

Cleanliness versus corruption / [Ronald Sutherland Gower].

Contributors

Gower, Ronald Sutherland, Lord, 1845-1916.

Publication/Creation

London : Longmans, Green, 1910.

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/ndezwkrf>

License and attribution

The copyright of this item has not been evaluated. Please refer to the original publisher/creator of this item for more information. You are free to use this item in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use.

See rightsstatements.org for more information.



Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

X/121
CLEANLINESS

VERSUS

CORRUPTION

By

LORD RONALD

SUTHERLAND-GOWER

With Illustrations

LONGMANS, GREEN, & CO.

39, PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON

PRICE

SIXPENCE

K5



Placed behind G 5

Presented by

Hargreaves, Green & Co.



22900335261

1900

X8 2876

Med
K22097



MEMORIAL IN GILLING CHURCH, YORK (p. 34).



CLEANLINESS

VERSUS

CORRUPTION



LONGMANS, GREEN, & CO.

39, PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON
NEW YORK, BOMBAY, AND CALCUTTA
1910

14295

List of Illustrations

MEMORIAL IN GILLING CHURCH

FRONTISPIECE	<i>by Lord Ronald Sutherland-Gower</i>	
AFTER BURIAL		<i>facing page</i> 16
INTERIOR OF A CREMATORIUM		" " 17
MARBLE URN IN VATICAN		" " 35
SCULPTURE BY CANOVA		" " 37
MARBLE VASE IN VATICAN		" " 37
ANCIENT URNS IN BRITISH MUSEUM		<i>facing</i> " 40
THE GOLDSMITH'S GREEN CREMATORIUM		" " 41
SUGGESTION FOR COLUMBARIUM CHAPEL		" " 43
TAILPIECE FROM BARTOLI'S ADMIRANDA		" " 46

WELLCOME INSTITUTE LIBRARY	
Coll.	walmsome
Call	
No.	WA



URN IN BRITISH MUSEUM.

CLEANLINESS v. CORRUPTION

The only two certain things here below are, first, that we must die, and second, that after we are dead our bodies must be put away, buried or burnt. I prefer being burnt to being buried, and my reasons are the two following:—

1. The destruction of the body by fire—generally termed cremation—is the quickest and surest way of reducing the body to harmless ashes, for in a little over an hour the fire effects what it takes years to do if the body is buried in the ground, and it prevents all pollution of air or water or the evil effects of leaving the body to moulder for years in the earth, often near the homes of the living.

2. Cremation does away with the horror of decomposition and corruption, and it removes the justifiable dread many have of being buried alive, for no cremation can take place in this country without death having been certified by two medical practitioners. This also is a safeguard against crime.

Little has been written in this country of cremation. I know of only two works on the subject. Of these the most attractive is a beautiful little book by the great landscape gardener, Mr. W. Robinson, named "God's Acre Beautiful." And the other, written by the great surgeon, Sir Henry Thompson, is called "Modern Cremation." Sir Henry—as is well known—was the pioneer of cremation in England, and it is to him that all who favour cremation owe deep gratitude. I have

made use of both these books in the following pages, and have received the permission of Mr. Robinson to quote at great length from his book. I have also been permitted, through the kindness of Mr. George Noble, the secretary of the Cremation Society of England, to make use of a few illustrations which have been published in some of the booklets of that society; and I have also, through the courtesy of the French publishers of the commission on the "Assainissement des Cimetières de la Préfecture du Département de la Seine," been allowed to select one out of a score of illustrations in that work, which gives some idea of what takes place in graveyards to the bodies of the dead. This is the least unpleasant of the illustrations, but is sufficiently ghastly to make one in favour of destroying, by the agency of purifying fire, what is left of our poor humanity after the spirit has left its earthly tenement.

We have made an advance in our system of burials since bodies were piled in heaps within our church vaults, but it is still remembered that hundreds of decaying bodies were placed a few feet beneath those who frequented the services of the church in town and country.

In that delightful book, "Curiosities of Natural History," by Frank Buckland (fourth series), occurs a chapter on the discovery of the remains of John Hunter in the vaults of Saint Martin's-in-the-Fields, in which Buckland describes his search in those vaults for the coffin of the greatest of our naturalists in the year 1859. The account of this search is worth quoting at length:—

"In the month of January, 1859, when sitting in the messroom of the 2nd Life Guards at Windsor, looking

over the advertisement sheet of the *Times*, the following caught my attention :—

“ St. Martin's-in-the-Fields—Church Vaults and Catacombs—Order in Council—Notice.—Any person or persons having the remains of relatives or friends deposited in any of the vaults under the church, or in any of the catacombs under the churchyard, situate at the north-east corner of Trafalgar Square, are hereby informed that they may, if they so desire, remove the same before the 1st day of February, 1859, after which date all coffins remaining in the said vaults or catacombs will be reinterred in the same place, and finally built and closed up in accordance with the said Order in Council, and cannot afterwards be inspected on any pretence whatever.’

“ Why, surely John Hunter is buried in this church, was the thought that immediately struck my mind: his remains ought certainly to be looked after; but who is to do it? I will try to rescue his remains. If I fail, there will be no harm done.

“ My leave of absence from my regimental duties happening to occur most opportunely just at this time, I hastened to London, and the next morning found me under the portico of St. Martin's Church inquiring for the sexton. Upon asking him if anything was known of John Hunter, who was buried in the vaults of the church, I was not surprised to find that none of the officials of the place had ever heard of him, or knew anything about the matter. I knew not whence or how I had obtained the idea that John Hunter was buried in St. Martin's vaults, but I fancied that I had heard this from my late lamented excellent friend Professor Quekett, then alive and well, so I went off at once to the College of Surgeons to consult him upon the matter. The Professor informed me that he was not at all certain of the fact, but imagined that it was so. We at once

consulted 'Palmer's Life of Hunter,' where we found the following passage:—

“ ‘ Hunter's body was interred in a private manner in the Church of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, accompanied only by a few of his medical friends.’

“ This at once put me on the right course, and I went back again directly to consult the Register of Burials at St. Martin's Church. . . .

“ I then sought the aid of Mr. R. K. Burstall, the vestry surveyor of St. Martin's, who, throughout all my labours in these dismal vaults, showed me the utmost attention, and afforded me the greatest assistance and facility in forwarding my search. I understood from him that the men employed by the parish were to commence the work of removing the coffins to a distant part of the vaults. As I was, however, most anxious to find John Hunter's coffin before the Hunterian oration of that year was delivered by the Hunterian orator at the College of Surgeons, Mr. Burstall very kindly set the men to work immediately at No. 3 vault.

“ On going down below the church we found ourselves in the crypt. This crypt is supported by massive pillars, and the spaces between some of them are bricked up so as to form vaults, some large and some small. There are the rector's vault—the portico vault—and the steeple vault, as well as several smaller vaults taken by private families. The larger vaults were guarded by strong iron gates, through which the coffins could be seen from the outside. Mr. Burstall having unlocked the ponderous oak door of vault No. 3, we threw the light of our bull's-eye lanterns into the vault, and then I beheld a sight I shall never forget. After our eyes had got accustomed to the light, we perceived that this vault was a good-sized

room, as full as ever it could hold with coffins, piled one over the other, from the very top to the very bottom. Many coffins were even piled up crossways in front of the door, so that no entry could be obtained except by moving them, and others were jammed up together in all possible positions, without the least attempt at order, reminding one much of books packed in a box to be sent away. To the left of this vault there began another, in which there was a great mass of wooden coffins of persons buried anterior to the Act which ordered that no person should be buried except in lead. The faint and sickly effluvia which emanated from these were truly overpowering and poisonous. I did not feel the effects of this till my work was over and the excitement passed off. I was then exceedingly unwell for more than a fortnight, and from the peculiar symptoms was frightened about myself; but, thanks to a kind Providence, I quite recovered my usual health after a time. Mr. Burstall tells me that he also suffered, and that he was obliged, soon after he had finished his work, to leave London for four months.

“John Hunter’s coffin was, I knew, somewhere among this mass of coffins in No. 3 vault. It was my self-imposed task to find it, and the only way I could do this was to inspect each coffin as it was brought out on its way to the catacombs outside the church. I therefore stationed myself at the door of the vault and examined, by the light of a bull’s-eye lamp hung on to the door-post, every coffin as it came sliding down the plank, occasionally climbing on to the top of them—dangerous work, by the way—and looking about among them with my policeman’s lamp to see if I could find the much-wished-for name of John Hunter inscribed on any of the brass coffin-plates.

"We worked away at this vault No. 3 for *eight* days, when Mr. Burstall decided to leave off for the present, and set the men to move the coffins at another part of the vault.

"Fearing lest John Hunter's coffin might by any chance have been removed from vault No. 3 to another part of the crypt, at some date between 1793 and 1859, I attended the men during the progress of this work in the further part of the church. I was glad I did so, as I discovered the body of *another* John Hunter, but the plate did not agree with the date of *the* John Hunter I was in search of. I also found the coffin of a Mrs. John Hunter, who died in 1820, but I do not know whether she was any relation to the illustrious anatomist and physiologist.

"On February 14th we resumed our work at vault No. 3, and as the pile of coffins became more and more diminished in number I became more and more nervous, lest, after all, I should be on the wrong track.

"After a time all the coffins were removed away from the vault but five; two lay side by side upon the floor, and three one over the other in a corner of the vault, and I could see the names on all these coffins except two: my chance was now, therefore, limited to these two coffins.

"The total number of coffins in No. 3 vault was over two hundred. The total number of coffins removed was three thousand two hundred and sixty. This will give some idea of the task that I had undertaken and had now nearly finished. If one of these coffins, therefore, was not John Hunter's, all our labours would have been in vain. The workmen stood at the head and foot of the uppermost coffin of the three, and slowly moved it away that I might see the name on that immediately

below it. As it moved slowly off I discerned first the letter J, then the O, and at last the whole word John. My anxiety was now at its height, and quickly running to one end, Mr. Burstall at the other, we moved the coffin away. At last I got it completely off, and to my intense delight read upon the brass plate the following inscription:—

JOHN HUNTER,
Esq.,
Died 16th Octr.,
1793,
Aged 64 Years.

“ The Hunters’ arms, viz., a hand with an arrow on it, also the three horns of the hunter, were upon the plate.

“ Lest there should be any subsequent doubt upon the identity of this coffin, a photograph was taken of it by Mr. Soame, which I have presented to the Royal College of Surgeons.

“ The coffin with its contents, immediately after I discovered it, were carefully removed to an empty vault under the church, where they were locked up by Mr. Burstall, who kept the key in his possession. The lead coffin was burst from the decomposition of the body within, and the upper lid was loosened; this lid was taken by myself a few paces from the coffin in order to be placed in a light favourable for the photographer. The cloth covering the coffin was in good order, and the brass nails upon it still bore their polish; the bottom alone was injured by damp from contact with the ground. The brass plate was as good as the first day it was put on.”

