work mighᵗ cause pain and suffering to some, she committed it to the flames before her death. This was noble, compared with the conduct of others, who leave to the world a bequest of venom—outraging friendship, confidence, and even decency. Dr. Johnson spoke with great contempt of an author who loaded a blunderbuss against religion and morality; but had not the courage to fire it off himself, but left it to a publisher to draw the trigger after his death.

Archbishop Tillotson had a shelf full of books in his library, all richly bound and gilt. "What are these favorite authors?" asked a friend. "These," replied the Archbishop, "are my own personal friends; and what is more, I have made them such, for they were avowedly my enemies; from them I have received more profit than from the advice of my most cordial friends." After the death of Tillotson, a bundle of papers was found, on which he had written, "These are libels; I pray God to forgive the authors, as I do." He only knows how to conquer who knows how to forgive.

It need not be a matter of wonder that men afflicted by disease should desire the cessation of life. The pain and incapacity for work, the gradual cessation of hopes and diminution of enjoyment, the advance of age, and the knowledge that the end cannot possibly be evaded, enable such men to welcome the termination of life, as the best earthly release. William Hutton says, in his autobiography. "The nearer the grave, the less the terror: health is the time to dread death, not sickness. Then the world has lost every charm, and futurity every fear."

When a man is young, and is still pressing on towards the accomplishment of his life's effort, it is hard to die. He hopes for the best, is encouraged by his friends, and tries to live. When David Scott, the Scotch Royal Academician, was struggling upwards in his art, he was seized

with a fatal illness. His brother encouraged him with the hopes of recovery. "No," said Scott, "it cannot be—it seems too great a prize, too awfully grand a thing to enjoy life and health again, with this experience overcome, to have been ill, to have seen into the darkness, and return to the clearness of life. It takes a long time to know how to live and work." It was too late. Scott did not recover, but died at forty-three. Grilparzer, in his tragedy of *Sappho*, says:—

> "To live is still the loftiest aim of life,
> And art, poor art, must be constrained for ever
> To be a beggar for lifes overthrow.

It is different with the old. Their work is done, their race is run, and life is no more a joy, but a burden. The Abbè St. Pierre, when he spoke of dying, said he felt as if he were about to take a walk in the country. Baxter said of dying, that it was like taking leave of a troublesome companion—like parting with a shoe that pinched. Dr. Gartshorn took a practical view. When he retired from business and had nothing to do, he became hipped, then ill, and then was told that he was dying. "I'm glad of it," he said; "I'm tired of having my shoes pulled on and off." Nicholas Sogol, one of the most distinguished of Russian authors, said just before breathing his last, "Ah! if people knew how pleasant it is to die, they would not fear death!"

Poor Charles Lamb and Thomas Hood must have often longed to get rid of life. And yet both were full of wit and humor. Lamb's humor seems to have proceeded from a keen—an almost torturing yet loving—perception of the contrast between the petty issues of life and the dread marvel of its mystery. His jesting was often like that of Hamlet with the skull of Yorick. He was the subject of much personal suffering. In 1833 he wrote, "Cough and cramp have become my bedfellows: we sleep three in a bed." "Some

persons," he said, "do not object to sick people; I candidly confess that I hate them." The *otiosa eternitas* of his later life, as his friend Proctor expresses it, lapsed into the great deep beyond, on the 27th of December 1839, when he was in his fifty-ninth year.

The same may be said of Thomas Hood. His laughter came from a suffering soul. His genial labors were the escape of his mind from ill-health and painful experience into a happier world, to redress the balance of this. Nearly all his short life was spent in attempting to escape from death; because he had others to provide for besides himself. As he himself described his case:

> "I'm sick of gruel, and the dietetics;
> I'm sick of pills, and sicker of emetics;
> I'm sick of pulses' tardiness or quickness;
> I'm sick of blood, its thinness or its thickness;
> In short, within a word, I'm sick of sickness."

At last his life-long disease came to an end when he had completed his forty-sixth year. He could not have lamented the end of so suffering an existence. It might be said of him what Sir William Temple said of the life of man: "When all is done, human life is, at the greatest and best, but like a froward child, that must be played with and humored a little until it falls asleep; and then the care is over."

