in the mining industry of Vancouver Island, and of the need of fresh immigrants, a few further details may be interesting to some of your readers. Most of the men at present employed by Mr. Dunsmuir have come to him from Philadelphia and other mining districts in the United States, though there is a sprinkling among them of more hard-working miners who have come out direct from Scotland and England, and also of newly-arrived Belgians. From 75 to 30 cents (i. e., from 3s. 13d. to 3s. 9d.) are paid per ton, and the earnings average from 3 to 5 dollars (or, say, from 12s. to 21s.) a day, each man having to load his own boxes or to pay an assistant for doing it. This subordinate work was until lately performed by Chinamen, whose wage was a dollar or a dollar and a quarter (4 or 5 shillings) a day, and no difficulty occurred until it was proposed to employ Chinamen not only as subordinates in the mines but also as drivers, in which case they would be employed and paid by the proprietors direct. To this new arrangement the white miners objected last spring, and after a great deal of friction they got their way, so that none or hardly any, but white men are now employed about the mines; the laborer receiving about 2 1/2 dollars, or 10s., a day, and the others twice as much. The cost of living is, of course, higher in Vancouver Island than in England or Scotland, but this is kept down by means of the general stores provided by the proprietors, at which whatever is required can be bought by the men at little more than wholesale price. With each miner's cottage, however, there is given a large garden, in which vegetables can be grown; and for those who choose to spend part of their leisure in shooting or fishing there are plenty of birds in the fields and plenty of trout in the small lakes and rivers, which are within reach of all. There are practically no game laws and no law of trespass in Vancouver Island. The rent of the cottages set up by the proprietors varies, according to size, between three and six dollars a month. It must be remembered, however, that these comfortable arrangements are partly consequent on the scarcity of good workmen in these districts. If the labor market is overstocked wages cannot but fall. On the other hand, there seems no limit either to the supply of good coal, procurable with very little trouble, or to the market for it. Of the Nanaimo coal—and the Comox coal is said to be better—Dr. George Dawson says: "It is true bituminous coal, of the very best quality. It was tested by the War Department of the United States some years ago, to find out which fuels gave the best results for steam-raising purposes on the western coast; and it was found that to produce a given quantity of the steam it took 1,800 tons of Nanaimo coal, to 2,400 tons of Seattle coal, and 2,600 tons of Oregon or Californian coal, showing that, as far as the Pacific coast is concerned, the coal of the Nanaimo has a marked superiority over all others." Four-fifths of the coal produced in Vancouver Island is exported to San Francisco, the demand from which is increasing every year. Departure bay, moreover, is being made a busy port by the number of ships that come to coal in it; and if the new city of Vancouver, on the opposite side of the Gulf of Georgia, attains anything like the commercial importance predicted for it, Wellington, Comox and the adjacent coal-fields cannot fail to share in its prosperity. —[Glasgow Herald Correspondent.]

An Inconsiderate Sisk Woman.
An old Scotch woman who had put herself to considerable inconvenience and gone a good way to see a sick friend, learned on arriving that the alarming symptoms had subsided. "An' hoo are ye the day, Mrs. Crawford?" she inquired, in breathless anxiety. "On, I'm quite well now, thank ye, Mrs. Groset." "Quite well," exclaimed the breathless visitor—"after me haein' come so far to see ye."