A propos of the vaults under the church of St. Martin’s-in-the-Fields, I remember my brother, the late Duke of Sutherland, telling me that St. Martin’s being the parish church of Stafford House, he and his sisters when

children attended the service in that building. They invariably, he said, came away from the service with headaches, and little wonder, considering that for nearly two hours they had been inhaling the noxious gases emitted from the coffins immediately beneath them, fumes enough to poison the whole congregation, and this was the case in a hundred other London churches as well as in the country.*

It is amazing to think that in such comparatively recent days people attending church were exposed to such risks to their health, and even to their life, from the abominable and revolting fashion of burying bodies within a few feet of the living. I believe that at a not very distant time it will be considered equally extraordinary that we should continue to bury our dead by hundreds and thousands in most of our densely populated towns or close to them. Over fifty thousand corpses are placed every year in the middle of London, and corruption is piled on corruption, creating what Mr. Robinson, in his book, "God's Acre Beautiful," calls "plague pits." We still in some instances bury our dead close to the living. For instance, in the case of monastic and conventual establishments—which in England are on the increase owing to the action of the French Government

* Although I do not vouch for the following tale, I am reminded by Buckland's description of the burst leaden coffins, of an account given to me by a clergyman who was a curate in a London church. He had been asked to preach in one of the City churches while yet its vaults were still well stuffed with human remains. It was a hot day, and he had not got far into his sermon when he was startled by a loud report. It was soon followed by others. These explosions were caused by the bursting of coffins some feet beneath the pavement of the church, and so frequent became these sounds that he was obliged perforce to end his sermon more speedily than he had intended: interrupted not by the quick, but by the dead.

in turning out monks and nuns—in many cases these private burial grounds exist within the conventual walls, and this has often been attended with terrible consequences.

The following account of our great suburban cemeteries is taken from Mr. Robinson's "God's Acre Beautiful":—

"The greater portion of the public probably suppose that the forbidding of burials within the town has saved us from all present danger. The following concerns cemeteries in the immediate suburbs of London—some of those situated in the most pleasant, and which will soon be crowded, suburbs of London.

"During the time that the merits of cremation have been under discussion its advocates might have strengthened their case had they been cognisant of the way in which two of the cemeteries of South London were being managed. We refer to the Battersea Cemetery, controlled by a Burial Board elected by the Vestry of Battersea; and to the Tooting Cemetery, managed by a Burial Board elected by the Vestry of Lambeth. The Tooting Cemetery is not in the parish of Lambeth, but is in the parish of Tooting Graveney, which is comprised within the district of the Wandsworth Board of Works; and the Battersea Cemetery abuts upon the district of the Wandsworth Board. Therefore, the members of the Wandsworth Board are concerned, on behalf of their constituents, in the sanitary condition of both cemeteries. In this matter at least the multiplicity of local authorities has not been without its advantages, for it has required the action of the Wandsworth Board to put a stop to the violation of the Secretary of State's regulations in both cemeteries.

" In April and May an impression prevailed amongst those resident near the Battersea Cemetery that an exceptional amount of sickness in the neighbourhood, including cases of scarlet fever and diarrhoea, was due to the overcrowded and consequent insanitary condition of the burial-ground. Whatever the cause of the sickness, its existence was a fact. The medical officer of health for West Battersea, Dr. Oakman, reported to the Wandsworth Board that the overcrowding also was a fact, and that it was assuming dangerous and alarming proportions. The Home Office was communicated with, Mr. Holland held an inquiry, and all that had been alleged was proved or admitted. The only person responsible in such a case for the violation of the law is the superintendent of the cemetery, who may be fined for every proved offence. In this instance his resignation was required by the Home Office. He has suffered for the sins of himself and his Board, and has been superseded: and under the management of his successor it is hoped that the regulations of the Secretary of State are being observed.

" A description in the London weekly organ of the Presbyterians of a Sunday funeral at Tooting Cemetery first directed attention to that burial-ground. It was an Irish Catholic funeral, and the mourners lowered the coffin. That was an unusually long one, and, being slightly tilted, it stuck fast half-way down the grave. A gravedigger touched it with his feet, or stood upon it, and some excitement ensued. The object of the writer was to furnish reasons for the discontinuance of Sunday funerals. Incidentally he mentioned circumstances which pointed to illegalities in the conduct of funerals and to the overcrowding of the ground. The article was read in the Lambeth Vestry. The Burial Board insti-

tuted an inquiry as to what happened on the Sunday, but ignored the suggested illegalities. They sent a letter to the Vestry declaring the article to be sensational and untrue. The Vestry appointed a Committee to inquire into the ignored charges. The Clerk to the Board and the Superintendent of the Cemetery being examined as witnesses, made a clean breast of it, and admitted everything. The Vestry Committee reported unanimously that every charge was established.

“The irregularities at both the Battersea and the Tooting Cemeteries have been of a similar character. In both cases the object was to economise ground and keep down current expenses. The length of time a burial-ground will be available is a mere question of figures if the graves are to be of a certain depth, if there is to be a foot of earth between each coffin, and if no coffin is to be within three or four feet of the top. Dr. Oakman, in his report on the Battersea Cemetery, concludes that, if all regulations are to be carried out, it does not contain sufficient space for a year's burials, and in another part, that it must be closed in three years. This contingency it was which led the Board, with ground drained to the depth of eight feet, to permit *graves to be dug deep enough to hold the coffins of fourteen adults or twenty-six children. The percolation of water into these common graves produced decomposition before the graves were filled; and the emanations from them endangered the health of the clergyman and the mourners at each successive funeral up to the 14th or the 26th, as the case might be.* However, as the Board have sacrificed their manager, it may be hoped that these irregularities are things of the past at Battersea.

“With regard to Tooting Cemetery, what the Wandsworth Board did was to appoint Mr. C. D. Noel, medical

officer of health for Streatham and Tooting, and Mr. James Barber, the surveyor for the district, to inquire and report. The soil is gravel and clay, the latter predominating; and it, therefore, retains water. One day, on making a visit, they saw a coffin exposed in a private grave; it had been laid bare at the request of a family for a member of which the grave had been reopened. The head of the coffin was immersed in one or two inches of black offensive water. *It was intended to place the next coffin immediately upon that exposed, so that a greater number could be buried in the grave.* Messrs. Noel and Barber addressed a series of questions to the Lambeth Burial Board, and these were frankly answered. In this case, too, the ground is drained to the depth of eight feet. One question was, 'Is the under-drainage such as to prevent the accumulation of water in graves?' The answer is, 'As far as possible.' Another question was, 'What is the greatest depth to which graves are dug?' The answer is, 'Generally twelve feet, but in some cases fourteen feet.' Messrs. Noel and Barber infer from these answers that there is no deep under-drainage. The material regulations affecting this cemetery are that there is to be a foot of earth between each coffin, four feet above the top coffin, and no second interment in an earthen grave on the same day, unless it be of a member of the same family. The object of the last requirement, as it affects common graves, is, that time may be allowed for the deposit of a foot of earth, 'which shall be closely rammed down, never to be again disturbed.' It used to be required that graves should be filled up, but the stringency of this regulation was relaxed by the provision that *if a foot of earth were closely rammed down over a coffin, the grave might be available the next day and on each*

succeeding day until it had received the proper number of coffins, to leave the last four feet from the surface. Messrs. Noel and Barber do not seem to have noticed this. The questions and answers bearing upon these regulations are as follows:—‘Are several coffins buried in one grave on the same day or during the same week?’—‘Yes.’ The offence here is in the second interment on the same day; and it was admitted before the Vestry Committee that two interments on the same day were usual, and sometimes there were three. ‘Is any layer of earth placed between the coffins in the same common grave, and what thickness?’—‘*Hitherto from four inches to six inches, but now one foot.*’ ‘What is the greatest number of persons over twelve years of age in one common grave?’—‘Up to the present time, six; but now, as a foot of earth is placed between each coffin, only four.’ ‘What is the greatest number under twelve years of age?’—‘Ten up to the present time; but as a foot of earth is to be placed between each coffin, there will only be seven.’ It is stated, in answer to one question, that six are the greatest number of coffins buried in a family grave; and the extreme depth of any grave is said, in another answer, to be fourteen feet; whereas, to place one foot of earth between each coffin and to place four feet of earth between the last coffin and the surface of the ground would require that the grave should be originally at least fourteen feet deep, instead of only twelve or fourteen feet. Messrs. Noel and Barber find, in conclusion, as the Vestry Committee found before them, that the regulations have been violated; but they have apparently fallen into an error in supposing that this cemetery was subject to the regulation which requires that any and every grave shall be filled up after one interment. They report that the ground is not drained

to such a depth and in such effectual manner as shall prevent the accumulation of water in any grave therein, *and that a layer of a foot of earth has not been left over a previously buried coffin.*

“As the Municipal Government of the metropolis is under discussion,* it may not be inappropriate to point out that, although the Vestry elects the members of a Burial Board and the Vestry votes the money required by the Board, the Vestry has no control over the Burial Board, the members of which are practically irresponsible. When the Committee of the Lambeth Vestry asked for the attendance of the Clerk to the Burial Board and its Superintendent at the cemetery, it was found that they were unable to comply with the request without the consent of the Board. The consent was given, but not without a protest against a resolution passed by the Committee, and with the proviso that the permission was not to be treated as a precedent, because the Burial Acts did not authorise the interference of the Vestry in the functions of the Board.

“The enforcement of the law and of the existing regulations will, it is said, necessitate an appeal to the Home Secretary for some relaxations in the case of the metropolitan cemeteries, most of which, it is broadly insinuated by the delinquent Boards, have been guilty of the same practices. There is something startling in local Boards urging their deliberate breach of well-considered laws as a reason why those laws should be amended. The absorbent properties of soils, the progress of decomposition in different soils, the emanation and diffusion of poisonous gases, the risks of mourners and of adjoining residents, are all elements which have determined the present state of the law, and what is based on scientific

