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"God and our Native Land."

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MISCELLANEOUS.

How a man Feels when he's Dead. OR, THE MINISTER'S STORY.

A series of papers entitled, "Extracts from the Portfolio of an Excitable Sober," have just been commenced in *Harper's Magazine*. We copy one of the stories, which, though old—for we think we have read it somewhere before—is exceedingly interesting:

One day when I dined with my grandfather, the Rev. John H. — was of the party. He was a man about 45 years of age, dressed with peculiar neatness, and entirely in black. At first I was very much disappointed with his appearance, for he had no form nor comeliness to recommend him. He was a slightly made man, with jet-black hair, without one good feature in his face, except the eyes, and had a somewhat saturnine complexion. His air had something peculiarly calm and tranquil in it, without any affectation of dignity; but a still, grave ease, which implied more than I perceived at the time. When he smiled, however—and he did so the moment I was presented to him—his face was lighted up with the sweetest expression of benevolence I ever beheld. There were two or three other gentlemen at dinner that day, and the conversation turned upon a multitude of subjects—Mr. H. — holding this part well and easily, on every topic that was discussed. I could see my grandfather's eyes turned frequently to his face, as if remarking something peculiar there; but after dinner the matter came out. "Why, John," he said, "you seem in very good health, and yet, when first you came into the room, I thought you must be ill. I recollect you quite a ruddy young man; and now—"

"You would say I am yellow as a guinea," replied Mr. H. —, with a smile.

"No, but exactly that," answered my grandfather; "but your face has lost all color, and got a sort of leaden look."

"That is owing to the fever I had some four years ago," replied the reverend gentleman, and of which I died, if ever man really died and came to life again, on this side of the grave."

He smiled as he spoke; and every one present expressing anxiety for some explanation of what he meant, he gave an account of the strange events that had occurred to him, which I shall endeavor to render almost in his own words, only remarking that he is still living, and can probably give farther details, if executors think it worth while to ask for them.

"In the winter of 18—," said Mr. H. —, "there was a great deal of typhus fever in Edinburgh. It was a gloomy, sad winter, changing frequently from hard frost to warm, rainy, oppressive weather; and never did my native city better deserve the name of *Auld Reekie*, than during nearly four months of that year. The high winds, to which we are generally subjected in winter, seemed to have ceased altogether; the smoke, instead of rising, beat down upon the city; and notwithstanding its elevated situation, and fine mountain air, the streets and houses were so markedly dark that there was very little difference between the short, dim day, and the long and early night. A sort of oppression fell upon all men's spirits, which was increased by the floating rumors of the awful ravages of disease in the town, brought home to us, every now and then, by the death of an acquaintance, a friend or a relation. Gradually the fever increased in virulence, and extended far and wide till it became almost a pestilence. It confined itself to no class or age. Judges, lawyers, physicians, were smitten, as well as the humbler classes: old and young alike, fell before it. Many good men in the ministry were taken. It assumed the worst form of all, however, in the prisons of the city, and the account of its ravages within their walls was tremendous. As the minister of the — Kirk, I was not absolutely called upon to attend the prisoners; but I heard that two of my brethren had died in consequence of their zealous care of the poor souls within those heavy walls. It was with difficulty that a sufficient number of the clergy could be found to attend to their spiritual wants, and I volunteered to visit the prisons daily, myself. For nearly a fortnight, I continued in the performance of the functions I had undertaken, without suffering in the least, except mentally from witnessing the sufferings of others. But one Saturday night, as I returned home through the very gloomy streets, I felt a lassitude upon me, an utter prostration of strength, which forced me to stop twice, in order to rest, before I reached my own door. I attributed it to excessive fatigue; for I was without the slightest apprehension, and