After all, death is not very much feared. Men offer their lives on the battlefield, as the old gladiators did to give the Romans pleasure. Men risk their lives on the hunting-field, or at sea with only a plank between them and death. "There is no passion in the mind of man so weak," said Lord Bacon, "but it mates and masters the fear of death. . . . It is as natural to die as to be born. He that dies in an earnest pursuit is like one that is wounded in hot blood, who, for the time, scarce feels the hurt; and therefore a mind fixt and bent upon somewhat that is good, doth avert the dolors of death; but above all, believe it, the

sweetest canticle is *Nunc Dimittis*, when a man has obtained worthy ends and expectations. Death hath this also: that it openeth the Gate to good Fame, and extinguisheth Envy."

The late Sir Benjamin Brodie, who had much knowledge of life and death, said that in the course of his vast experience he had never observed indications of the fear of death, except twice. In both these cases, the patient was suffering from hæmorrhage, which it was impossible to suppress. The gradual loss of blood produced a depression which it was painful to witness, and led Sir Benjamin to the reflection that when Seneca bled himself to death he made the most miserable ending he could possibly have selected.

Nature has only ordered one door into life, but a hundred ways out of it. She gives us our being, and gives us the custody of the keys of life. Accidents, however, interfere, and take their custody out of our power. Thus Æschylus, the Greek poet, is said to have been killed by an eagle letting a tortoise fall upon his head to break it, mistaking his bald pate for a stone. The Lacedemonian youth, who resembled the great Hector, was crushed to death by the multitude who rushed to see him on hearing of the resemblance.

A grape pip silence the songs of Anacreon. William the Conqueror died of a hot cinder. William the Third was sent from this life into the next by his horse stumbling over a mole-hill. Sir Robert Peel was brought to his death by an uneven paving-stone. Lavater was killed by a gunshot wound at Zurich, while carrying relief to the wounded. Molière was carried off the stage, a dying man, after performing in his own *Malade Imaginaire*. Andrew Marvell died while attending a meeting of his constituents at Hull. Bruce, the Abyssinian traveller, after passing unscathed through many perils, was killed by falling downstairs in his

house at Kinnaird, in Stirlingshire, while courteously seeing a lady visitor to her carriage. Captain Speke, the traveller, who discovered the sources of the Nile, and braved a thousand perils, was accidentally shot by his own gun while passing over a stile in Devonshire, and bled to death under a stone wall. A valiant commander, who had been three times round the world, was drowned while crossing the ferry between the Isle of Dogs and Greenwich. Captain Harrison, who first commanded the *Great Eastern*, and had braved the storms of the Atlantic for many years, was drowned while going from his ship to the shore in a little cock-boat in Southampton Water. Von Ense, the soldier and author, who won an ensigncy on the bloody field of Wagram, and fought under Napoleon during the Continental wars, escaping many perils of life and limb, died while playing a game of chess with his little niece, falling back in his arm-chair, and exclaiming "J'ai perdu."

Cremalius Cordius died of starvation. Otway is said to have been choked by a piece of bread, which he devoured in the rage of hunger. Savage died in prison. The two illustrious De Witts were murdered by their political enemies. Kotzebue was assassinated. Condorcet, proscribed by the Girondins, poisoned himself to avoid being arrested. Lavoisier was condemned to die by the guillotine: his great services to science could not save him; "the republic," it was said, "has no need of philosophers." Petrarch was appropriately found dead in his library, with his head resting on an open book. Tasso was carried off by fever on the day appointed for his coronation in the Capitol at Rome; and he was buried the same evening in the Church of St. Onofrio.

Some men, supposed to be dead, have been too early interred, in early and even in modern times. Winslow, the Danish physician, who lived to the age of ninety-one, was twice on the point of being buried alive, while in a

state of apparent death. The circumstance led him to write his well-known work, *On the Signs of Certain and Uncertain Death*, which was translated into French. Some years ago a petition was presented to the French Senate, praying for an alteration in the laws affecting the burial of the dead. Only twenty-four hours then intervened between death and interment. His eminence, Cardinal Donnet, in supporting the petition, mentioned the case of a young priest who had fainted while in the act of preaching. In fact it was himself, and he was about to be buried when he was rescued by the devotion of a friend.* This discussion influenced the famous Meyerbeer, who was haunted by the dread of being buried before life was extinct; and he left careful provisions in order to prevent such a catastrophe.