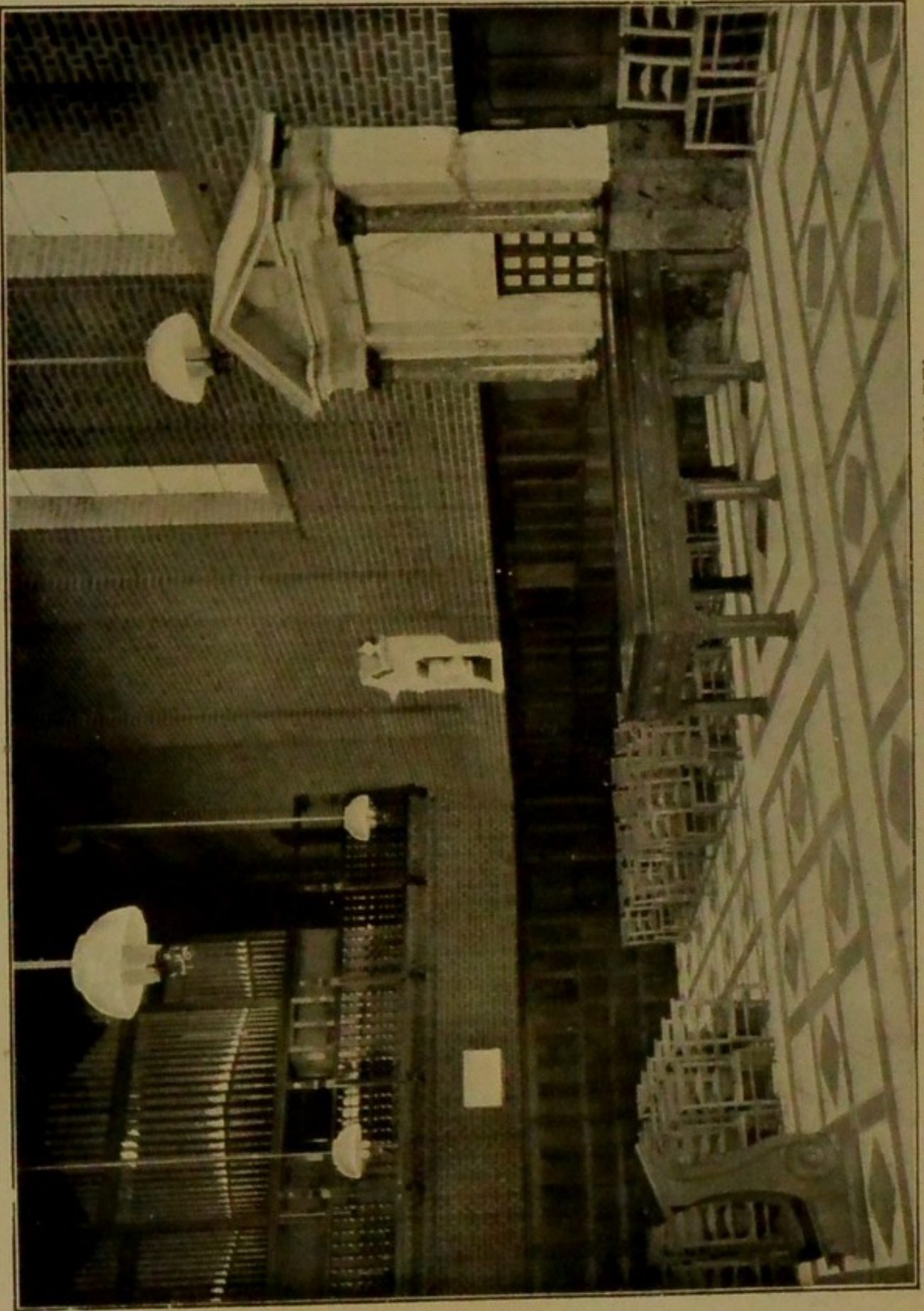
* See London Government Act, 1900.



Male. 47 years of age.
After burial for 3 years.



Male. 21 years of age.
After burial for 22 months.



THE GOLDSER'S GREEN CREMATORIUM CHAPEL.

fact and experience cannot be changed, to the detriment of the living, for the sake of enabling a local Board to pursue a policy of so-called economy.—*Times*, November 17th, 1874.

“ After reading the foregoing passages in italics no one can say the *fosse commune* of Paris, abominable as it is, is the worst example of the burial of the poor. Do the public, and particularly the women of England, know and acquiesce in the fact that human bodies are stacked, one over the other, with from four inches to a foot of soil between them?

“ After such facts one can sympathise with the declaration of the Rev. Brooke Lambert, in a lecture at Tamworth, that the whole process is, from beginning to end, revolting and disgusting. Such a revolution in our burial arrangements will not come suddenly, but perhaps a little reflection may serve to convince those who have feelings of repulsion to urn-burial that, as a matter of fact, less dishonour is done to the remains of those whom one loves in subjecting them to a fire which reduces them to ashes which can be carefully preserved, than in allowing them to become the subjects of the loathsome process of corruption first, and then subjecting them to the chance of being ultimately carted away to make room for some metropolitan or local improvement.

“ Few would not say as much who knew the shocking realities of the cemetery, but those connected with such places do all in their power, for obvious reasons, to keep the painful facts as much concealed as possible from the public.

“ ‘ We,’ say the reporters of the Sanitary Commission, ‘ may safely rest the sanitary part of the case on the single fact that the placing of a dead body in the grave and covering it with a few feet of earth does not prevent

the gases generated by decomposition, together with putrescent matters which they hold in suspension, from penetrating the surrounding soil, and escaping into the air above and the water beneath.'

"After supporting this statement by illustrations of the enormous force exercised by gases of decomposition, in bursting open leaden coffins whence they issue without restraint, the reporters quote the evidence of Dr. Lyon Playfair to the following effect:—'I have examined,' he says, 'various churchyards and burial-grounds for the purpose of ascertaining whether the layer of earth above the bodies is sufficient to absorb the putrid gases evolved. The slightest inspection shows that they are not thoroughly absorbed by the soil lying over the bodies. I know several churchyards from which most fetid smells are evolved; and gases with similar odour are emitted from the sides of sewers passing in the vicinity of churchyards, although they may be more than thirty feet from them.'

"... He goes on to estimate the amount of gases which issue from the graveyard, and estimates that for the 52,000 annual interments of the metropolis (a number which has already reached 80,000 in 1873, so rapid is the increase of population. The above was written in 1849) no less a quantity than 2,572,580 cubic feet of gases are emitted, 'the whole of which, beyond what is absorbed by the soil, must pass into the water below or the atmosphere above.' The foregoing is but one small item from the long list of illustrative cases proving the fact that no dead body is ever buried within the earth without polluting the soil, the water, and the air around and above it: the extent of the offence produced corresponding with the amount of decaying animal matter subjected to the process.

“ But ‘ offence ’ only is proved ; is the result not only disagreeable but injurious to the living ?

“ The report referred to gives notable examples of the fatal influence of such effluvia when encountered in a concentrated form ; one being that of two gravediggers who, in 1841, perished in descending into a grave in St. Botolph’s churchyard, Aldgate. Such are, however, extremely exceptional instances ; but our reporter goes on to say that there is abundant evidence of the injurious action of these gases in a more diluted state, and cites the well-demonstrated fact that ‘ cholera was unusually prevalent in the immediate neighbourhood of London graveyards.’ I cannot cite, on account of its length, a paragraph by Dr. Sutherland, attesting this fact ; while the many pages detailing Dr. Milroy’s inspection of numerous graveyards are filled with evidence which is quite conclusive, and describes scenes which must be read by those who desire further acquaintance with the subject.

“ Dr. Waller Lewis reports the mischievous results of breathing the pestiferous air of vaults, and the kind of illness produced by it. His long and elaborate report of the condition of these excavations beneath the churches of the metropolis, presents a marvellous view of the phenomena, which, ordinarily hidden in the grave, could be examined here, illustrating the many stages of decay ; a condition which he describes as a ‘ disgrace to any “ civilisation.” ’ But it may be said all this is changed now ; intramural interment no longer exists ; why produce these shocking records of the past ?

“ Precisely because they enable us to know what it is which we have only banished to our suburban cemeteries ; that we may be reminded that the process has not changed ; that all this horrible decomposition, re-

moved from our doors—although this will not long be the case, either at Kensal Green or Norwood, to say nothing of some other cemeteries—goes on as ever, and will one day be found in dangerous vicinity to our homes.

“To return to our reporters: we have seen the condition of graveyards in town, but it will not be undesirable to glance at the evidence relating to the condition of provincial churchyards where, in the midst of a sparse population, the pure country air circulates with natural freedom—numbers of such spots are mentioned—let one single example be ‘Cadoxton Churchyard, near Neath.’ Respecting this, the reporter writes: ‘I do not know how otherwise to describe the state of this churchyard than by saying that it is truly and thoroughly abominable. The smell from it is revolting. I could distinctly perceive it in every one of the neighbouring houses which I visited, and in every one of these houses there have been cases of cholera or severe diarrhoea.’ This is not a selected specimen, some are even worse; for further examples, see the report of Mr. Bowie describing graveyards at Merthyr-Tydvil, Hawick, Roxburghshire, Greenock, and other places.—Sir H. THOMPSON.

“*A Spanish Cemetery.*—There is a little walled-in spot of sandy, rocky ground, some two miles outside the town from which I write—it is the cimiterio, where at last the bones of the Spanish peasant are laid in peace, waiting for the touch of that magic wand which one day is to make all things new. I entered that sacred ground a few nights since for the first time. Much as I had heard of the beauties of burial-yards abroad, I looked at least for decency and cleanliness. The first thing that struck me as I opened the gate and took off my hat was the sickly, putrid smell, that well-nigh caused me to vomit. Close before me, on a rough-hewn and unlettered stone,

stood two tiny coffins; the lids (always of glass) were not screwed down. I pushed one aside, and there, beautiful even in death, were the rich tresses and pink cheeks of a child of some eight summers. The other was the coffin of an infant. Both bodies were wrapped, as is customary here, in coloured silver paper, for the clothes are *burnt* invariably, as they might be a temptation to some dishonest person to exhume the coffin from its shallow grave. Just then I looked down, and lo! the whole place was covered with human bones, lying on the surface. The evening breeze rose and fell, coming from the distant Sierra Morena, and wafted to my feet—it *clung around* my feet—a light, loose mass of long and tangled hair. Stooping down to look, I saw that there was plenty of it about; on the gravestones, and around the dry thistles, which grew in abundance, it twined and clung. There was no grass, no turf—only sand, and rocks peeping out. This, then, was the end of life's brief drama here: the rude end of a still ruder life! I saw no tombstones worthy of the name. I asked the old gravedigger when would he bury the two little coffins? 'Manana' (to-morrow), he answered; 'but the place is so full I hardly know where to scrape a hole.'

"*The Cemeteries of Paris.*—This nuisance, in various ways bound up with superstition, is unseen in France, but, to anyone accustomed to associate cemeteries with gardens more or less beautiful, the cemeteries of Paris are far from being agreeable. In these human love does not fail in its testimony; but such are the evils of overcrowding, of still following plans less evidently wrong when the city was much smaller, and of the odious system of using the same ground for interments many times over, that the best aspects of these cemeteries are painful. Nothing more agreeable is to be seen than

crowded stones and whole acres covered with decaying blackened 'immortelles.' In the portions devoted to the graves of the rich, or of such as passed on their way to the grave by the paths of fame or glory, a little chapel or a ponderous tomb often prevents for a time the dust of individuals from mingling with the common clay of their neighbours, and the earth is not used merely as a deodorising medium, as in other parts of the same cemetery.