never at all looked forward to the coming calamity. When I reached home I could not eat—my appetite was gone. But that I attributed also to fatigue, and I went quietly to bed. During the night, however, intense pain in the back and in the forehead succeeded; a burning heat spread all over me; my tongue became parched and dry; my mind wandered slightly; and instead of rising to preach, as I intended, I was obliged to lie still, and send for a physician with the first ray of the morning light. His visit is the last thing I recollect for several days. I remember his ordering all the windows to be opened, notwithstanding the coldness of the day, and causing saucers, filled with some disinfecting fluid, to be placed in different parts of the room, in order to guard my wife and children against the infection. I then, for the first time, discovered that I had caught the fever. I remember little more—for violent delirium set in soon—till suddenly, after a lapse of several days, I regained my consciousness, and with it a conviction that I was dying. My wife was kneeling, weeping, by my bedside; two physicians and a nurse were present; and it was strange after the dull state of perfect insensibility in which I had lain during the last twenty-four hours, how completely all my senses had returned, how keen were all my perceptions, how perfect my powers of thought and reason. In my very healthiest days, I never remember to have had so complete a command of all my mental faculties as at that moment. But I was reduced to infant weakness; and there was a sensation of sinking faintness, not confined to any one part or organ, but spreading over my whole frame which plainly announced to me that the great event was coming. They gave me some brandy in tea-spoonfuls; but it had no other effect than to enable me to utter a few words of affection and consolation to my wife; and then the power of speech departed altogether. The sensation that succeeded I cannot describe. Few have felt it; but I have conversed with one or two who have experienced the same, and I never found one who, either by a figure or by direct language, could convey any notion of it. The utmost I can say is, that it was a feeling of extinction. Fainting is very different. This was dying; and a single moment of perfect unconsciousness succeeded.

"Every one believed me dead. My eyes were closed and weights put upon them. The lower jaw, which remained dropped, was bound up with a black ribbon. My wife was hurried from the room, sobbing sadly; and there I lay, motionless, voiceless, sightless; growing colder and more cold, my limbs benumbed, my heart without pulsation, dead, all but in spirit, and with but one corporal faculty in its original acuteness. Not only did my hearing remain perfect and entire, but it seemed to be quickened and rendered tenfold more sensitive than ever. I could hear sounds in the house, at a distance from my chamber, which had never reached me there before. The convulsive sobbing of my wife in a distant room; the murmured conversation of the physicians in a chamber below; the little feet of my children treading with timid steps as they passed the chamber of death; and the voice of the nurse, saying, "Hush, my dear, hush!" as the eldest wept aloud in ascending the stairs.

"There was an old woman left with a light, to watch with the dead body; and I can not tell you how painful to me was her moving about the room, her muttering to herself, and her heavy snoring when she fell asleep. But more terrible anguish was in store.— On the following morning the undertaker came to measure me for my coffin. Although, as I have said, I was all benumbed, yet I had a faint remnant of feeling, which made me know when any thing touched me, and a consciousness as perfect as in the highest days of health. You can fancy, better than I can tell, what I endured, as I felt the man's measure run over my body to take the precise size for the awful receptacle that was to carry me to the grave. Then came the discussion of half an hour between him and the old crone in the chamber, in regard to black gloves and hat-bands. I am really ashamed of what I remember the sensations I experienced. I never felt so unchristian in my life, as I did then, when lying to all appearance, dead; and the worst of it all was, I could not master those sensations. Will seemed to be at an end, even when consciousness remained entire. After that, what I most distinctly remember was, a long, dull blank. I fancy the room was left vacant, for I had no perceptions. The spirit was left to itself. It only remained organ of communication with the material world had nothing to act upon, and thought was all in all.— But thought was intensely terrible.— True, thought was concentrated altogether upon one subject. Every man

has much to repent of. Every man who believes, has much to hope and much to fear in the presence of another world. But repentance, hope, fear—I tell you the plain truth—another world itself, never came into my mind. They seemed to have died away from memory, with that extinction of will of which, I have spoken. All I thought of then was, that I was lying there living, and was about to be buried with the dead. It was like one of those terrible dreams in which we seem grasped by some monster, or some assassin, and struggle to shriek or to resist but have neither power to utter a sound nor to move a limb.

"I will not dwell much upon the farther particulars. The coffin was brought into the room; I was dressed in my grave clothes; I was moved into that narrow bed, stiff, and rigid as a stone, with agony of mind which I thought must have awakened some power in the cold, dull mass which bound up my spirit. One whole night I lay there in the coffin—hearing the tick of the clock upon the stairs—filled with strange and wild impressions—doubting whether I were really dead, or whether I were living—longing to see and know if my flesh were actually corrupting—fancying that I felt the worm. The morning broke; a dim gray light found its way through my closed eyelids; and about an hour after, I heard the step of the undertaker and another man in the room. One of them dropped something heavily on the floor, and a minute after they came to close the coffin, and the undertaker asked his assistant for the screw-driver. It was the last instant of hope, and all was agony. Suddenly I heard my wife's step quite at the foot of the stairs. "Oh, God she will never let them!" I thought. "She who loved me so well, who was so dearly loved!"

