

throughout Russia and from today you will assist me in this new work." He then shook hands with the representatives, greeting cordially even those who have been most insistent upon governmental reforms. This is a great victory for the doctrine of self government and the czar will soon find that he has gained influence rather

than lost it by making the people co-partners in the work of government. The people will endure things for which they are themselves responsible and will patiently await remedies which they themselves can apply. Now if the czar will give them free spirit and a free press he will convert a heretofore sullen constituency into enthusiastic

supporters. The public official who tries to suppress criticism not only intensifies the criticism but denies himself the advantage of suggestions from the opposition. The more centralized the government the more do those in authority need the frank and candid criticism of political adversaries.

## "GOING DOWN THE VALLEY"

An aged man lay dying one evening in a western hotel. In the office on the floor below a number of friends had congregated to await the end. Aside from those friends and the members of the family gathered at the bedside it was not generally known that in that great building a life was going out. In the parlor on the same floor on which the dying man's room was located assembled a little party, all ignorant of the important events going on within a few doors. A sweet faced girl was asked to sing. Soon the men waiting in the office below and the grief-stricken ones gathered at the bedside of the dying father and husband were listening to one of the sweetest voices ever heard singing one of the sweetest songs ever sung. The watchers heard:

We are going down the valley one by one  
With our faces toward the setting of the sun.  
Down the valley where the mournful cypress  
grows,  
Where the stream of death in silence onward  
flows.

Instantly every man in the office below removed his hat, and one of the watchers at the bedside opened the door a bit wider as the sweet singer gave the refrain:

We are going down the valley, going down  
the valley,  
Going toward the setting of the sun  
We are going down the valley, going down  
the valley,  
Going down the valley, one by one.

It was plain to the persons gathered at that bedside that the dying man heard and understood the singer and the song. Plainly he was straining his ears to catch the music and the words; and plainly he succeeded, because a smile lighted up his face upon which the death damp had already gathered as the girl sang:

We are going down the valley one by one;  
Human comrades there will you and I have  
none.  
But a tender hand will guide us lest we fall—  
Christ is going down the valley with us all.

As though anticipating the wish of the dying man, the watchers at the bedside, their voices trembling with emotion, sang again the last verse. As they concluded: "But a tender hand will guide us lest we fall, Christ is going down the valley with us all," the watchers knew that that particular voyage was at an end; and in their heart of hearts they felt that their friend had not been unattended in his pilgrimage.

It has been written that "men fear death as children fear to go in the dark; and as that natural fear in children is increased with tales, so is the other." But children may be trained to abandon their fears of the night which is just as much a part of natural law as the day—even as death is as much a part of divine law as birth. And "men, who are only boys grown tall, for hearts don't change much, after all," ought to outgrow these fears that, properly, have no place in the thoughts of intelligent men.

Of course it is easier to make such suggestions than to act on them; but is it unreasonable to believe that the present day dread of death could be measurably reduced if men were educated by others—and by themselves—to regard it as passing through the very thin shadow separating the living from the dead?

Some will say that the way to cure these fears is pointed out in "the faith of the mothers." We know that men have been greatly strengthened by that faith when "going down the valley," but we know, too, that many men whose opinions did not lie exactly along the lines of the orthodox religion, and other men who had no fixed religious belief, have met death without a tremor. We know, also, that even among men who are firm believers, and among men who have lived eminently correct lives the fear of death—

and not alone the natural reluctance to terminate life—exists in pronounced form. Even the faith that is bred in the bone of the member of the orthodox household has not served in all cases—nor as a rule—to cure men of the fear of the summons from "over there." Because this is so men should teach one another to look upon death not as an unnatural thing, but as mere fulfillment of God's law; for "we are going down the valley one by one."

Death is no more mysterious than birth, and there need be no more of the elements of tragedy in the one than in the other. Every man who dreads not death and meets it calmly sets an example to his living fellows; and the instances—they are many—where men have without fear or trembling closed their eyes for all time are worthy of being recalled occasionally. It would be well if the popular conception of death could be somewhat revised through frequent recitals of instances where deathbed scenes have proved an inspiration to the living witnesses.

Colonel Sol G. Kitchen of Missouri was famous as a brave officer in the Confederate army. A few days before his death he said to his wife: "As soon as the doctor tells you I am dying I want Lu (his daughter) to go to the piano and play 'Jesus, Lover of my Soul.'" When the doctor announced that death was rapidly approaching, the daughter took her seat at the instrument and with tears streaming down her cheeks played that fine old air as it was never played before. The dying man heard the music and recognized the sign. With a smile on his face—and faintly repeating the words: "Safe into the haven guide; O, receive my soul at last"—the fine old soldier passed down the valley.