Edmund Smith, the poet, died from swallowing medicine of his own prescription. Machiavelli also died from the effects of medicine. Voltaire died from taking too strong a dose of opium. Edgar Allan Poe was picked up in the street intoxicated, and was carried to an hospital where he

* The debate in the French Senate took place in February 1866. The experience of Cardinal Donnet was most extraordinary, and it made a great impression on the house, as well as on the public. The following is the summary of his statement: "In the year 1826, at the close of a sultry summer afternoon, a young priest fainted while in the act of preaching. Hours elapsed—he gave no sign of life. The village doctor pronounced him dead, inquired his age, place of birth, and signed the burial license. The bishop in whose cathedral the young curé had been performing the service, arrived and recited the De Profundis. The coffin-maker measured the body. In the dead of night a young friend, hearing of the event, arrived to take a last farewell; the sound of the familiar voice acted as an electric shock on the supposed corpse, and a superhuman effort of nature was the result. The following day, the young priest was again in his pulpit, and, gentlemen, *he is now in the midst of you*—(sensation)—and forty years subsequent to this experience he implores of you not only to recommend that increased precautions be taken to see that the law as it stands be carried out, but that new preventive measures be decreed to prevent irreparable misfortunes." The result of the extraordinary debate was that the length of time between death and burial was considerably increased.

died, at thirty-eight. The death of Sterne was equally melancholy. Though he used to boast of troops of friends, he eventually sank into poverty, and died in a mean lodging-house. He was followed to the parish burying-ground at Tyburn by hired mourners; the grave was marked by the resurrectionists; the body was taken up and sold to Professor Collignon of Cambridge, for dissection by his students. Alas! poor Yorick. Yet Jeremy Bentham left his body for dissection for the benefit of science; and it was pleasant to see his smiling face, in the dress in which he lived, at the house of his friend, Dr. Southwood Smith.

Caravaggio and Titian were shamefully treated by assassins and robbers. Polidoro da Caravaggio had amassed a considerable sum of money at Messina, and prepared to return to Rome: but before he departed, some assassins, at the instigation of his servant, were admitted to the house, and stabbed him to death while he slept. Titian was struck by the plague at Venice at the age of ninety-nine; as he could not defend himself, he was plundered by his attendants and left to die. It was not so with Leonardo da Vinci. He entered the service of Francis I. of France, and had chambers at his palace of Fontainebleau. One day, when Francis happened to visit Leonardo in his chamber, the latter was seized with a violent paroxysm of heart disease, and the painter died in the king's arms.

A strange funereal longing characterized nearly every member of the Austrian house of Spain. They anticipated the grave, and seemed to long for death. Charles V. was present, after his abdication, at the celebration of his own funeral rites. His son, Philip II., placed his crown upon a skull shortly before he died. He was a most cruel and unhappy man—the persecutor of the Netherlanders, and the originator of the Sacred Armada. He was never known to laugh, except when he heard of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, when more than five thousand Parisians

of all ranks were murdered in the streets of Paris. It is said that he eventually died of *morbus pediculosus*.

Philip IV. of Spain laid himself down in the niche destined for his own reception in the Pantheon. Charles IV. descended into the mausoleum in which the dead kings of Spain lay, opened their coffins, looked at their fleshless faces and cerements corpses, which crumbled into dust as soon as touched. "Surely," says a writer in the *Edinburgh Review*, "this visit of the last descendant of the house of Austria to the Pantheon of the Escurial—the corpse-like king stealing among the collected corpses of his race—is one of the strangest things in history."*

Some men have gloried in dying in the moment of victory. Muley Moluc rose from his death-bed to fight a battle, and when he had won it he suddenly died. Drake was committed to the deep in sight of Portobello, which he had stormed and taken. "The waves became his winding sheet, and the waters were his tomb." When the gallant Sir Humphrey Gilbert went down with his ship, he said, "The road to heaven is as short by sea as by land." Admiral Blake died within sight of England, when returning from victory. Nelson died on the scene of his most famous sea-fight—the bay of Trafalgar.

General Wolfe died on the heights of Quebec; the scene of his one great battle. When dying an officer, looking towards the field, cried, "See! how they run!" "Who run?" asked Wolfe eagerly, raising himself on his elbow. "The enemy!" was the answer, "Then God be praised; I die happy." The hero fell back, and at once expired. When Montcalm, the French general, was told that his wound was mortal, he replied: "So much the better! I shall not live to see the surrender of Quebec." Sir John Moore also died the death he always wished for—on a won field of battle, with the flying enemy before him. His ex-

* *Edinburgh Review* No 263. p. 31.

piring words were: "I hope the people of England will be satisfied, and that my country will do me justice."

Speyk, the Dutch commander, blew up his ship at Antwerp, to prevent it falling into the hands of the Belgians. The Dutch have commemorated his valor by pictures and statutes. Lieutenant Willoughby, in the Indian Mutiny, blew up the great magazine at Delhi. He thus destroyed the ammunition that would have armed the rebellious Sepoys, and enabled them to hold the field against the British soldiers. In blowing up the magazine, Lieutenant Willoughby destroyed himself.