"She came very slowly up the stairs, and the step paused at the door. I fancied I could almost see her, pale and trembling there. The undertaker asked, in a loud voice, for the coffin-lid. But the door opened, and Isabella's voice exclaimed, half-choked with tears, "Oh, not yet, not yet! Let me look at him once again!"

"Love and sorrow spoke in every tone. My spirit thanked her; and never had I felt such ardent love for her as then. But the idea of living burial was still pre-eminent. If she took that last look and left me, all was over. My anguish was beyond all description. It seemed to rouse my spirit to some great, tremendous effort. I tried to groan, to speak, to cry, to move, even to breathe. Suddenly, in that great agony, a single drop of perspiration broke out upon my forehead. It felt like molten iron pouring through the skin. But the deadly spell was broken. My arms struggled within their covering; I partly raised my head, and opened my eyes wide. A loud, long shriek rang through the room, and my wife cast herself upon the coffin, between me and the hateful covering the man held up in his hands.

"I need not tell you all that followed; for here I am, alive and in perfect health. But I have never recovered my original color, and have ever remained as sallow as you see me now. The event, however, has been a warning to me. In many cases previously I had calmly seen people hurried very early to the grave; but ever since, wherever I had influence, I have prevented the dead from being buried before some signs of corruption presented themselves; for I am perfectly convinced that those signs are the only real tests of death."

"Such was the tale told at my grandfather's table, in my hearing, by the Rev. Mr. H. —, one of the most amiable, pious and exemplary men I ever knew. Though not, I am afraid, over-burdened with religion himself, my grandfather never sneered at religion in others, and your history, my excellent friend, seems to me, the extinction, as it were, of all thought of a future state, in the terrible condition to which you were reduced. I might almost call it the extinction, of religion in your mind, which, in one of your principles and views, seems almost unaccountable; for the mere act of memory, I should imagine, must have recalled the ideas in which you had been brought up."

"It was a very strange state," said Mr. H. —, thoughtfully. "One in which every thing seemed extinguished, but perception. You are wrong, however, in supposing that religion was at an end; for the idea of God and his mercy through Christ were present to me all the time; not distinct as thoughts, and without giving me any power to will or to do; but as perceptions, as beliefs—just as in the midst of a dream, we very often know that we are dreaming. I cannot explain myself more clearly; but whenever I again meet with another person who has been in a similar state, I will compare my sensations in those particulars—for I cannot call them thoughts—with his,

and endeavor to arrive at something more definite." The subject was then dropped.

"Tail" of a Shirt Collar.

We find the following rich story in a late number of the *New York Spirit of the Times*. If the weather is very warm, recommend it to be read in a cool corner, or in a shady grove, at some of our summer retreats or watering places:

I will give you an adventure of a bashful lover. His name was Damp-hule, but we used to call him 'Jack-ass' for short. Heaven help me if he should ever hear this story; I hope he don't take the Spirit.

Among his many misfortunes, for he was cock-eyed, red haired, and knock-kneed, he numbered that inconvenient one of bashfulness; nevertheless, he was fond of the ladies, although when in their presence he never opened his mouth; he could help it, and when he did speak he used both hands to help him talk; in fact, he was a young man of 'great actions.'

Jack, one warm day, fell in love. He had just graduated in college, and began to think he must seek the ladies' society; he was getting to be a man, and it looked manly to have a 'penchant.'

So Jack fell in love with the sweetest, loveliest, hoydenish girl in the square—but how to tell his love. There was the rub. He had a good deal of the 'language of eyes' and he accordingly tried that; but when he looked particularly hard at the window in which Miss Emily was in the habit of sitting, some persons on the other side of the street would invariably bow to him, thinking he was endeavoring to catch their eyes. He has despised expressions ever since.

At length he obtained an introduction through his sister, and with her he called several times, but she was obliged to leave the city for a season, and as each interview had increased his ardor, he finally determined upon 'going it alone.'