All the world is familiar with the scenes at the death bed of William McKinley. We remember that twice after it was known that the president was dying he recovered consciousness and on each occasion summoned his wife to the bedside, seeking in spite of his pain to comfort the distressed woman. Evidently realizing that the end was near, in one of these moments of consciousness he murmured, "Good-bye, all, good-bye. It is God's way. His will be done, not ours." And while the world was receding from him and he realized that he was "going down the valley," he chanted the words of that beautiful hymn "Nearer My God to Thee, Nearer to Thee."

The people of Nebraska are familiar with the scenes occurring at the death-bed of John S. Robinson, at one time a member of congress. The facts as hereinafter stated are well authenticated, and it is safe to say that no more inspiring scenes were ever enacted in the very presence of the grim reaper. For, perhaps, twelve hours before his death Mr. Robinson was perfectly conscious of all that was going on about him. The same cheerfulness that during the days of his strong manhood endeared him to his friends characterized his dying moments. When after a consultation of physicians it was announced that there was no longer any hope, that fine philosophy with which he had been wont to cheer up his fellow democrats after a political defeat was brought into play, and he said: "We have lost the battle; but we at least have the consolation of knowing that we made a good fight."

Perhaps an hour before death came the nurse, ascending the stairway just outside the sick chamber, stumbled and in keeping with an old superstition, made an ejaculation.

When the nurse entered the room, Mr. Robinson said: "I see you are superstitious."

"How do you know that?" asked the nurse.

"You stubbed your toe on the stairway and I heard what you said," replied the dying man.

Twenty minutes before this man died, he turned to a friend at the bedside and directing his attention to a cigar stub on the dresser, said: "Give me that cigar. I am going to have another good smoke, anyway." His friend replied: "John, you'd better have a fresh cigar" and from his own pocket he tendered the dying man an Havana which Mr. Robinson proceeded to light and apparently enjoy.

For himself he seemed to have not the slight-

est fear. There was, unquestionably, deep anxiety on his part lest his good wife needlessly suffer; and his whole thought seemed to be to give to his sweetheart and his helpmeet, out of his own poor and all but depleted stock of strength, the courage and the vigor essential in that the most trying moment of her life. Turning to his brother at the bedside, he asked: "Jim, have you got your nerve with you?" The brother, well nigh choking with emotion, replied in the affirmative. "I am glad of it. Hang on to it to the end, we will need it all," said the dying man.

Perhaps five minutes before he passed away, he noticed that all the windows in the room were open wide; and he noticed, also, that his wife wore no wrap. "Put on your jacket, Kate; you'll take cold," admonished the thoughtful man who at that moment stood at the very threshold of eternity.

It is not difficult to discover that this man had some very firm convictions on the great question affecting the future. It must be evident to every one that he was well fortified to meet and solve the secret of nature. Some of those who shared his confidences know that he did not believe that there was an extremely broad chasm between this life and the next. They know that he believed that men who die live again; and that somehow and some way the living who have loved and lost their beloved may enjoy the consolation of that sweet communion by which was smoothed the sorrow of one of whom it was written: "A guardian angel o'er his life presiding, doubling his pleasures and his cares dividing."

And so when he came to bid farewell to the one nearest and dearest to him he turned to his good wife and said: "The end is drawing near, but we must not worry." And then with striking emphasis, he added: "It's all right; and I'll be standing right there, Kate, waiting for you on the other shore with outstretched arms."

Some one has said: "The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes." Perhaps it was merely a coincidence, but it is, however, a fact that at the very moment when the spirit of this brave man took its flight there came a heavy peal of thunder; and as the hands were folded on the breast, Senator William V. Allen, one of the watchers at the bedside, turned to a companion and said: "It is as though the artillery of heaven were firing a salute in welcome to a superbly brave man."

Though we may call the thunder peal a mere coincidence, who will say that it was not eminently fitting that the heavens themselves should blaze forth the death of a man capable of so much love, courage and philosophy?

Will we not do well to remember that "man makes a death which nature never made," and that "it is impossible that anything so natural so necessary and so universal as death, should ever have been designed by Providence as an evil to mankind."

Don't you remember the story of "He and She?" They said she was dead. They left the room glad to get away from its awful stillness. They sought to take him with them. "But he who loved her too well to dread the sweet, the stately, the beautiful dead, he lit his lamp and took the key and turned it—alone again, he and she. He and she; but she would not speak, though he kissed, in the old place, the quiet cheek. He and she; yet she would not smile, though he called her the name she loved erewhile. He and she; still she did not move to any passionate whisper of love."

He wanted to know whether there was a language of death and what was the infinite wonder of it all; he wanted to learn "the very strangest and suddenest thing of all the surprises that dying must bring." With his hot tears raining on the dear, sweet face he pleaded for a word. Did he plead in vain? "Who will believe that he heard her say, with the sweet, soft voice, in the dear old way: 'The utmost wonder is this—I hear, and see you and love you and kiss you, dear; and am your angel who was your bride and know that though dead, I have never died.'"

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