"Where the poorer people bury their dead in this part of the graveyard may be seen a most revolting mode of sepulture. A very wide trench or fosse is cut, broad enough to hold two rows of coffins placed across it, and one hundred yards or so in length. Here they are rapidly stowed in one after another, close together, no earth between the coffins, and wherever the coffins, which are very fragile, happen to be short, so that a little space is left between the two rows, those of children are placed in lengthwise between them to economise space; the whole being done much as a workman would pack bricks together. This is the *fosse commune*, or grave of the humble class of people, who cannot afford to pay for the ground. The remains of these people thus dishonoured are not even allowed to rest in the grave, such as it is, but after the lapse of a short time their bones are dug up and the ground prepared for another 'crop.' A cutting thirteen to fourteen feet wide, with the earth thrown up in high banks on either side, a priest standing at one part, near a slope formed by the slight covering thrown over the buried of that day, and, frequently, a little crowd of mourners and friends bearing a coffin. They hand it to the man in the bottom of the trench, who packs it beside the others without placing a particle of earth between; the priest says a few words, and

sprinkles a few drops of water on the coffin and clay ; some of the mourners weep, but are soon moved out by another little crowd with its dead, and so on till the long and wide trench is full. They do not even take the trouble to throw a little earth against the coffins last put in, but simply place a rough board against them for the night. Those places not paid for in perpetuity are completely cleared out, dug up, and used again after a few years. The wooden crosses, little headstones, and countless ornaments are carted away or are thrown together in great heaps, the crosses and consumable parts being generally sent to the hospitals as fuel. The headstones from such a clearance (when not claimed in good time by their owners) go to make the drainage of a drive, or for some similar end. And yet these people, who cannot afford to pay for the ground in perpetuity, go on erecting inscribed headstones, and bringing often their little tokens of love, knowing well that a few years will sweep away these, and that afterwards they cannot even tell where is the dust of those that have been taken from them. One day, when in the cemetery of Mont Parnasse, I saw the workmen making a new road, the bottom of which was formed of broken headstones, many of them bearing a date four years before. These had been placed on ground that had not been paid for in perpetuity, and were consequently grubbed up at the end of a few years, when the ground was required again for another series of these disgusting interments. The plan is, however, on the whole, more decent and less dangerous than the London one of piling many bodies one over the other, with a very little soil between each."

—*From "God's Acre Beautiful."*

Mr. Robinson has alluded to cremation in Spain, and I can speak from personal knowledge of what occurs in

that country. When I was at Granada, in 1879, I was at the cemetery of that town, from which one commands a glorious panorama: the Alhambra being below, and the snow-clad range of the Sierra Nevada stretches its glorious outline on the horizon. It is one of the most exquisite views in the Peninsula, but at one's feet is a veritable Golgotha of dead men's bones, which robbed the glory of the scenery from one's sight. For here, in that so-called Campo Santo, had been laid generations of dead Granadians. The richer classes were stowed into the cemetery walls, and the poorer huddled into the soil. It was, I think, a so-called Saint's Day, and the Campo was filled with people peering amongst the graves, many of which had been opened, and bones and fragments of poor mortality strewed the ground. It was a piteous sight, but a still sadder one was a crowd of women who were crying and wailing as they stooped and gathered some *disjecta membra* from out the graves. One poor woman had filled her apron with what seemed to be the skull of a child, her own probably, for she wept sorely as if her heart would break as she went out of the cemetery carrying the bones in her apron.

Horrible as this upheaval of the dead after a few months or years is, I think that our custom of burying the dead in a triple set of coffins is still more revolting. In one case the body has a good chance of being soon dissolved in Mother Earth, but in the other the wood and leaden coffins keep for centuries the poor decayed shells of mortality within them.

Another personal experience related to this manner of burial occurs to me. A near relation of mine died and lay in his coffin awaiting burial, which in those days—fifty years ago—was generally deferred for a week, or even longer. The place of burial was near York, and

I was called to attend the ceremony, and arrived on the night before the funeral. I remember as if it were yesterday passing through the dimly lighted series of rooms and galleries till I reached a room at the end of the building—and there lay the coffin. The windows of the room were open, and I noticed a tube of india-rubber attached to the lower portion of the coffin, and one end passing along the floor and through one of the open windows. On my enquiring the reason of this tube, I was told that it was inserted into the coffin to allow the gases to escape into the open air—a precaution which had been adopted, seeing that if this had not been done the coffin might have exploded.

Another personal experience:—Suffering from tooth-ache in Rome some years ago, I put myself into the hands of a dentist. The nerve of the tooth was found to be exposed, and it was stopped, but the nerve killed was left in the cavity. Shortly after I had a burning pain as if a red-hot needle were driven through the tooth into the jaw. I returned to my dentist. He first removed the stopping, and then drew out a minute particle of white matter, no bigger than a pin's head: it was the dead nerve which he had killed but not removed, and this had set up inflammation. That little piece of nerve, hardly visible to the eye, was more potent to the sense of smell, and I could not help thinking how it is with our bodies if such a small thing can produce such an intense aroma.

Many years ago the Khedive Ismail gave my brother at Cairo a handsome mummy in its painted case, which my brother brought to London and placed in the hall in Stafford House. Wishing to see the contents of this mummy case, my brother invited some "savants" to come and open it. This was done, and among those

who assisted in the unrolling of the mummy Sir Richard Owen took a chief part. Slowly and carefully the case was opened, and the ligaments removed from off the body. During this operation an acrid smell began to make itself felt, and soon the great hall was filled by an old-world or mummy perfume, which gradually proved unbearable to the onlookers, and soon the "savants" and others beat a hasty retreat, and the poor wreck of the Egyptian woman, which Professor Owen declared to be that of a lady, was carted away as rapidly and unceremoniously as the remains of Louis the Well-Beloved from Versailles in 1774. I have heard that in the museum at Boulak, near Cairo, it has not infrequently been found necessary to throw away mummies owing to the condition they were in, which shows that even the best embalmed bodies can make themselves unpleasant after thousands of years have passed over their carefully preserved remains.

Never in the world's history has there been such a scattering of Royal remains as when, in 1793, the Kings and Queens of France were torn from their sepulchres and cast into a ditch by the *sans culottes*. The following is a short account I wrote of this for *Vanity Fair*:—

"The other day I came across a somewhat rare little brochure, an account of the violation of the Royal sepulchres of St. Denis during the first French Revolution:

"The work of destruction and sacrilege commenced early in October, 1793, and lasted all the month. The first corpse found was that of Henri IV., the once beloved Henri de Navarre. Some curiosity, if not affection, still seems to have lingered even among those patriots who had constituted themselves body-snatchers, and the Béarnais was propped up against the church wall in his

shroud, and became quite an attraction for the crowd. One of the Republican Guards even condescended to cut off the king's grey, upturned moustache and place it on his lip; another removed the beard, which he declared he would keep as a relic. After these marks of attention were exhausted the body was thrown into a huge pit filled with quicklime, into which successively followed those of its ancestors and descendants.

"On the next day the corpses of Henri IV.'s wife, Marie de Medecis, that of his son, Louis XIII., and that of his grandson, Louis XIV., were added to this. The body of the Sun King (as Louis XIV.'s courtiers loved to call him) was as 'black as ink.' What a contrast to that majestic, bewigged head, as we see it on the canvas of Le Brun and Rigault, must not that poor blackened skull have been! The body of the Grand Monarch's wife and that of his son, the Dauphin (father of Louis XV.), followed. All these, and especially the latter, were in a state of shocking decay.

"The following day poor, harmless Marie Leczinska's body was torn from its resting-place, as also were those of the 'Grand Dauphin,' the Duke of Burgundy and his wife, and several other princes and princesses of the same race, including three daughters of Louis XV. All these were in a state of terrible decomposition, and in spite of the use of gunpowder and vinegar the stench was so great that many of the workmen were seized with fever, and others had to continue the gruesome work. By a strange chance, on the very morning that Marie Antoinette's sufferings came to an end on the Place de la Révolution, the body of another unfortunate queen again saw the light of day. It was on the 16th of October that the body of our Queen Henrietta Maria, who had died in 1669, was taken from its coffin and

added to the ghastly heap in the 'ditch of Valois,' as the pit into which these Royal remains were hurled was called; that of her daughter, the once 'Belle Henriette,' came next; and then in quick succession the bodies of Philippe d'Orleans; that of his son, the notorious Regent; of his daughter, the no less notorious Duchesse de Berri; of her husband, and half a dozen infants of the same family. On the same day a coffin was cautiously opened. This was found at the entrance of the Royal vault (the customary position for that containing the latest deceased king), and contained the remains of Louis 'le bien aime.' No wonder that the body-snatchers hesitated before withdrawing the corpse from its enclosure, for it was remembered that Louis had perished from a most terrible illness, and that an undertaker had died in consequence of placing the already pestilent corpse in its coffin. Consequently it was only on the brink of the ditch that the body was removed and hastily rolled over the edge, but not without the precaution of discharging guns and burning much powder, and even then the air was terribly tainted far and near.

"I turn the page and find that we are only in the thick of all these dead men's bones and uncleanness, for the Republican Resurrectionists began with the Bourbons and had still to disentomb all the Valois, and further back, up to the Capetian line, and are not content until the almost legendary remains of Dagobert and Madame Dagobert reappear. Suffice it to add that after Louis the Well-Beloved had been disposed of came in succession, like the line of Royal ghosts seen by Macbeth, Charles V., who died in 1380, whose body was one of the few well preserved, and was arrayed in Royal robes, with a gilt crown and sceptre still bright; that

of his wife, Jeanne de Bourbon, who still held in her bony hand a decayed distaff of wood ; Charles VI., with his queen, Isabeau de Bavière ; Charles VII. and his wife, Marie d'Anjou ; and then Blanche de Navarre, who died in 1391. Charles VIII., of whom nothing but dust remained, Henri II., Catherine de Medecis, Charles IX., and Henri III. were disinterred on the morning of the 18th ; ' after the workmen's dinner,' Louis XII. and his queen ; and among other less interesting Royal remains, the bones of Hugues, Comte de Paris, father of Hugues Capet. And so on the work went, till one tires even of the details of the preservation of this or that queen. Can anything be more shocking than to know that all the horrors of decay and decomposition will remain, even after two or three centuries have passed over the lifeless form, and that, supposing one has the ill-luck to be thus confined and one's body removed, ' a black fluid, emitting a noxious smell,' will run from out our last home, as was the case with those Royal remains during that hot summer month at St. Denis in 1793 ?

" Who, after reading these instances, can doubt that it is infinitely better that the dead should be quickly resolved into white and odourless ashes than subjected to insult and degradation even much less shocking than the cases mentioned in the foregoing pages ? Some pretend that they do not care what becomes of their bodies after death, but a healthier feeling would make us determine that all such horrors, as disgraceful to the living as disrespectful to the dead, should be impossible now and for ever."

The accident of birth may enable some to decay in the vaults of the Capuchins in Vienna, or in the gloomy tombs of the Escorial, or beneath the floor of St. George's Chapel, Windsor. I, for one, do not envy the

Hapsburgs, the Spanish Bourbons or the Guelphs their questionable privilege. Better a speedy destruction of the dregs of our mortality than the retention for centuries by lead and wood or marble of our bodies.

Westminster Abbey is reported to be so full of illustrious dead, or others, that no more room can be found within its walls. Our great actor, Henry Irving, showed a proper feeling with regard to the disposal of his body by being cremated, and the only blot to an otherwise perfect funeral ceremony was that his ashes were carried to their resting-place in a coffin, instead of having them placed in an urn, or some trophied vase. Shortly after Irving's funeral another took place in the Abbey, that of Lady Burdett-Coutts, and it was hoped that she would have followed her illustrious friend's example and been cremated, but such was not the case. I pointed out at the time of Irving's funeral, in a letter to the papers, how desirable a thing it would be to make obligatory the cremation of the bodies of those honoured by a public funeral in Westminster, and how easily hundreds of our illustrious dead in succeeding times would find ample space for their ashes within its walls. We are such a nation of snobs that I believe if more dukes were cremated than has been the case up to the present cremation would be followed by many who love to imitate the aristocracy. Of course, even the cremation of a bishop would be a good example, and how happy the cremationists would be if we could reduce to ashes an Archbishop. I cannot complain that in my own family cremation has been neglected, as two of my brothers-in-law left instructions that they should be cremated. In the case of one of these his orders were carried out, but I regret to say that in the case of the other this desirable consummation did not occur.

