

days later, when my wife and Clara were about half way across the ocean, I was standing in our dining room, thinking of nothing in particular, when a cablegram was put into my hand. It said:

"Susy was peacefully released to-day."

It is one of the mysteries of our nature that a man, all unprepared, can receive a thunderstroke like that and live. There is but one reasonable explanation of it. The intellect is stunned by the shock, and but gropingly gathers the meaning of the words. The power to realize their full import is mercifully wanting. The mind has a dumb sense of vast loss—that is all. It will take mind and memory months, and possibly years, to gather together the details, and thus learn and know the whole extent of the loss. A man's house burns down. The smoking wreckage represents only a ruined home that was dear through years of use and pleasant associations. By and by, as the days and weeks go on, first he misses this, then that, then the other thing. And, when he casts about for it, he finds that it was in that house. Always it is an essential—there was but one of its kind. It cannot be replaced. It was in that house. It is irrevocably lost. He did not realize that it was an essential when he had it; he only discovers it now when he finds himself balked, hampered, by its absence. It will be years before the tale of lost essentials is complete, and not till then can he truly know the magnitude of his disaster.

The Last Tidings

THE eighteenth of August brought me the awful tidings. The mother and the sister were out there in mid Atlantic, ignorant of what was happening; flying to meet this incredible calamity.

All that could be done to protect them from the full force of the shock was done by relatives and good friends. They went down the bay and met the ship at night; but did not show themselves until morning, and then only to Clara. When she returned to the state room she did not speak, and did not need to. Her mother looked at her and said: "Susy is dead."

At half-past ten o'clock that night Clara and her mother completed their circuit of the globe, and drew up at Elmira by the same train and in the same car which had borne them and me westward from it one year, one month, and one week before. And again Susy was there—not waving her welcome in the glare of the lights, as she had waved her farewell to us thirteen months before, but lying white and fair in her coffin, in the house where she was born.

The last thirteen days of Susy's life were spent in our own house in Hartford, the home of her childhood, and always the dearest place in the earth to her. About her she had faithful old friends,—her pastor, Mr. Twichell, who had known her from the cradle, and who had come a long journey to be with her; her uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Crane; Patrick, the coachman; Katy, who had begun to serve us when Susy was a child of eight years; John and Ellen, who had been with us many years; also Jean was there.

At the hour when my wife and Clara set sail for America, Susy was in no danger. Three hours later there came a sudden change for the worse. Meningitis set in, and it was immediately apparent that she was death struck. That was Saturday, the fifteenth of August.

"That evening she took food for the last time"

(Jean's letter to me). The next morning the brain fever was raging. She walked the floor a little in her pain and delirium, then succumbed to weakness and returned to her bed. Previously she had found hanging in a closet a gown which she had seen her mother wear. She thought it was her mother, dead, and she kissed it, and cried. About noon she became blind (an effect of the disease), and bewailed it to her uncle.

From Jean's letter I take this sentence, which needs no comment, "About one in the afternoon Susy spoke for the last time."

It was only one word that she said when she spoke that last time, and it told of her longing. She groped with her hands and found Katy, and caressed her face, and said "Mama!"

How gracious it was that, in that forlorn hour of wreck and ruin, with the night of death closing round her, she should have been granted that beautiful illusion,—that the latest vision which rested upon the clouded mirror of her mind should have been the vision of her mother, and the latest emotion she should know in life the joy and peace of that dear imagined presence!

About two o'clock she composed herself as if for sleep, and never moved again. She fell into unconsciousness, and so remained two days and five hours, until Tuesday evening at seven minutes past seven, when the release came. She was twenty-four years and five months old.

On the twenty-third, her mother and her sisters saw her laid to rest—she that had been our wonder and our worship.

In one of her own books I find some verses which I will copy here. Apparently, she always put borrowed matter in quotation marks. These verses lack those marks, and therefore I take them to be her own:

Love came at dawn, when all the world was fair,
When crimson glories' bloom and sun were rife;
Love came at dawn, when hope's wings fanned the air,
And murmured, "I am life."
Love came at eve, and when the day was done,
When heart and brain were tired, and slumber pressed;
Love came at eve, shut out the sinking sun,
And whispered, "I am rest."

