

Dec 31, 1919

EXTRACTS FROM TWO LETTERS FROM GRACE.

The Empyema operation was a week ago. The Surgeons and Doctors said "Do not worry all will be well". I have never been hopeful since October 14th, when Willie told me what would happen. He was a perfect Seer into the future and knew his condition better than any one else. Sir Gordon Watson said "In a week he will be splendid" but he grew more and more toxic. They enlarged the wound but he soon became restless and began to cough, then hemorrhage which they checked but he very soon became unconscious. It was the end of a perfect life.

On Christmas Eve he brightened a bit and asked me to call Bill to read Milton's hymn to the Nativity because he had often read it to Revere. Willie kept pressing my hand and then fell asleep.

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Sue and Bill arrived just before the Surgeon who came to operate and Sue was at work at once helping. It was an anxious hour, but he came through all right and was very comfortable. For a day or two he seemed better but then his temperature went up a little and there was evidence of poison in the lung. Monday morning the London men were here and did something to relieve the situation. The anaesthetic made him cough. After he was unconscious he never opened his wonderful eyes and by four thirty he was asleep. We were all with him and the wonderful peace and quiet that came over the form I can never forget. I felt I could hear his voice and Revere's together. It was wonderful to see that beautiful face once more free from marks of distress.

He left a note for me saying he wanted an autopsy also told Dr. Gibson and Archie, so it was done, and I am glad for they told me had the hemorrhage not come, he might have lived for weeks in continual discomfort.

The coffin was covered with a purple velvet pall with a white cross and only a sheaf of lilies. He was in his own room until Thursday afternoon and we went in and out quite cheerily.

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The Cathedral was packed to the doors, all the most distinguished men in Great Britain, all the Universities sending representatives, the Vice-Chancellor and all our University people, a wonderful procession, most beautiful music, his favorite Latin hymns and then most wonderful of all we were allowed to leave him overnight in the Lady Chapel.

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This morning we went by Motor to Golder's Green for the cremation, the Dean with us, no one else but Frank and Willie's devoted nurse. Bill waited and brought back the ashes. They lie in an oak box on the Library Table surrounded by his much treasured books.

The physical misery of those weeks make it possible for me to say "Thank God".

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Willie Francis writing to Marjorie Fitcher in Baltimore says "The ashes are to be brought to McGill".

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