I find in Mr. Arthur Benson's "Fasti Etonenses" the following, which shows how unpleasant the old fashion of burying the dead in vaults could be. Writing of the Marquis Wellesley's funeral at Eton College:—"The body," Mr. Benson says, "lay in state in the election chamber, and was buried in the Provost's vault, according to his wish, near his old friend Dr. Goodall. When the vault was next opened, for the funeral of Provost Hawtrey, it was in a horrible state. An old Eton resident who was present said, 'He could not get the taste out of his mouth for a week.'"

One has heard of some old family vaults in Scottish churchyards which, reopened after many years, have been found in a terrible condition: coffins burst open and fragments of the dead scattered on the ground, recalling Juliet's terrible vision when, just before drinking the drug which was to send her into a death-like stupor, she imagined awakening in the vault of the Capulets:—

"Shall I not, then, be stifled in the vault,
To whose foul mouth no healthsome air breathes in,
And there die strangled ere my Romeo comes?

As in a vault, an ancient receptacle,
Where, for these many hundred years, the bones
Of all my buried ancestors are pack'd."

Shakespeare's injunction, graven on his tombstone to respect his bones, was doubtless inspired by his dread lest his remains should be thrown into the charnel of Stratford Church. And I feel as certain as I am that our great painter Watts was cremated, that Shakespeare—were cremation in existence in his day—would have chosen that form of burial. Jeremy Taylor, too, I think, to judge by the following passage in his "Holy Dying,"

would have chosen cremation rather than burial had it been practicable in his time. What a fine passage this is on death and its aftermath:—

“It is a mighty change,” he writes, “that is made by the death of every person, and it is visible to us that our life reckons from the sprightliness of youth and the fair cheeks and full eyes of childhood, from the vigorousness and strong flexion of the joints of five and twenty to the hollowness and horror of a three days’ burial, and we shall perceive the distance to be very great and very strong. But so have I seen a rose newly springing from the clefts of its home, with the dew of heaven as a lamb’s fleece; but when a ruder breath forces open its virgin modesty and dismantled its too youthful and unripe retirement it began to put on darkness, and to decline to softness and the symptoms of a sickly age; it bowed the head and broke its stalk, and at night, having lost some of its leaves and all its beauty, it fell into the portion of weeds and outworn faces. The same is the portion of every man and woman, the heritage of worms and serpents, rottenness and cold dishonour, and our beauty is so changed that our acquaintance quickly know us not; and that change mingled with so much horror, or else meets so with our fears and weak discoursings, that they who six hours ago attended upon us either with charitable or ambitious services cannot without some regret sit alone where the body lies stripped of its life and honour. I have read of a fair young German gentleman who living often refused to be pictured, but put off the importunity of his friends’ desire by giving way that after a few days’ burial they might send the painter to his vault, and if they saw cause for it, draw the image of his death unto the life; they did so, and found his face half-eaten, and

his midriff and backbone full of serpents, and so he stands pictured among his armed ancestors. So does the fairest beauty change, and it will be as bad with you and me; and then what servants shall we have to wait upon us in the grave? What friends to visit us? What officious people to cleanse away the moist and unwholesome cloud reflected upon our faces from the sides of the weeping vaults, which are the longest weepers for our funeral?"

Although it would be almost an insult to those who profess their faith in the resurrection of their bodies after death to believe they can object to cremation for fear of not having that consummation in a future state owing to their bodies being reduced to ashes, still, perhaps it would comfort such people to hear the opinions of some bishops regarding cremation. When the Birmingham Crematorium was opened, in October, 1903, Dr. Legge, Bishop of Lichfield said: "I am in sympathy with those who see the necessity for adopting some such method for disposing of the bodies of the departed, on sanitary and utilitarian grounds, and I see nothing in it which should reasonably cause offence to those who hold the Christian faith." Dr. Gore, Bishop of Birmingham, writes: "What I should desire when I myself die is that my body should be reduced to ashes, so that it may do no harm to the living. Then, in accordance with the Christian faith, it should be laid in the earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, with the rites of the Church. I do not see that there is any serious Christian argument against such a practice, and, from a sanitary point of view, it has enormous advantages." Dr. Knox, Bishop of Manchester, writes: "I am quite sure that, in spite of the strong sentimental objections very naturally entertained, we shall come to see that

under the conditions of modern life cremation is not only preferable from the sanitary point of view, but that it is also the most reverent and decent treatment of the bodies of the dead, and one that is entirely in accordance with the Christian belief." The late Bishop of Manchester, Dr. Fraser, disposed of the idea of cremation being un-Christian in the following words:—"Do they suppose that it will be more impossible for God to raise up a body at the resurrection, if needs be, out of elementary particles which had been liberated by the burning, than it would be to raise up a body from dust and from the elements of bodies which had passed into the structure of worms? The omnipotence of God is not limited, and He would raise from the dead, whether He had to raise even bodies out of churchyards, or whether He had to call our remains like the remains of some ancient Romans out of an urn in which they were deposited two thousand years ago." The Bishop adds that urns containing the ashes of the dead are far preferable to coffins, and when one recalls the beautiful veiled figure of Canova's masterpiece of sculpture at Vienna, the tomb of the Archduchess Christina, where a graceful female figure is shown entering the tomb bearing in her hands the sepulchral urn; or in Gilling Church, near York, the beautiful recumbent figure representing a mourner clasping a pair of urns in her arms, and gently laying her cheek against them, one feels how different these monuments would be were there coffins instead of urns.

No one can expect the Church of Rome to do otherwise than oppose cremation, on the ground of that form of burial being un-Christian. The Church of Rome has been responsible for the cremation of many thousands of persons while living—victims of the



MARBLE URN IN THE VATICAN.

Inquisition. These burnings of the living were regarded by the Church of Rome as meritorious actions, but when it was mooted that cremation should be encouraged the present Pope gave out his veto against it, and although Milan has the honour of being the first city in which a Crematorium was built, the capital of Italy is still content to bury its thousands in the immediate neighbourhood and within the walls of the Eternal City.

In a lecture, delivered in the Music Hall at Aberdeen in November, 1899, the Right Hon. Dr. Robert Farquharson gave an address on cremation which I think should be read by all interested in the subject. It has been published by the Cremation Society of England. He states: "That in England and Wales alone about 550,000 people die every year, and the problem is one of increasing difficulty of how to dispose of the dead without injury to the living. London doubles the number of its inhabitants every fifty years. Two thousand acres there are now devoted to the reception of dead bodies, and with this alarming increase our little island will soon be filled with these remains." The problem is, as Sir Henry Thompson wrote, "given a dead body, to resolve it into carbonic acid, water, and ammonia, and the mineral elements generally, safely and not unpleasantly." Dr. Farquharson then proceeds to give an account of the history of cremation in all countries. "From the earliest times burning was practised in Asia and the Western world, and in Rome cremation was a rule from the time of the Republic down to the fourth century; and the Greeks, whose claim to be a highly cultured people none can dispute, have handed down to us beautiful sculptured urns which served as the mausoleums of their dead." He then says



FROM THE TOMB OF THE ARCHDUCHESS CHRISTINA,
VIENNA.



CINERARY VASE IN THE VATICAN.

that the early Christian belief in the primitive dogma that the actual body of the dead was changed into an actual glorified body for the future state had, of course, given a great stimulus to the practice of burial, and soon the process of burning had actually become a stigma. Heretics were burnt, both dead and alive, and so burning became identified with unbelief, and gradually died out. "And although," he adds, "to use Lord Playfair's phrase: 'No educated person now believes that immortality must change the dead body, still the practice of burying out of sight—where the inexorable and repulsive process of nature disposes of the mortal framework in its own slow and laborious fashion—has become so established by custom that belief in the superiority of cremation is only slowly progressing.'"

Dr. Farquharson then gives an account of the movement in favour of cremation which was revived in Italy in 1873, and in the following year Sir Henry Thompson published his book on the subject. There was much opposition, and the Home Office in 1879 announced that cremation for human bodies would be prohibited. However, in 1885 the Crematorium at Woking burnt its first body, and proved that in an hour and a half the process could be carried out cheaply and easily without smoke or smell or the slightest external sign of what was going on within. Since then the Woking establishment, as well as those more recently established, have carried on an active campaign.

Dr. Farquharson draws the following picture of what he calls the sentimental argument:—"A very touching picture," he says, "may be drawn of the old village church, with its overhanging roof and picturesque tower, the lych-gate and venerable yew, and the setting sun or the rising moon generally illuminated the mouldering

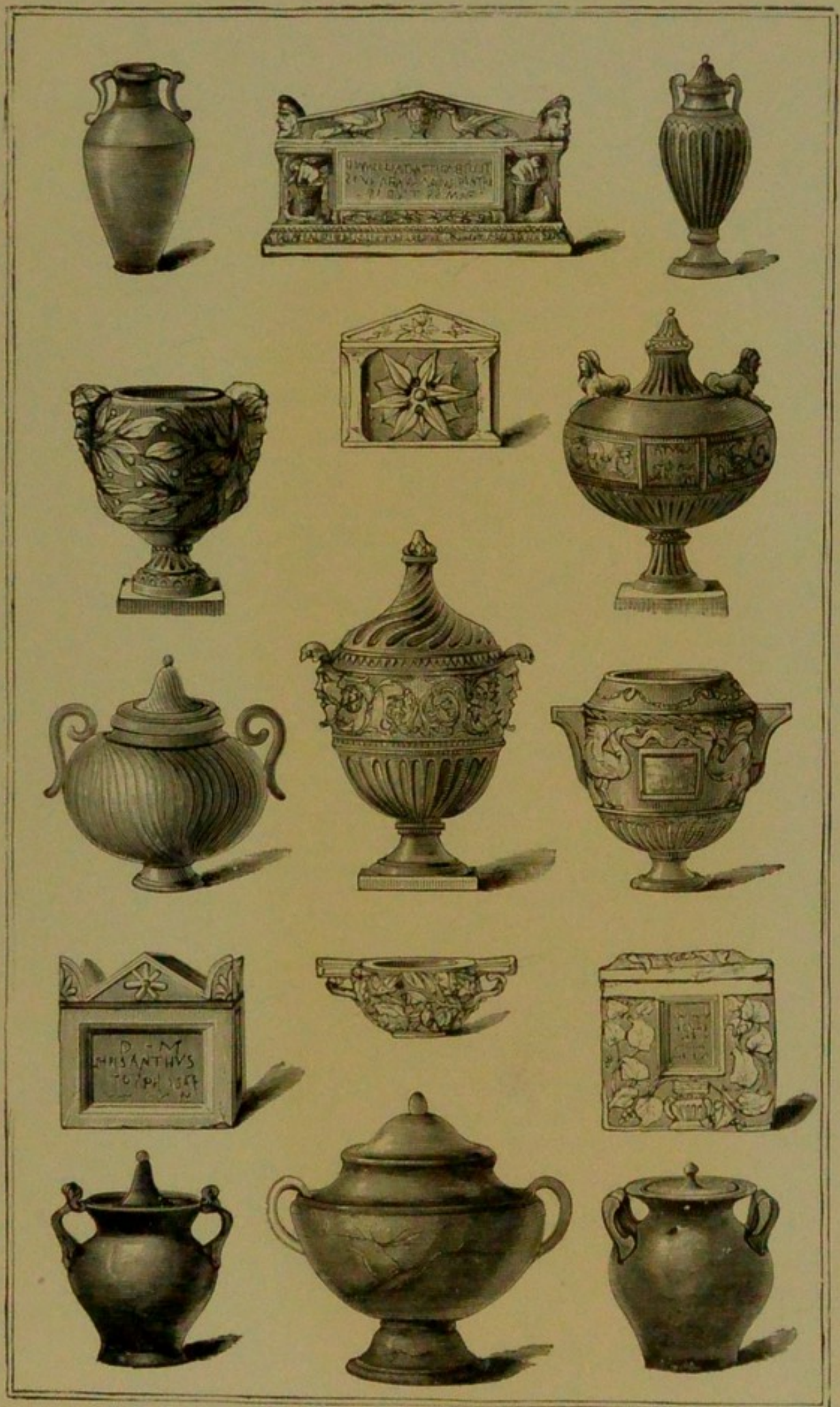
monuments which recalled the virtues of the deceased ; and the dead are supposed to be sleeping there in peaceful rest, free from the hurry and worry, and cares and disappointments, and ambitions and successes of this bitter world. It seems hard to dispel this attractive illusion, but the actual state of affairs is something very different. The remains of the deceased, it is true, lie calm and peaceful down below, but even in his inanimate form, as Sir Henry Thompson points out, all is bustle and activity. Chemical changes are rapidly going on, microbic life is becoming fruitful and multiplies fast, and the processes of decay involve conditions and mutilations and disfigurements which would fill us with horror and disgust if we could see the changes brought about by the dread hand of time. Then we hear lead coffins forcibly burst open by the rapid ferment of acrid gases therein, and black pools of fluid surrounding the coffins and oozing out into wells and streams, and foetid emanations finding their way through the supposed disinfectant barrier of the earth and tainting the atmosphere of the surrounding houses. These things are bad enough in small churchyards where private property exists, but how shall we describe the burial arrangements in large cemeteries where the poor are interred? The deceased is carried to a place entirely removed from all family or religious associations, the service is hurried over in a perfunctory manner by a stranger, and his coffin is separated from that of the next comer by a nominal foot, but actual few inches of earth, or in the case of common pits, none at all."