Long before the hour fixed upon by custom for an evening visit, he found himself arrayed in his best.— Blue coat, metal buttons, black cassimere pants, (said pants being a leetle tighter than the skin) and a spotless vest. The journals of the day state, as an item of intelligence, that the thermometer ranged from 75 to 80 deg. Jack swears it was a hundred. As the hour gradually drew near, Jack found his perspiration and courage oozing out together, and he almost determined to pull off and stay at home. He concluded, however, he'd take a walk past the house, and see how he felt.

By the time he reached the mansion, he firmly concluded not to go in, but on casting his eyes towards the parlor window, and perceiving no sign of life there, he thought it probable that no one was at home, and since he had proceeded so far, he would proceed farther and leave his card.

No sooner determined, than concluded. In a reckless moment he pulled the bell; the darn'd thing needn't make such a 'cussed' noise. The door was opened as if by magic, and the servant girl politely asked him in. Miss Emily was alone in the parlor, and would be delighted to see him.

"O Lord! here was a fix! Go in a dark parlor with a pretty girl alone! It was too late to retreat; the girl had closed the front door, and was pointing to the parlor where 'Miss Emily was sitting all alone.' Being perfectly convinced that no choice was left for him, into the dark room he walked or rather slid.

All was perfect chaos to his eyes for a moment, but only for a moment; then from the deepest gloom came forth an angel voice, 'bidding him welcome and draw near.' To obey the order was but the work of a moment, as he supposed; but he little dreamt of the obstacle which fate had thrown in his way. He knew full well the stream of love had many ripples, but full grown snags entered not into his calculation.

Judge then of his astonishment on being tripped up almost at the fair one's feet by a footstool with plethoric legs, which chance or a careless servant had placed on his road to happiness. Over he went, and as the tailor had not allowed for an extra tension of muscles and sinews, he

not only 'procured a tumble,' but also a compound fracture of the black pants aforesaid; said fracture extending all across the point which comes in closest contact with the chair.

Having picked himself up as carefully as circumstances would allow, the smothered laugh of Miss Emily not getting him forward any, he at last succeeded in reaching a chair, and drawing his coat tail forward to prevent a disagreeable expose; sat himself down with as much grace as a bear would be expected to exhibit when requested to dance on needles.

The young lady was almost suffocated with laughter at the sad misfortune of the bashful lover, felt truly sorry for him, and used all her powers of fascination to drive it from his mind, and eventually succeeded so far as to induce him to make a remark.

On this rock he split, for just at that moment she discovered that she had lost her handkerchief. What had become of it?—She was sure she had it when she came in! It must certainly be some where about.

'Haven't got it under you, M. Damp-hule?'

Jack was sure that couldn't be so, but poor Jack, in venturing an answer, could not possibly get along without raising his hands, and of course he must drop his coat tail.— In his anxiety to recover the missing viper, he even ventured to incline his body so as to get a glance on the floor. As he did so, the fracture opened, and behold, there lay, as the lady supposed, her property.

It was the work of a moment to seize the corner and exclaim: "Here it is, sir; you needn't trouble yourself. Raise a little; under you!" at the same time giving it a long pull.

Alas! the 'tail' was told—no escape—nothing short of a special interposition of Providence could save his shirt. But what could he do? Another and another, a strong pull, evincing on the part of the lady a praiseworthy determination to obtain the 'lost dry goods,' coupled with the request—

'Get up, sir, your're sitting on it,' determined him, and in the agony of the moment, grabbing with both hands, a fast disappearing strip of linen which encircled his neck, he exclaimed in heart-broken accents, "for God's sake, Miss Emily, leave me my shirt collar!"

