

WOMEN AND FUNERALS.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT OF THE GENTLER SEX ATTENDING.

A Description of Sitting Up with a Corpse in the Country—The Dressmaker's Hurried Work—In Favor of Cremation—Fashion Rules This as Everything.

When a person dies conventionality seems then to really get its work in properly. Everybody does not marry, but everybody must die, and conventions have a stronger hold, for many reasons, upon the "mourners" than upon anybody else. Though a family may be aware that a death must occur in their midst within 44 hours at the very longest, that they must be arrayed in black on the funeral day, that it will be impossible for them to get their clothing properly made in time, yet the man or woman who dares to buy a yard of black cloth before the last breath is gone out of the sufferer, would be black-listed for ever. Such cold-blooded calculation must not enter into the heart of sorrowing man or woman. You may mentally figure up the style of your new black gown, or arrange whether your suit shall be broadcloth, serge or worsted; you may have thought out the tailor or dressmaker who is to be employed, yet you must not consult them neither before death nor so soon afterwards that you may be suspected of mental preparation. It is considered the proper thing to have a friend at the trying moment, who shall be commissioned to see the undertaker, and who shall also force the family to consider the question of raiment. This friend is expected to go to the undertaker and tell him to "do what is necessary," asking no questions as to the price, except in a general way fixing a limit which is to indicate the style of a funeral desired. "Do what is necessary" is the formula, and of course the undertaker spends all the money he can and expects to reap a no mean profit.

I can well remember "sitting up with the corpse" when I lived in the country and shared the necessity for co-operation which exists there. Three of us ordinarily "sat up with the deceased," while away the long leaden hours of the night in a room adjoining the one occupied by the departed, talking in a whisper about all sorts of things, occasionally laughing in a whisper, at midnight partaking of "funeral-baked meats" also in a whisper, stealing into the enshrouded room on tip-toe to see that a cat had not stolen in—such a thing had happened once, and a corpse had been disfigured—or to moisten the cloth which covered the poor, cold face, and then towards the dawn, when even the distant sobbing or restless rolling in an uneasy bed of a wakeful one had ceased, and when conversation had become scarce and eyelids heavy, we still stole in and out of the death room, still moistened the cold face, still whispered and then awoke from a nap to find the others sleeping! A quick shaking of the slumberers, an excited rush to the dreadful room, and a return with the satisfactory discovery that no one had been asleep for over two minutes; or, once in a while, the discovery that we had been asleep two hours, as the first cold rays of the morning stole in through the open window and lighted with a ghastly naturalness the lifeless face. Memories of these doleful night watches, of the busy employment of the neighbor women in sewing crape and cloth garments which were to array the mourners while attending church, the mournful millinery and the preparation of the paraphernalia of woe which had to be attended to on the co-operative plan where dressmakers could not be employed, leads me to believe that in many cases, if not in the majority, it is much better for the females of a house to stay at home than that the house of grief should be made a workshop or the slender means of the survivors taxed for the employment of milliners and dressmakers. Of course it does not follow that black must be worn at a funeral, but the force of fashion in wearing black at funerals must be broken before it would be safe for any to urge women to attend the burials.

Personally, when I cease to inhabit this tenement which costs me so much to take care of, I would like my loved ones to go and see me put under ground, or, at least, stowed in some place of safety where they won't worry about the medical students getting me. There is nothing I would like so much as such a period as to be cremated, whether any trouble is subsequently taken with the ashes or not. I believe that is the proper way to rid this over-crowded earth of its dead. This return of "ashes to ashes and dust to dust" in this way is as near the poetical and sentimental end of man as is possible. Dissolution is best accompanied by cremation, but if it is by burial it does seem to me that it would be good for a few tender womanly eyes to fill as they watch the filling of the grave and to keep the rude men folks from trotting horses or stopping too frequently at the tavern as they come home. There is no doubt but that the hard, business-like way with which some poor fellows are put underground would be softened if lovely and loving women were there. Women may not feel much sorer than men or feel that way much longer but they did it much more tenderly. It hallows the scene, it softens the heart of the onlooker. In country places women

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still go to funerals and amongst our Roman Catholic friends it is the practice in cities, and if we could only get rid of this conventionality about wearing black clothing and crape and hiring hacks, if we could go to a funeral and see a loved one off this earthly stage as we go down to the train and say good-bye to them while they live and are leaving us on a long journey, I think it would be lovely for the women and children to go and even take the babies into whose infant minds there would creep a picture perhaps never to be forgotten of when they saw papa or uncle or aunty off at the burial place. I don't think people should be expected to scream with grief or perform, but it is one of the loveliest things in civilization that men and women should desire to show love and respect for the dead, and with all the tenderness that is in them to say good-bye when they go away never to come back, and with the problem unsolved when and where, if ever, they are to meet them again.—Don, in Toronto Saturday Night.

COULD MRS. JONES BITE?