There are also the deaths following victories of another sort. Amongst these are the death of Howard, the philanthropist, at Cherson, after his war against vice, immorality, and the cruelties of prison life. When Hugh Latimer was about to be burnt at the stake, and was asked whether he should abjure his principles, his reply was: "I thank God most heartily that he hath prolonged my life to this end, that I may glorify God with this kind of death." William Wilberforce was on his deathbed when the news reached him of the bill abolishing slavery passing the House of Commons. "Thank God," he exclaimed, "that I have lived to see the day when England is willing to give twenty millions for the abolition of slavery."

Some men have lived through many battles. Though the Duke of Wellington was only once wounded, the Marquis de Segur was often wounded, almost to death. At the battle of Rocoux a musket-ball pierced his chest and was extracted from near the spine. At Lanfield, his arm was shattered by a musket-ball and amputated. At Closteramp, he was pierced in the neck by a bayonet, and received three sabre wounds in the head. While laboring under the gout, in 1790, he was arrested by the Convention, and imprisoned in La Force. Yet he lived till 1801, and died at seventy-eight.

Some have carried their love of science to the last extremity. Archimedes was killed by a soldier at the taking of Syracuse. He was tracing geometrical figures upon the sand, and the interest of the problem enabled him to forget the fear of death. Haller, when on his death-bed, followed the variations of his pulse. He said to his friend Dr. Rosselet: "Now the artery ceases to beat," and immeately expired. It was the same with Mr. Green, author of *The Spiritual Philosophy of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.* When the surgeon entered his room, Mr. Green pointed to the region of his heart, and said significantly, "Congestion." With his finger on his wrist, he noted the feeble pulses which were between him and death. Presently he said, "Stopped," and died with the word on his lips.

Cuvier, when struck by paralysis, called the attention of the bystanders to his mouth twitched on one side, as a proof of Sir Charles Bell's theory of the nervous system: "Ce sont les nerfs de la volonté qui sont malades." M. Retzius died in the full pursuit of science. He made observations on the progressing dissolution of his own body: "Now the legs are dead; now the muscles of the bowels cease their functions; the last struggle must be heavy, but for all that, it is highly interesting." These were his last words.

Geology also, has had its martyrs. Pliny the elder fell a victim to the eagerness with which he examined the eruptions of Mount Vesuvius. In modern times, Professor Strickland of Oxford was killed while examining the geological structure of a railway cutting; and Dr. James Bryce, in his eager scientific ardor, was killed while examining the geological formation of the rocks near the Fall of Foyers in Scotland. Others have lost their lives in geographical explorations—Captain Cook in the Sandwich Islands; Mungo Park in Central Africa; Burke in Australia; Gardener in Columbia; and Sir John Franklin in the Arctic Regions.

Bacon fell a martyr to his love of experimental philosophy. He was desirous of ascertaining whether animal substances might not be prevented from putrefying by the application of snow or ice. One cold day, in the early spring of 1626, he alighted from his coach near Highgate to try the expreiment. He bought a dead fowl and stuffed it with snow. While thus engaged he felt a sudden chill. It was the premonitor of his death. He was carried to the Earl of Arundel's house at Highgate, and died within a week. To the last he did not forget the fowl stuffed with snow. In the last letter which he wrote, he mentioned that the experiment of the snow had answered "excellently well."

The daughter of Diderot published a memoir of her father, in which she says that the evening before his death he conversed with his friends upon philosophy, and the various means of pursuing it. "The first step towards philosophy," he said, "is incredulity." This characteristic remark was the last which he made. Diderot had before approved of the last words of Sanderson, the mathematician: "Time, matter, and space, are perhaps but a point." Laplace's last words were: "Ce que nous conaissons est peu de chose; ce que nous ignorons est immense"; reminding one of Newton's words, that throughout his life he had been merely picking up shells along the great ocean of truth.

Mozart died with the score of the *Requiem* before him. As the last film gathered over his eyes, his trembling fingers pointed to one bar of music, and with his lips he seemed trying to express a peculiar effect of kettle-drums, when he finally sank into his death-swoon. Rossini's last productive hours were occupied by the composition of the *Messe Solenelle*, which was played at his funeral; and Chopin died while Marcella's famous *Hymn to the Virgin* —which had before saved for a time the life of Stradella

—was being performed in an adjoining room. It was his last request, and before it was finished the lethargy of death had stolen over him. Chopin's *Marche Funebre* was played at his own funeral.