THE MODEL MOTHER-IN-LAW.—The Model Mother-in-law is essentially a strong-minded woman. She is always telling people "a bit of her mind." The husband gets a bit every day. All his relations, too, who dare "to put their noses into what do concern them," are favored with "a bit"—a good large bit—also. Her "mind" like the bell of St. Sepulchre, is never told, unless it is the prelude to some dreadful execution. She dearly loves a quiet family. The Model Mother-in-law makes a principle of residing with the victims. When once in a house, she is as difficult to get out as the dry rot, and, if allowed her own way, soon undetermines everything, and brings the house, "in no time," about every body's ears. She goes out of town with them every year. She should never forgive herself if anything happened when she was away, and she was not near her dearest Julia to aid and comfort. The husband's comfort is never considered. If he does succeed in driving her out of the house his torments are by no means at an end, for the chances are that she takes a lodging in the same street, and lives just opposite to him. Then she amuses herself by running backward all day, dropping into dinner and luncheon about six times a week, or else watching every thing that takes place in the house, from over the window blinds of her first pair front. Her only escape, then, is in establishing a society for the promotion of emigration to England of all homeless mothers-in-law who have an only daughter. If this should be fruitless, his only hope is in procuring a law to annul all marriages where the husband can prove that he has married "a treasure of a daughter," who has a "jewel of a mother." If this remedy even should fail, he had better take a couple of Life Pills, for "there is no rest but the grave," for the husband who groans under a model mother-in-law.—Punch.

"Pat!"

"Well, my dear, what is it?"

"Didn't you tell me the world was round?"

"Yes."

"Then I'd like to know how it can come to an end?"

"My child, how often must I tell you not to talk when you are eating?"

To Fanny Fern.

[A reply to the article in the True Flag of October 30, entitled "Bachelor Housekeeping."]

Beg pardon Fan, but I cannot stand it any longer!! You're bringing us 'old bachelors' out in a horrid fix. 'Ragged dressing-gown!' 'unshorn beard!' and worst of all, 'scowling face!'—to which last charge, I for one plead not guilty. Why, it's just as 'natural' for me to look pleasant, as it is for the sun to shine—if you don't believe me, drive round this way some day and see for yourself.

You 'pity' us, do you? Well, it looks like *pity* when you take the 'better' part of mankind, to make laughing stock for the whole female creation, saint and sinner—merciless pity, that.

'Out of elbows, out of sorts,' &c., &c. Now if you want to see a man 'out of sorts,' follow home that family man that goes 'strutting past'—poor *hen-pecked, curtain lectured* family man! No wonder he holds up his head like a 'chanticleer,' when he gets out. He feels free once more, almost like himself again—unless just as he meets an old chum, he sees prints of 'baby's' fingers on his shirt bosom, or finds a piece of Charley's candy sticking to his coat. Oh, joys of wedded life! We ain't under conviction yet—can't be frightened into the 'matrimonial noose,' no how.

'Afraid to ask a woman to have them for fear she'll say No!' Now, I've been appointed a committee of fourteen, to tell you it's no such thing! Haven't the least fear of woman before our eyes; wouldn't believe the 'dear critters' if they did say 'No.' Haden't we, a long time ago, when we thought woman was just what she seemed to be,—hadn't we a dear little loving creature that we wrote poetry to, serenaded, and all that—and didn't she deceive us! Who'd be afraid of hearing a woman say 'no!' after he'd been said 'yes' to, as sweet as lip could say it, and then jilted. That's what makes some 'old bachelors,' and if the sisters in general keep a clear conscience, I pity them. Their 'sufferings' must be 'intolerable.'

AN OLD BACHELOR.

Murder of a Rich Old Gentleman by his Housekeeper.

The English papers are filled with the details of the murder of a rich old bachelor by the name of William Jones by his housekeeper, a middle aged woman named Elizabeth Vickers. It appears that Mr. Jones had lived so long with Elizabeth that he thought he could not possibly live without her, and she had got in the habit of drinking, and when she was drunk she abused him. The old man was nearly helpless, and he was so attached to Mrs. Vickers that whenever she threatened to leave him he would entreat her not to abandon him. One witness testified that she would lock him up when she went away, and that if he got out she would whip him terribly. She was frequently seen dragging him through the garden by his gray hairs. Mrs. Annie Gray, a next door neighbor, said: I knew Mr. Jones well, but never had a conversation with him but twice. The first time, in July, I told him I was sorry to see him so poorly and infirm, and added that it was a pity to see him in the state he was in. His reply to me was, "I am a miserable man." I told him that if he wanted anything and tapped at the wall, I would render him all the assistance in my power. I have often heard cries in his house. Mr. Jones and his housekeeper used to have serious disputes about money matters. I have heard the latter say, "Give me the money and let me go." At other times I heard her beat the old man. Jones used to say her, "Don't leave me." I distinctly heard the sound of a slap on the face which the housekeeper gave him. I have frequently heard them quarrel and heard the deceased utter the cries of "murder" on two or three occasions. In one of these quarrels I heard the housekeeper say, "Give me the money and let me go," and his reply was, "Don't leave me; I cannot lose you." She then asked him how he dared to go to Mr. Key, his lawyer. The old man not answering her, I heard several blows and groans, as if they came from a person in intense agony. I have seen gentlemen apply for admission