Sir Charles Cameron quotes from Dr. E. Duncan, of Glasgow, the description of the digging of a capacious pit twelve feet deep, in which coffins were laid in layers

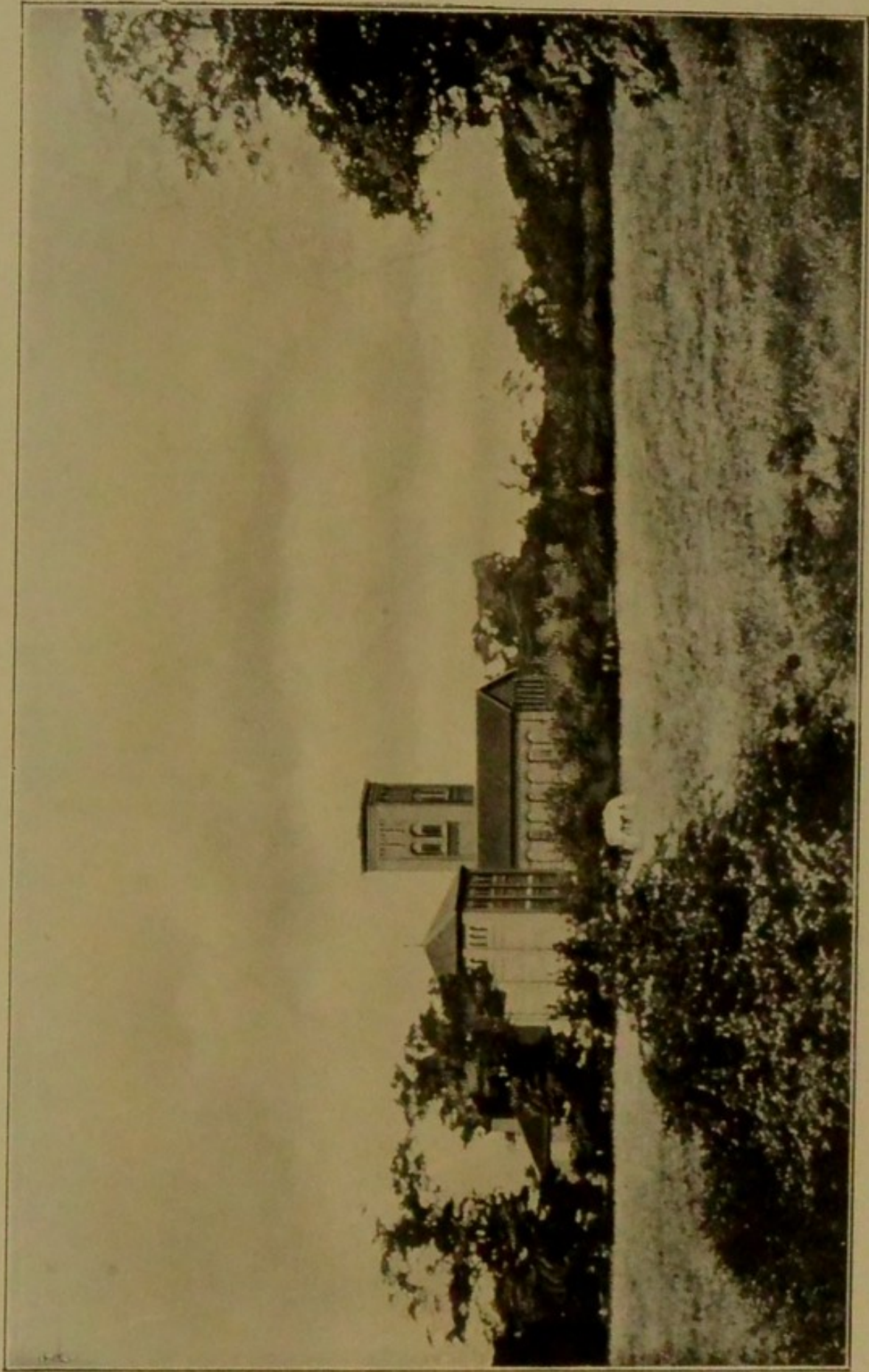
and left uncovered until the pit had been filled up to within the prescribed limit, of three feet from the surface, which pit took from ten to twelve days to complete, and contained from sixty to seventy coffins, and the process of packing them in and filling up the interstices between the larger coffins and the smaller was said to be quite an artistic piece of workmanship. The famous case of the parochial burial ground of St. Cuthbert's is quite as bad as this, for there in fifteen years 10,800 bodies had been deposited in little more than an acre of ground, nearly all of which had been trenched over for the purpose of reinterment three times in twenty years, and some of the graves had been opened often eight, nine, and eleven times. A furnace had been erected, and in spite of the protests of the surrounding inhabitants it was busily engaged in burning the remains of the *débris* removed from the ground by this exhumation.

The directors of the Kensal Green Cemetery actually proposed to accommodate 1,335,000 paupers in seven acres, which was expected to hold 133,500 graves, and each grave with ten coffins. This is the kind of treatment to which the world's failures are subjected.

Dr. Farquharson proceeds to give what he calls more practical considerations, by basing his case for cremation not entirely on sentimental but on sanitary considerations, and the danger to the public health which the present system involves. As he says, it matters very little to us individually what becomes of our bodies after death, but we have to consider the welfare of those whom we leave behind. Science, Dr. Farquharson says, has proved the way in which gases, impelled by the variations of atmospheric pressure, travel with the greatest ease through cement and mortar, which would



EXAMPLES OF ANCIENT URNS IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.



VIEW OF GOLDBER'S GREEN.

seem to furnish an insuperable obstacle, and we thus see how little protection coffins and even bricked-up graves can give against them. Cholera, he adds, has been unusually prevalent in the immediate precincts of the London grave-yards during all the recent epidemics. At the end of the lecture Dr. Farquharson speaks of the remedy to our present form of burial. "Now," he asks, "what is the remedy?" Sir Henry Thompson gives the first practical answer by laying down clearly and definitely the conditions under which cremation can be carried out by the Society, and these are:—To furnish two certificates, one from a qualified medical man who attended the deceased, and the second from a doctor resident in the district, who certifies after an independent examination of the evidence that death is due to natural causes, and these being passed, the process of burning is then carried out. If no medical certificate can be obtained the order must be made by a duly qualified medical man. In 1893, Dr. Farquharson states, a select committee was appointed by Mr. Asquith on the urgent appeal of leading members of the Cremation Society, on which he sat, who reported strongly against the present loose and ineffectual system of death registration and certification, and in favour of various reforms; but no action was taken owing to changes of Government and other causes. In conclusion, Dr. Farquharson says that in the two rival processes—if he may call them so—the same thing takes place in different ways. In one we resolve our bodies into primeval chemical elements, which in their turn evolve life out of death and furnish material ingredients to be used in the great circle of plant and animal existence. But in the one case the process is slow and laborious, and the progressive stages of disintegration and decay

are attended by stages happily hidden from the human eye; whilst the calm repose so apparently characteristic of burial may be rudely disturbed by self-interested violence, and some blameless being, whose life has been spent in doing good, may in death be made the medium for spreading infectious disease.

In the other case fire swiftly consumes the bodily framework, and leaves behind some sweet, clean ashes, which may be bestowed as reverently as affection may desire.

But it requires some pluck to go against the conventional routine of the world, and to escape from the trammels of custom and to brave the hostile and perhaps sneering comments of friends and neighbours needs some moral courage, more than some perhaps possess. But time works on our side, prejudices have been removed, hostile arguments overcome, and a good, stout, healthy body of public opinion founded in favour of cremation.

By the Cremation Act, 1902, Parliament has recognised cremation. In pursuance of this Statute the Home Secretary has made regulations as to the maintenance and inspection of crematoria, and has prescribed in what cases cremation may take place, and the forms of notices, certificates, and declarations which shall be given or made before cremation is permitted.

