

(From Dr. W. W. Francis to his sister)

Oxford,

Jan. 2, 1920.

Dear Bea,

It has been a sad week here; up till Monday morning the 29th, and especially on Sunday, we were hopeful; he seemed really better. On Monday Aunt Grace said to him "You're very very perky this morning" and he answered, "Yes, I have a better outlook to-day." That was almost the first optimistic thing he had said, because he always believed he was going to die. About two o'clock (p.m.) the nurse noticed the dressing on the operation wound was blood-stained - the poor darling was bleeding into the pleura, where the ulcerated vessel could not possibly be got at. In his condition he could not stand even a small loss of blood, and sank rapidly, soon losing consciousness, and breathed his last about half-past four. Thus passed our Beloved.

I am so glad Aunt Sue and I had a week here before the end. He was devoted to her, and has been constantly saying since his illness, "I wish Sue was here."

On Christmas Eve he had me read to him, and Aunt Grace, and Sue, Milton's "Ode on the Nativity" but I did not finish it. It was too much for them. He always used to read it to Revere on Christmas Eve in the old days. The last two nights before he died he was much better, and had me read from "The Spirit of Man", the Poet Laureate's Anthology. The last bit of literature he heard were the last two verses of "The Ancient Mariner" - so appropriate to him - "He prayeth best who loveth best" to "He made and loveth all."

Aunt Grace has been fortitude itself. Heart-broken and desolate, but attending to every detail, and there has been enough to keep ten ordinary women busy.

The funeral was a wonderful tribute in a superb setting, in the Cathedral yesterday. The hymns were "O God our help in ages past" and "O quanta qualis" (O what the joy and the glory). This the choir sang in Latin. It was one of his favourites, largely on account of his feeling for its author, poor Abelard, and Uncle Willie always had me sing it in Latin on Sunday evenings. Last night the Body rested in the Lady Chapel, under the arches Revere loved particularly, just near St. Frideswide's Shrine, and also near the tomb of his 17th century friend Burton of the "Anatomy of Melancholy." In the evening Aunt Grace and I went down and saw him there. Early this morning Archie Malloch, who has been the greatest help, medically and otherwise, and I, went to the Cathedral, and Archie took the Body to London in a motor car. Aunt Grace and Aunt Sue and I went by train. The Dean of Ch. Ch. came too, and took the Committal Service at the Crematorium. Uncle Frank was there, and the nurse he had all through his illness - a treasure. No others. The rest went back by train, while I waited for the Ashes, and took them back in a motor to Oxford, arriving home about 6 p.m. It was a strange emotion to be carrying the precious ashes of the Beloved in a little box. But it is all so clean and sane and so much more friendly than leaving the Body behind in the cold cold ground. They will probably go to Christ Church temporarily, and finally to McGill Medical Library with his precious books. Those were his written wishes.

Thank Norman, for me, and Auntie and Gwen for Aunt Grace and me, for their cables.

Lovingly,

Bill.