to the house, but were refused. I have let gentlemen over the wall of my garden, on their telling me that the woman would not let them in.— Mr. Jones came out to speak to them, and said he could not admit them. They were nephews of the deceased, and said they particularly wished to take Mr. Jones away, as they understood his life was in danger. Maria Hammond, who also lived next door to Mr. Jones, detailed at some length the particulars of what she saw and heard of the housekeeper and the deceased. She said that on the night on which Mr. Jones died, she was much disturbed by the quarrelling between him and the housekeeper. In the course of the night she was awake by one of these quarrels. From the voices she could distinctly tell that there were only Mr. Jones and his housekeeper in the room (the back parlor) at the time. Distinctly heard the latter talk angrily, and heard Jones say, "Oh, what do you say?" Immediately after this she heard a heavy fall on the floor, and was followed by perfect death-like silence, during which witness did not hear even a breathing or whisper.— This was broken by the housekeeper opening the door and admitting some persons to her assistance, as she could distinctly hear several voices, and for the remaining part of the morning, the noises from the room appeared to be most unpleasant. The fact that this old man was over 80 years old, and that he had died from the violence of his housekeeper was proved conclusively. The woman was committed to prison for trial.— Old Mr. Jones was worth near one hundred thousand dollars, all of which he had willed to this brutal woman. His nieces and nephews had only about £500 each given to them in his will.

NAFKINS AND NOSES.—We have been cognizant of many and ludicrous mistakes occasioned by the presentation of finger bowls to the uninitiated. Some have made punch in them; others have mixed brandy; still others drink their water from these enigmas of porcelain; and it is recorded that one old lady used hers as a spittoon. Until yesterday afternoon we were unaware of any trouble being attached to the gracefully folded napkins that are now invariably spread by the side of every plate at our fashionable and well kept hotels and private residences. It is forced upon our consciousness, however, by an incident of as recent date as that specified, that the simplest things may have their uses woefully misconceived, and be themselves marvelous, if misapplied.

A gentleman of some age, incontestably from the interior, says the N. O. Picayune, was lately visiting one of our hotels. He found the appliances singularly different from those of the piny wood region that had reared him, and had hereof contained him.— Nevertheless the majority of useful articles he could detect, and when detected could use. The bell-rope annoyed him some, and was rendered by him a noyance. The waiters were a little troublesome, and other minor matters vexed the old gentleman's temper. He was not seriously 'fired,' however, until dinner time. Having taken his seat at the table, he began looking after the edibles. There was nothing within reach save the utensils of eating that surrounded his plate.— These he surveyed with some interest, righted the plate, prepared the knife and fork, pushed back the wine-glass, and drew towards him the little goblet which contained his napkin. This latter he carefully extracted from the glass, and surveyed with the most peculiar air of wonder and curiosity, considering, we suppose, what on earth it could be intended for. Finally a bright idea seemed to strike him: the napkin was gathered up like a handkerchief, slowly elevated to his face, and then,—and then to the uncontrollable mirth of all who had watched his movements, he applied it to his nasal organ, and blew a blast equal to the noise of six east winds and the grating of three car brakes.

THE YOUNG WIFE'S RESPONSE.—Why art thou sad my love to-day? What grief is frowning o'er thy heart? Why dost thou droop and turn away, and why do tears unbidden start?—When first I wooed thee in thine isle—thy Erin emerald of the deep—I saw thee, sweetest, only smile, nor even dream that thou couldst weep. The sun of summer lights the earth, the zephyr's kiss is on thy cheek, all nature calls thee back to mirth: then be not prythe love so weak? While thus I spoke my bosom's queen, one deep fond glance upon me stealing, exclaimed: "Be jaded, but you're green! It's Onions sure I'm after peeling!"