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GLOOMY BRIC-A-BRAC.

Coffin Plates Once Used as House Ornaments in Maine.

In New England 100 years ago it was by no means uncommon for people to provide their coffins long before their death and keep the same in their houses, where they could see them every day. It was perhaps a custom having the same purpose and significance as the skeleton at the feasts of the ancient Greeks, to remind the living in their hours of levity of the seriousness of life and the certainty of death.

This was not the idea, however, of a man named Lindsey, whom people now living in Leeds may remember or at least have heard of. He built his own coffin many years before he died and used to keep it in a chamber of his house. He used it generally to keep beans in. It was a very fine coffin, made of mahogany and nicely finished and polished. Mr. Lindsey made it with his own hands and gave as reason that if he left the task of providing him with a coffin to his sons it would be just like them to put him in a hemlock one. Perhaps the boys did not relish the implication. At any rate, they did not like to have the coffin about the house and took it away one night and threw it into the river. It was found several miles below, considerably broken and battered as it went over the rips, and old Lindsey heard about it, drove down and got it and was finally buried in it.

Another queer custom that prevailed in this section of Maine down to a comparatively recent date was that of removing the plate from the coffin after the funeral and just before the body was lowered into the grave and keeping it in the best room in the house among the ornaments and bric-a-brac. The writer saw one of these gawdawdy exhibits on the mantel of a Lincolnville parlor not more than twenty-five years ago, and we shouldn't be surprised if quite a number of them could be found in the old houses throughout Maine.—Bangor News.

Democratic Watchman

Belleville, Pa., March 31, 1905.

Mulligan's Antics.

Casey and Mulligan lived in adjoining tenements. Casey was looking out of his front window one afternoon when he saw Mulligan go through the street door on the run. In a few moments he returned, still running. On the next night Casey saw Mulligan repeat the performance. Casey told his wife there must be sickness in the Mulligan household, but Mrs. Casey said no. On the third day Casey again saw Mulligan dash out of the door and return on the run. On the fourth night Casey saw Mulligan leave the house with a skipping rope and go down the street skipping the rope. When he returned he was still skipping the rope. This was the last straw to Casey's already overburdened curiosity. He watched and when Mulligan was out went to his home.

"Is there anythin' I can do for you, Mrs. Mulligan?" he asked her. "What for?" asked Mrs. Mulligan. "Shure, and your husband has gone daff," said Casey. "I seen him run out of the house and run back ag'in three nights and the fourth go out skippin' a rope." "Oh, that's nothin'," said Mrs. Mulligan. "The doctor was here last week, Mike bein' by way of allin', and gave him four pills. 'Take three runnin' and skip the fourth,' sez he, 'and that's what Mike has been doin'.'"—New York Tribune.

BOOKS.

A collection of books is a real university.—Carlyle.

Some books are to be tested, others to be swallowed and some few to be chewed and digested.—Bacon.

A good book is the precious lifeblood of a master spirit embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life.—Milton.

We can take reproof patiently from a book, but not from a tongue. The book hurts not our pride; the living reproof does.—T. Adams.

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How He Appears When Viewed Through English Spectacles.

The American man is more consistently considerate and generous to women than any fellow on earth, and in no country does he get sharper snubbing for his pains. The handling of husbands by wives in America amounts to an art, a profession, almost a science. Based on the theory that the more one has to do the more one can accomplish, ladies who have hard working, enterprising spouses simply retire from active life. If he manages his office and business satisfactorily, why not take over the house and servants? What is known as "a good husband" in the United States is a first class, nontiring money making machine, who gives everything, asks nothing and brags ceaselessly of his wife's perfections. Should he presume to criticize a charred chop or a fat soufflé or complain at the size of the draper's bills he is set down as a brute, and the wife is pitted as a first class martyr. For such sins as the above two men of my acquaintance were forced to live in hotels a year at a time. They had committed the crime of finding fault with the impeccable sex and were reduced to subjection by having their homes taken from them. For my part, I think the Briton's way is best.—An Englishman in London Chronicle.

Medical.

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