A Question Considered and Answered in the Negative. It is quite evident that there has been a disturbance in the lovely hamlet of Midgie. For the information of those who never heard of this delightful rural centre it should be stated that it is a disputed question as to where Sackville ends and Midgie begins.

The letter PROGRESS has received indicates that the fact of the disturbance has become public property and that the threat of forwarding a statement for publication has induced a counter statement. The counter statement is the only one at hand and it deserves a place in these columns for its direct and touching simplicity:

Midgie, Oct. 8, '90.

MR. EDITOR: I here a statement is coming out in next week issue of PROGRESS that last Monday I became enraged at my husband and tried to cut his throat and bite him as his arm attests such is not the case I did not bite him nor did I attempt to cut his throat nor had I a razor. I hope you will print this denial in your next issue as well as the fals statement of your correspondent. Yours, etc.,

MRS. MERINDA JONES.

P. S. I could not bite as I have no front teeth. With a singular and touching frankness that must appear to every heart, Mrs. Jones states her case! With a most commendable desire to tell the truth, the whole truth and presumably nothing but the truth. She makes a delicate admission which is in itself a conclusive proof of the utter falsity of the charge that she bit him whom she had sworn to love and cherish, on the very arm which had so often encircled her shrinking form in the happy days of courtship. She says with touching abandon of false pride and foolish vanity, "I could not bite as I have no front teeth."

With woman's adroitness she reserves this all-important clincher for the postscript, after which it seems patent to the thinking mind that no further testimony is required to completely exonerate Mrs. Jones from the scurrilous charge. Was it not the great Lord Macaulay who said: "Nothing was impossible in this world, except a physical impossibility?" Without front teeth, PROGRESS believes it to be a physical impossibility for anyone to bite another on the arm, nor is it likely that any lady in this free and enlightened country, no matter what the provocation might have been, would make the attempt with her back teeth. Were the matter to come before judge and jury, the question would doubtless be asked, how long the accused had been thus incapacitated, and what were the attendant circumstances; whether the deprivation of her dental conveniences dated from the time of, or prior to, her alleged encounter with her lord and master, but it is not within the province of this paper to make any such impertinent inquiry. To all fair minded persons, the simple fact thus frankly stated, is all-sufficient. They will be satisfied that Mrs. Jones did not—could not—bite.

How the Halifax Academy Was Built.

In appealing for a generous response to a call for funds to repair the Academy of Music the Critic of Halifax tells incidentally how it was built as follows:

The general theatre-going proportion of the citizens of Halifax are not aware of the debt of gratitude they owe the gentlemen who subscribed to, built and furnished the Academy of Music. Fifteen years ago the building was erected and furnished in order to supply a need which had long been felt. The cost was \$77,400, of which sum \$54,400 was raised by subscription, and the balance procured on mortgage bonds. Not a dollar has ever been paid to the subscribers as dividend on their investment, and the board of directors, under whose supervision the academy is managed, give their services gratuitously, and aim to make the theatre a comfort and credit to our city.

A Suggestion for Hard Workers.

Have you been on a trip this summer or fall? If you have not take a few minutes and calmly consider if it would not be a good idea to go to New York by the Winthrop excursion. For seven dollars, a return ticket. Just think of it, pack your grip and take the next steamer.

To Pass the Evenings.

D. J. Jennings has a lot of cheap books for the long winter evenings, on his counters at present. Some of the best books cost only fifteen cents, in paper covers, and nearly every class of literature is represented.

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WHY MONCTON IS SAD.

ALL HER HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS BLIGHTED BY A MR. CLARKE.

The Inventor of the Thomas Nut Lock is Imposed Upon by the "Parisian Inventors' Academy"—A Medal and Diploma for Ten Dollars.

Moncton, as I have already remarked, on various occasions, when the railway town seemed to desire patting on the back, has a way of getting there though it has no wings, and this is the way it accomplished the feat last time.

With the times of last Thursday announced without innocent pride, that Mr. Charles H. Thomas, inventor of the Thomas nut lock, had received a communication from the secretary of the Parisian inventors academy stating that after an examination of his invention the title of corresponding honorary member has been conferred upon him. The Times adds that the honorary president of this institution is E. de Laigle des Masures, Ex-Lord Mayor, Knight of the Legion of Honor, the president being Professor Emile Boettcher, civil engineer of France.

Of course all this sounded lovely and we naturally felt very proud of Moncton, and Mr. Thomas, and incidentally, of ourselves also, for no one could tell who would be the next whose name would be selected "to fill the speaking trump of future fame." And we held our heads so very high, that a great many of us slipped and fell in the mud and spoiled our new autumn mits, while one well known citizen who wears a wooden leg, stepped into a bed of new laid asphalt sidewalk, in an unguarded moment and became so firmly imbedded therein that he had to be pried out with crow bars and sent home in a walk, the side hack contractor retaining the offending limb in past payment for the damage it had wrought. Saturday morning brought a biting frost in the shape of a communication signed Thomas Clarke, which described the very latest thing in swindlers, for the purpose, the writer says, of preventing the uninitiated from being eased of their cash. Mr. Clarke appends the document he received which is a most flattering notice from the Parisian Inventors' Academy whose honorary president is M. E. de L'Aigle des Masures. Chevalier de la Legion d'honneur, President effectif, Le Professeur E. Boettcher, Ingenieur civil de la armee territoriale, etc.