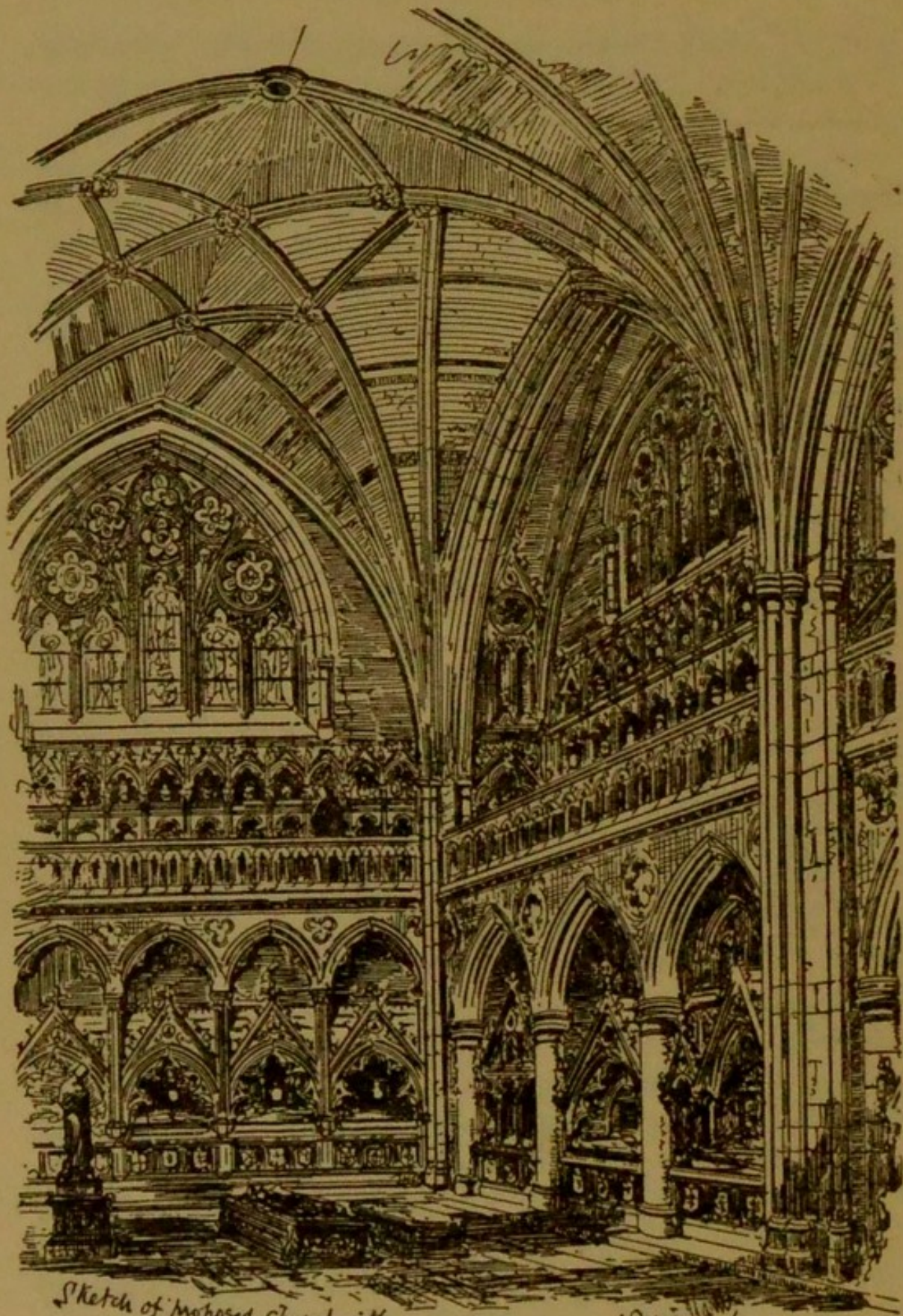
Between 1885 and 1909 over eight thousand cremations have taken place, and among well-known people who have been cremated at Woking Dr. Farquharson mentions the celebrated engineer, James Nasmyth; Lord Bramwell, the Judge; Sir Henry Layard; Du Maurier; Sir Spencer Wells, the eminent physician; Sir Edward Burne-Jones, and Lord Farrar amongst others. Besides the Crematorium at Woking, others

are at full work in Glasgow, Leeds, Bradford, Darlington, Golder's Green, Leicester, Birmingham, Ilford, Sheffield, Liverpool, and Hull.

Abroad cremation is rapidly on the increase. In Italy, in the towns of Milan, Bologna, and Venice, and in Germany, at Hamburg, Heidelberg, and Gotha. Cremation is also practised in Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, and in Norway; also in France, Canada, the United States, and New Zealand.

In New South Wales there is a Cremation Society, which held its first general meeting in November, 1908. During the year 1908 there was a decided increase in the number of cremations throughout this country. In this increase the London crematoria—Woking, Golder's Green, and Ilford—figure most prominently, the total number being 80 or 20 per cent. more than in the previous year. The exact figures are: for Woking, 119, as against 108 in 1907; for Golder's Green, 364, as against 290; and for Ilford, 19, as against 18. In the provinces the increase was only 4, or 1.4 per cent.

According to the *British Medical Journal*, cremation in Germany has lately made rapid headway, notwithstanding opposition on the part of religious bodies. The total number of bodies cremated in that country was 4,050 in 1908, as against 2,977 in 1907, showing an increase of 1,073, or 36 per cent. Among these were 1,474 females. The classification according to religious creeds gives some interesting results. While the majority were Lutherans, there was a considerable body of Roman Catholics, notwithstanding the prohibition of the Pope. For some reason, in Germany, as in France, cremation does not seem to appeal to Freethinkers. In 2,517 cases, all coming under the head of Lutherans, the cremation was accompanied by religious rites.



Sketch of proposed Chapel with
Columbaria in Gallery.

G. P. Davis 1885

POSTSCRIPT.WHY SHOULD NOT THE ASHES OF THE
DEAD BE PLACED IN CHURCHES?

Some quarter of a century ago I placed in our family chapel at Trentham Church an urn—made by Doulton's—in terra-cotta, in which I intended my ashes to be placed.

The local clergyman, fond, as many of his kidney, of interfering with anyone's actions in anything appertaining to what he considered his privileges and perquisites, informed me that such a thing as having my ashes placed within a church could not be allowed. The law, he said, forbade such a thing as "human remains" finding a place of rest within the sanctified walls of a place of prayer and worship.*

I accordingly took away my poor urn, which now awaits its future contents in my library at Hammerfield, and is placed cheek by jowl with a Roman or British urn which was unearthed at Hammerfield when foundations were being laid for the building. What possible objection can there be, may I ask, against the bestowal of the ashes of the dead within the walls of a church?

After Sir Henry Irving's funeral in Westminster Abbey I wrote to the papers suggesting that all bodies to be interred in the Abbey should be previously cremated. By that means sufficient room will be found for hundreds of the illustrious dead, and instead of

* Urns containing ashes have since been interred in churches. For the law on the point see *In re Kerr* (1894).—P. D.

having their poor carcasses rotting under the Abbey pavement, their illustrious and innocuous dust might be placed either beneath the flooring of the building or within shrines in the Abbey walls.

It is interesting to note that the will of the late Mr. W. P. Frith, R.A., whose body was cremated at Golders Green early this month, contained the following clause :

“ Believing that the duty of the individual to his kind includes providing for such final disposal of his body as shall be least detrimental to those who survive him, and believing that the modern process of incineration provides the quickest and safest mode of such disposal, I hereby solemnly express to my survivors and executor my earnest desire and request that on my decease my body shall be cremated at such convenient place as shall furnish the proper facilities.”

R. S. G.

Travellers' Club, Pall Mall, S.W.

November 26th, 1909.



THE CREMATION SOCIETY OF ENGLAND.



PRESIDENT.

* SIR CHARLES CAMERON, Bart., M.D., LL.D., J.P., D.L.

VICE-PRESIDENTS.

His Grace The DUKE OF BEDFORD, K.G.

The Rt. Hon. The EARL OF MAYO, K.P., P.C.

LORD RONALD SUTHERLAND-GOWER.

Rt. Hon. Sir WALTER FOSTER, P.C., M.D., D.C.L., LL.D., M.P.

The Rt. Hon. ROBERT FARQUHARSON, P.C., M.D., LL.D., J.P., D.L.

HON. PERCY WYNDHAM, J.P., D.L.,

Sir G. ANDERSON CRITCHETT, Bart., C.V.O., F.R.C.S.

* Sir JOHN TWEEDY, F.R.C.S., LL.D.

Sir L. ALMA-TADEMA, O.M., R.A.

COUNCIL.

* J. S. FLETCHER, Esq., J.P., M.P.

H. T. HERRING, Esq., M.B., B.S.

W. ROBINSON, Esq., F.L.S.

F. H. SKRINE, Esq., F.R.Hist.S.

J. C. SWINBURNE-HANHAM, Esq., J.P. (Hon. Secretary).

WILLIAM THEOBALD, Esq.

Sir HERBERT THOMPSON, Bart. (Hon. Treasurer).

Rev. CHARLES VOYSEY, B.A.

G. W. WHATCOTT, Esq.

* Trustees.

Mr. G. A. NOBLE, Secretary.

The Cremation Society of England was founded in 1874 by the late Sir Henry Thompson to promote Cremation as a method of disposing of the dead in a sanitary, reverent, and innocuous manner without danger to the living.

The Society is the pioneer in this movement, and by practically demonstrating the advantages and facilities of Cremation has already overcome much of the prejudice and opposition to which it was at first subjected.

The Society is philanthropic and the services of its Council and Officers are entirely honorary. The whole of its income is devoted to the propagation of Cremation in every way possible, by publishing and distributing pamphlets, by lectures, and by giving information.

Members have greatly increased since the rules were altered in March, 1908, and the Society has proportionately gained in strength. The Council, with the view of still further advancing the movement, cordially invite all interested in Cremation to enrol themselves members. The Society is always pleased to give information, as far as it is able, on subjects connected with Cremation.

Membership also offers the following advantages:—

A Life Member is entitled to be cremated *at any Crematorium in Great Britain* without fee.

The wish of a person to be cremated after death is more likely to be fulfilled if he is a Life Member. A wish is often forgotten, or not acted upon, if no instructions are left. Life Membership prepays the cremation fee, and thereby relieves the survivors of a portion of the funeral expenses, and the Certificate, given by the Society, clearly indicates the desire, which relieves executors and others of the responsibility of deciding.

A member, beside being kept in touch with the progress of the movement, by means of publications, etc., has the right to vote at all general meetings of the Society, and therefore to influence its policy.

The following are the rules governing life-membership:—

RULE 5.

The members of the Society shall be persons of either sex, who have been approved by the Council, and who

- (a) *Pay to the Society a Subscription of One Guinea per annum,*
- (b) *Qualify for life membership under Rule 6.*

RULE 6.

Any person who shall make application to the Society in the form provided for that purpose and pay the sum of Five Guineas shall thereby qualify as a life member of the Society, and shall as such life member be entitled—subject to the legal forms being complied with—to be cremated at death without further fee at any Crematorium in Great Britain that is in working order.

The payment of six annual subscriptions of One Guinea shall qualify a person for life membership.

No financial liability beyond the payment of the subscription is attached to Membership.

A portion of each Life-Member's subscription, sufficient to meet the liability in respect of his cremation, is invested in the names of the trustees, and will be so held until his death.

The following Crematoria are already established:—

BIRMINGHAM—

Offices: King's Court, 115, Colmore Row.

BRADFORD (Corporation)—

Offices: Scholemoor Cemetery.

DARLINGTON—

Offices: 36, Priestgate, Darlington.

GLASGOW—

Offices: 142, St. Vincent Street, Glasgow.

APPENDIX

GOLDER'S GREEN (London, N.W.)—

Offices : 324, Regent Street, London W.

HULL (Municipal)—

Offices : Hedon Road Cemetery, Hull.

ILFORD (City of London)—

Offices : Guildhall, London, E.C.