Her Childhood

THE summer seasons of Susy's childhood were spent at Quarry Farm, on the hills east of Elmira, New York; the other seasons of the year at the home in Hartford. Like other children, she was blithe and happy, fond of play; unlike the average of children, she was at times much given to retiring within herself, and trying to search out the hidden meanings of the deep things that make the puzzle and pathos of human existence, and in all the ages have baffled the inquirer and mocked him. As a little child aged seven, she was opposed and perplexed by the maddening repetition of the stock incidents of our race's fleeting sojourn here, just as the same thing has oppressed and perplexed maturer minds from the beginning of time. A myriad of men are born; they labor and sweat and struggle for bread; they squabble and scold and fight; they scramble for little mean advantages over each other; age creeps upon them; infirmities follow; shames and humiliations bring down their prides and their vanities; those they love are taken from them, and the joy of life is turned to aching grief. The burden of pain, care, misery, grows heavier year by year; at length, ambition is dead, pride is dead, vanity

is dead; longing for release is in their place. It comes at last,—the only unpoisoned gift earth ever had for them,—and they vanish from a world where they were of no consequence; where they achieved nothing; where they were a mistake and a failure and a foolishness; there they have left no sign that they have existed—a world which will lament them a day and forget them forever. Then another myriad takes their place, and copies all they did, and goes along the same profitless road, and vanishes as they vanished—to make room for another and another, and a million other myriads, to follow the same arid path through the same desert, and accomplish what the first myriad, and all the myriads that came after it, accomplished—nothing!

"Mama, what is it all for?" asked Susy, preliminarily stating the foregoing details in her own halting language, after long brooding over them alone in the privacy of the nursery.

A year later, she was groping her way alone through another sunless bog; but this time she reached a rest for her feet. For a week, her mother had not been able to go to the nursery, evenings at the child's prayer hour. She spoke of it; was sorry for it, and said she would come to-night, and hoped she could continue to come every night and hear Susy pray, as before. Noticing that the child wished to respond, but was evidently troubled as to how to word her answer, she asked what the difficulty was. Susy explained that Miss Foote (the governess) had been teaching her about the Indians and their religious beliefs, whereby it appeared that they had not only a God, but several. This had set Susy to thinking. As a result of this thinking, she had stopped praying. She qualified this statement,—that is, she modified it,—saying she did not now pray "in the same way" as she had formerly done. Her mother said:

"Tell me about it, dear."
"Well, mama, the Indians believed they knew; but now we know they were wrong. By and by, it can turn out that we are wrong. So now I only pray that there may be a God and a Heaven—or something better."

I wrote down this pathetic prayer in its precise wording, at the time, in a record which we kept of the children's sayings, and my reverence for it has grown with the years that have passed over my head since then. Its untaught grace and simplicity are a child's; but the wisdom and the pathos of it are of all the ages that have come and gone since the race of man has lived, and longed, and hoped, and feared, and doubted.

A Precocious Inquirer

TO go back a year—Susy aged seven. Several times her mother said to her:

"There, there, Susy, you mustn't cry over little things."

This furnished Susy a text for thought. She had been breaking her heart over what had seemed vast disasters,—a broken toy; a picnic canceled by thunder and lightning and rain; the mouse that was growing tame and friendly in the nursery caught and killed by the cat,—and now came this strange revelation. For some unaccountable reason, these were not vast calamities. Why? How is the size of calamities measured? What is the rule? There must be some way to tell the great ones from the small ones; what is the law of these propor-

Continued on page 18

GREAT WORDS DEFINED IN EPIGRAM

By WILLIAM GEORGE JORDAN



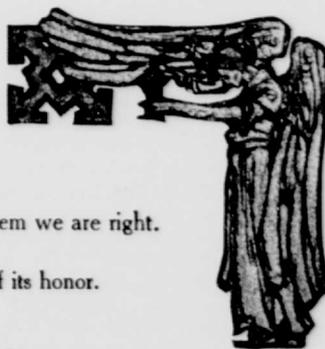
Religion

Spiritualized morality.
Belief in God made a faith, an emotion, and a life.
Consecrating mind, heart, body, and life to the direction of a divine power.
A creed molding a life.
Faith in God as a living impetus.
Harmonizing one's life with belief in the ultimate cause of all life.
The philosophy of the soul, not of the mind.
Serene restfulness of the finite in the arms of the Infinite.



War

Argument by cannon, with Death as referee.
Patriotism desecrated, not consecrated.
Living chess, played between nations, where all the pieces may be sacrificed to save the King.
Assassination in uniform.
Administering capital punishment to our enemies to convince them we are right.
The great red stain on civilization.
The nation granting free trade in all crimes for the protection of its honor.
The blood sacrifice of a people on the altar of statesmanship.
Murder trust run by two nations, without fear of injunction.



Dignity

The visible poise of self dominion.
Calm heroism of character facing the inevitable.
Serenity, strength, and simplicity in a crisis.
Pride in the hour of abasement, and humility in time of exaltation.
The soul's consciousness of rectitude radiated in noble bearing.
The armor of self respect.
Walking calm and courageous through the valley of humiliation.
Character rising superior to conditions or circumstances.