This wonderful document goes on to state that the academy after examining Mr. Clarke's invention has been pleased to confer upon the happy inventor the title of corresponding honorary member, with diploma and the great gilded medal, and mentions incidentally that both diploma and medal will be forwarded to his address upon receipt of the trifling sum of ten dollars to pay for taxes, freight, etc. Of course the ten dollars are scooped in, and the proud inventor hears no more of his medal or diploma.

The enterprising firm of swindlers keep well posted concerning the recipients of patents, and confer their favors accordingly. Thus does Mr. Clarke rub the gilding off our poor little piece of gingerbread, with ruthless hand, and instead of feeling that one of our townsmen was singled out for special honor, we are left with the bitter knowledge that he was merely chosen as the opening sacrifice, and our joy is reduced to mourning. How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle?

A Free Trip Around the World.

The all-absorbing topic of the day is the Home Fascinator Pub. Co.'s great word contest, affording a grand opportunity to see the world. To the person sending them the largest number of English words constructed from letters contained in the sentence "God Save the Queen," the publishers offer "A Free Trip Around the World," also in order of merit the following additional prizes: A Free Trip to Florida, a Silver Tea Set, \$68; a Domestic Sewing Machine, \$60; Lady's or Gent's 14k. Gold Watch, \$50. To every one sending a list of not less than 25 English words, of four or more letters, found in either Webster's or Worcester's Dictionary, a prize will be given. Enclose them 50 cents to pay for a grand Premium Catalogue and a six month's trial subscription to their beautifully illustrated family story paper The Home Fascinator. As the person sending in the largest list of correct words may not be in a position, or care to make the extensive trip offered, the publishers give such person the choice of the trip or \$1,000 in cash. Contest is open to any person in the U. S. or Canada. Address, The Home Fascinator, Montreal, Canada.

Where They Can be Found.

At this season of the year when the heavy fall rains commence, the ladies who require waterproof garments, are looking around to find one to suit them. The American Rubber Store is headquarters for this class of goods. Rubber goods being their exclusive business, they are showing a complete stock of ladies mackintoshes of new and elegant patterns, the styles shown being the latest and most approved. The firm have been in business four years, and find their trade constantly increasing.

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MR. EDGECOMBE'S PAINTINGS.

What Mr. J. S. Climo Thinks of the Fred-erick Artist's Work.

TO THE EDITOR OF PROGRESS: I notice a short article in last week's PROGRESS in relation to the above, and I must say I feel something like the "Ontario exhibitor"—that Mr. Edgecombe should have had some recognition from the judges in the art department. He appears to be quite a young man, and certain evidences of his skill in one or two of his productions stamps him in my opinion as a coming man in the world of color. The picture of a woodland scene, with waterfall, that Mr. Edgecombe has sold, I believe, for \$300, possesses high merit in one very necessary element—that of color. This particular merit of color is what the great majority of artists lack, and however skilfully a scene may be drawn, if it lacks color it fails to excite the senses as a production simulating nature. I think the painting referred to has all the elements desired in regard to color, and for so young an artist is an extraordinary effort. The fact of its not being recognized or mentioned in any way was probably owing to the break-up of the art committee—the judges at the last moment being left to chance selection. The judges, not being practical, did not know what to do about these paintings of Mr. Edgecombe's. The figure pieces, so crude and sign-like, of the same gentleman, knocked all the judging out of the judges. They could never imagine that the hand that plastered the sign-board "figgers" could have blended into his landscape the delicious coloring of nature that he has so well depicted thereon. Of course I forgive Mr. Edgecombe for "tackling everything" in painting, he is so young, but landscape and seascape are, in my opinion, his forte, and it he continues in these roles I think, some day he will "astonish the natives," but, of course, he must have the instruction of the higher finished talent to attain this end more quickly. I greatly regret for our own city's sake, as an art centre, that competent judges were not selected, as evidently in this young man there is something that the people of New Brunswick can afford to feel proud of, but in spite of his being ignored by ignorance, it is his spirit as proud as his coloring is good, he will yet reach a point that will float him to fame. J. S. CLIMO.

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To those who had the pleasure of sampling Kerr's Evaporated Vegetables in soup at the exhibition, it is useless to say how nice it was, but we would say to all those, and others, that they can obtain the vegetables just the same from J. S. Armstrong & Bro., 32 Charlotte St.

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