When Lacépéde, the naturalist, was seized by virulent smallpox, and felt himself dying, he said to his physician: "I go to rejoin Buffon." Hooker, on his deathbed, expressed his joy at the prospect of entering a World of Order. Dupuytren desired that a surgical paper which he had been preparing should be read to him the evening before he died, "in order," he said, "that he might carry the latest news of disease out of the world." Montaigne died whilst mass was being said at his bedside. Scarron, after a life of debauchery and dissipation—though an ecclesiastic and a canon—said, when dying: "I could not have supposed it so easy to make a joke of death." Like Scarron, Rabelais, though a priest, could not refrain from jesting when dying. After receiving extreme unction, a friend asked him how he felt, he replied: "Je suis pret au grand voyage; on vient de me graisser les bottes." The dissipated Marshal Saxe's last words were: "Le reve a été court, mais il a été beau." He died at fifty-four. Edward Coke died at eighty-two; his last words were: "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done."

When Herder lay dying, he asked his son for a great thought that, when the darkness of death had gathered round him, he might feel that a greater life and light were there. But, for the most part, men are past thinking when they are passing over the verge of life. Death resembles sleep. The interruption of the functions of inspiration is the only apparent source of uneasiness to the dying, and even that is little felt. The breathing becomes slower and slower, and then it ceases altogether without pain. Sir Henry Halford said, that "of the great number to whom it had been his professional duty to have adminis-

tered in the last hours of their lives, he had sometimes felt surprised that so few appeared reluctant to go to 'the undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns.'" "I must sleep now," said Byron; and "Sleepy" was the last half-hushed ejaculation of Lyndhurst, who slumbered out of life.

In fact dying, when disease has done its work, is no more painful than falling asleep.

> "Like a clock worn out with eating Time,
> The wheels of weary life at last stand still."

Although the appearances upon the features of the departing sufferer may indicate anguish, relatives may be comforted with the assurance that when the changes begin which end in death, all pain is really at an end. Muscular spasms and convulsions are at that stage quite independent of feeling, and are mere unconscious acts. Death is the gentlest possible separation of life from matter; in many, if not in all cases, it is accompanied by the sensation described in the beautiful lines of Spenser—

> "Sleep after toil, port after stormy seas,
> Ease after war, death after life, doth greatly please."

At the moment of death, however, there is sometimes a momentary exaltation of the mind, in which it surveys the past with lightning glance, and exhibits the triumph of spirit over matter at the moment of their final separation. The mind flickers up like the last glimmer of a taper in its socket, and the parting breath of the dying is often a striking commentary on the past life. Physiologists inform us that this preternatural exaltation of the mind at such a moment resembles dreaming more than any other known mental condition; yet the ideas passing in the mind seem to be suggested to some extent by external circumstances. As in the case of the death of a distinguished judge, who, seeing the mourning relatives standing round his bed, raised himself for a moment from his couch, and

said with his wonted dignity, "Gentleman of the jury, you will find——," then fell back on his pillow and expired.

Among the memorable last thoughts of great men is that of Goethe. He rises to go out and luxuriate in the young sun; the hand of death falls on him; he sinks back on the sofa, murmuring, "Dass mehr Licht hereinkomme," and passes away into another life. More light! The prayer of expiring genius resounds from world to world. At the close of Schiller's long illness, a friend inquired how he felt: "Calmer and calmer," was his reply. A little later he looked up and said, "Many things are growing clearer and clearer to me," and then the pure and noble spirit passed away. Keats, before he died, was asked how he felt: "Better, my friend; I feel the daisies growing over me!" The sun shone brilliantly into the room where Humboldt died, and it is said that the last words addressed to his niece were, "How grand these rays! they seem to beckon Earth to Heaven!" When Fichte's son approached him with medicine in his last moments, he said, "Leave it alone; I need no more medicine; I feel that I am well." "It is time to go to rest," said Richter.

Among the ever-memorable words of great men spoken on their deathbeds, are those of Johnson, "Live well!" Sir Walter Scott said to his son-in-law, "Be virtuous, be religious, be a good man; nothing else can give you any comfort when you come to lie here." When Sir Walter Raleigh's executioner told him to lie down at the block with his head to the east, he said, "No matter how the head lie, so that the heart be right."

Cicero says that Plato was actually engaged in writing at the moment of his death, at the age of eighty-two. Lucan died reciting verses from his *Pharsalia*. Roscommon uttered, at the moment he expired, two lines of his own version of *Dies iræ*. Herder closed his career writing an ode