LEEDS (Headingley)—

Offices : Lawnswood Cemetery, Adel.

LEICESTER (Corporation)—

Offices : Gilroes Cemetery, Leicester.

LIVERPOOL (Corporation)—

Offices : Crematorium, Priory Road, Anfield.

MANCHESTER—

Offices : 57, King Street, Manchester.

SHEFFIELD (Corporation)—

Offices : City Road Cemetery.

WOKING (St. John's)—

Offices : 324, Regent Street, London, W.

And the building of others is contemplated.

Further particulars may be obtained free upon application to the Secretary, THE CREMATION SOCIETY OF ENGLAND, 324, Regent Street, London, W.



THE
Cremation Society of England,

324, REGENT STREET, W.

*The following works on Cremation will be forwarded by the
Secretary, post free, on receipt of stamps or P.O.O.*

MODERN CREMATION: ITS HISTORY AND PRACTICE.
By the late Sir HENRY THOMPSON, Bart., F.R.C.S.,
M.B. Lond., First President of the Society. 4th edition.
Cloth, 2s. ; paper, *One Shilling.*

CREMATION: THE TREATMENT OF THE BODY AFTER
DEATH. By the late Sir HENRY THOMPSON, Bart.,
together with "Cremation or Burial," by the late Sir T.
SPENCER WELLS, Bart., and the charge of Sir James Stephen
delivered at Cardiff. 3rd edition, 1884. *One Shilling.*

DR. FARQUHARSON (Rt. Hon. R. FARQUHARSON)
ON CREMATION, being one of the Aberdeen City
Lectures delivered on November 30th, 1899. *Fourpence.*

SPEECH OF SIR HENRY THOMPSON, Bart., at
the General Meeting of Members at Grosvenor House
on March 15th, 1899, being a Reprint in pamphlet form.
Fourpence.

CLEANLINESS *v.* CORRUPTION. Illustrated by
LORD RONALD SUTHERLAND-GOWER. *Sixpence.*

GOLDER'S GREEN CREMATORIUM: Record of
Proceedings at Opening Ceremony. (Reprint, 1907.)
Twopence.

DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS FOR ARRANGING
CREMATION at Golder's Green, or Woking. *Free.*

GOLDER'S GREEN CREMATORIUM. Illustrated
and Descriptive Booklet. *Free.*

WOKING CREMATORIUM. Descriptive Booklet.
Free.

CREMATION IN GREAT BRITAIN. Full informa-
tion, with illustrations and description of every
Crematorium, Cremation Act 1902, and Home Office
Regulations. *Sixpence.*

CREMATION IN GREAT BRITAIN.

CONTAINS: An Account of the Cremation Movement—Reasons for Cremation—Brief History and Description of the British Crematoria, with Tables of Fees, etc.—Építome of the Law relating to Disposal after Death, and Directions for Arranging for Cremation, etc., etc., together with the Cremation Act of 1902 and the Statutory Regulations made thereunder by the Home Secretary—Illustrated with numerous Views.

PRESS NOTICES.

"Contemporary Review."

"We recommend the book to the attention of those who have any doubt as to the growing necessity of the general adoption of cremation."

"The Guardian."

"Gives an account of the various crematoria in this country, as well as much else that it is useful to know."

"Nottingham Guardian."

"Will be read with widespread interest, as it gives a history of the movement in this country and answers enquiries which are often made as to the arrangements in cases of cremation."

"The Pharmaceutical Journal."

"An interesting description of the cremation movement; many clear illustrations are given."

"Science Siftings."

"We regard cremation as the only sanitary and inoffensive form of burial. All the facts relating to this means of interment are lucidly set forth. This booklet could be read with much profit by everyone."

"Nursing Notes."

"The cost is so frequently mentioned as a reason for ordinary burial in preference to cremation that it is especially good to have facts here put on record showing that cremation is not the expensive affair it is supposed to be."

"The Vegetarian."

"A very neat production and lavishly illustrated, dealing with a subject of increasing interest. In this interesting little book we find historical facts, opinions of eminent men, and many other items of useful information."

"The General Practitioner."

"We strongly advise our readers to buy the above book, to read it, and to keep it for reference."

Of all Booksellers, or post free from

THE CREMATION SOCIETY OF ENGLAND,

324, REGENT STREET, W.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

THE LONDON CREMATION Co., LTD.,

Carry out all kinds of
Memorial Work for .
Cremation, in Marble,
Metal or Stone, . . .
. at reasonable prices.

**SPECIAL DESIGNS FOR TABLETS, DOORS,
AND GRILLES FOR COLUMBARIA.**

*The Company have a LARGE SELECTION
OF URNS in ALL MATERIALS, and
are prepared to give advice and assistance to
persons desirous of securing replicas from the
Antique and Classical examples for future use.*

FULL PARTICULARS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM—

Office: 324, REGENT STREET. (Near ^{Queen's} Hall.)

Telephone: 1907 Gerrard.

Telegrams: "Crematorium, London."

GOLDER'S GREEN CREMATORIUM,

LONDON, N.W.

Situated in picturesque Freehold grounds overlooking the wooded slopes of Hampstead Heath. Five minutes' walk from the Charing X and Hampstead Tube Terminus.

The Chapel, containing grand organ, is available for any form of Funeral Service or Ceremony.

Columbarium for the sepulture of urns in perpetuity.

Provision for urns and for cinerary Monuments in the grounds. Urns received from abroad for permanent deposit

The buildings and grounds are open to visitors.

All information may be obtained from the Secretary.

Office: 324, REGENT STREET, LONDON, W.

(NEAR QUEEN'S HALL.)

Telephone: 1907 Gerrard.

Telegrams: "Crematorium, London."

MORS + JANUA + VITÆ

CREMATION makes possible far more worthy memorials of those who have passed through the gate of Death into the Life beyond than can be the case where earth-burial is carried out, no matter how carefully it may be done.

No one who considers the matter from a sanitary point of view and realises the actual changes taking place while the body resolves to its component elements would think of spending much time in a mausoleum which contained corrupting bodies within its walls or in vaults below, even though they be enclosed in lead cases.

But with only pure ashes in urns or cists a small mausoleum may become a very precious memorial-chamber of a family, to which the living members may constantly come and renew floral offerings and other mementoes from time to time, and in the quiet seclusion of such a little chamber a place for meditation and communion of spirit with the loved ones gone before may be found such as few spots can provide in the busy round of city life.

Surely, it would be quite suitable for such a small mausoleum to contain any special objects which were intimately associated with the life of the departed, and it could, of course, be always kept under lock and key, so as to be quite a sacred spot to the use of those who cared for its associations.

A mausoleum of about 7ft. to 8ft. internal diameter covered with a glass dome and with tracery or other pierced openings on three sides and a small doorway on the fourth can be constructed of enduring materials and lined throughout with tiles, marble, or alabaster in any style from the simplest to the most ornate at a cost of say £150 to £700.

Designs can be submitted to meet any requirement.

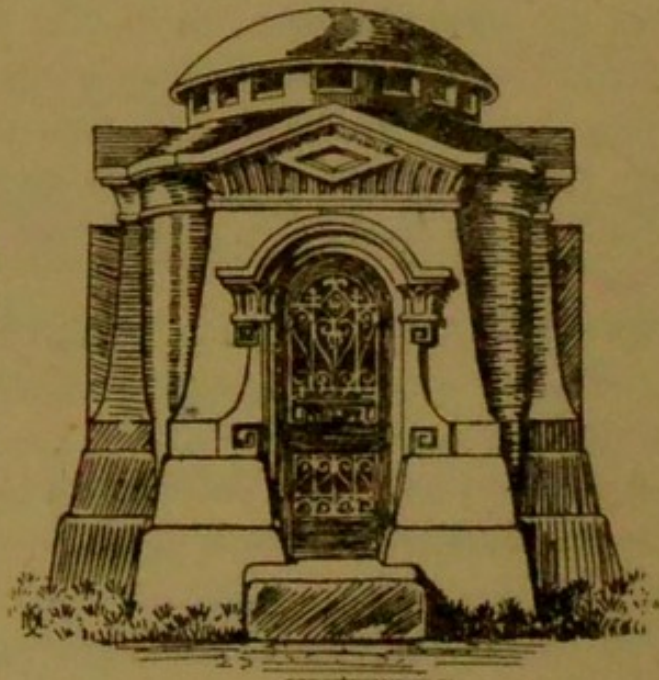
J. MILLER CARR.

Parliament Chambers, Westminster, S.W.

MEMORIALS IN ENDURING MATERIALS

Specially designed for Crematoria.

Urns and
Cists in
Terra - Cotta
Doulton
Ware
or Bronze.



Mausoleum

designed to receive the ashes after Cremation. The building being perfectly pure and free from any taint of corruption offers exceptional opportunities for floral tributes and loving care on the part of relatives of the deceased.

**GRILLES AND GATES FOR NICHES IN
COLUMBARIA A SPECIALITY.**

Designs with Estimates submitted for the work by—

J. MILLER CARR,

Telephone :

407

Westminster.

Parliament Chambers,

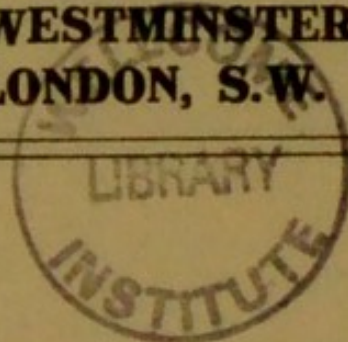
Great Smith Street,

WESTMINSTER,

LONDON, S.W.

(Opposite

Church House)



CINERARY URNS AND CASKETS

(From Ancient Examples),

== In **TERRA COTTA**, ==

the material that the majority of the ancient urns were made of,
Manufactured in England by

PULHAM & SON,

Makers to all the Principal Crematoria,

71, Newman Street, Oxford Street, London, W.

TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS: "PULHAMITE, LONDON."

TELEPHONE No.: 5141 CENTRAL.

Works: BROXBOURNE (G. E. R.)

TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS: "PULHAM'S, BROXBOURNE."

TELEPHONE No.: 16 BROXBOURNE.



Casket Urns in Stock at Woking, Golder's Green, and other Crematoria.

Speciality :

The Making and Carrying Out of Special Designs.

ILLUSTRATED PRICE LIST ON APPLICATION.

*A Stock of Urns and Caskets is on hand and may be inspected at our
London Showroom.*



Crematorium

**GRILLES,
TABLETS,
AND
GATES,**

IN

BRONZE
OR
MARBLE.



**GAWTHORP & SONS,
16, Long Acre, London, W.C.**

By Appointment to H.M. The KING.

CULN BRASSES (REGISTERED),
ALBASCRIPT TABLETS,
MARBLE MEMORIALS,
For CHURCH WALLS and CEMETERIES.

Designs and Prices on Application.

GOLD MEDAL, EARL'S COURT, LONDON, 1909.



BLUNT & WRAY
49, RED LION ST., HOLBORN
LONDON, W.C.

TELEPHONE 3816 CENTRAL

DESIGNERS AND MAKERS
OF CINERARY URNS AND
TABLETS, AND WORKERS
IN BRONZE, SILVER,
GOLD, ETC.

CRAFTSMEN TO THE LONDON CREMATION CO.

