



Cremation and the Campo Santo.

By MR. GERALD MOERDIJK.

Life must end, and of course arrangements must be made in this relation. Now, the question of cremation versus burial has of late years received far more consideration than formerly, and crematoria have been established all over the world. Cremation is nothing new under the sun, and as far as history will take us back we find it in common use either alone or side by side with burial.

In England it was practised in the stone and bronze ages down to the time of the Roman occupation. Later, under the influence of Christianity which, like Judaism before it, always favoured burial in preference to burning, cremation ceased, and has not been in use till its recent revival; it is, however, the common way of disposing of the dead over large parts of Asia (India and Siam). The modern revival began in Italy in 1870, and was introduced into England by Sir Henry Thompson, who founded the Cremation Society in 1874. Owing to legal difficulties the first cremation, however was not performed till 1882, since which date its spread has been rapid and continuous. Beautiful Campo Santo Crematoria exist in Genoa, Leipzig, and Paris, hundreds of small crematoria are found all over the Continent and Britain.

Reasons for Cremation on the Ground of Health.

Looked at from a purely sanitarian point of view, cremation is undoubtedly the most perfect system of the disposal of the dead. The matter is one calling for the most serious consideration on the part of the

hygienist, who, when casting prejudice aside and reasoning alone by the science of his avocation, can but arrive at the conclusion mentioned. So long as towns and villages are small, burial of the dead in the midst of the living does comparatively little harm. But as our population increases very rapidly and is concentrated round centres of industry, it becomes imperative to consider the question of public health in a way that was quite unknown before.

Research has shown that churchyards are centres from which disease spreads to the surrounding dwellings, the air in the neighbourhood of a cemetery contains a very large percentage of carbon dioxide (CO_2). In England investigations were made which revealed the horrible conditions of burial vaults and graves, and the result was that in 1855 a law was passed forbidding interment within the boundaries of cities. This, however, proved to be only a temporary remedy for the evil. Cemeteries were formed on the outskirts of London and elsewhere, but the growth of the population was so rapid that it overtook the cemeteries, which were soon surrounded by dwelling-houses: thus the old fatal conditions were reproduced over again. There is only one remedy, and that remedy is found in cremation, by which a human body is reduced in the space of half an hour into harmless gasses and a small amount of clean, white ash. It is really almost incredible that people will go on sowing the ground around the cities in which they live with a ring of decomposing matter. Under usual conditions obtain-

ing in regard to cremation, the resultants of the complete resolution of the body which are its elementary and inodorous gasses are returned to the earth through the action of rain and dew. Nothing is more absorbant of these gasses than water, and this gives back to the earth the elementary solids which had been borrowed from them. Thus we find that decomposition in a grave and decomposition through the instrumentality of the crematorium resolves itself in the relative speed of resolution.

Aesthetic Reasons.

Cremation in no way interferes with the feeling of sanctity which attaches to the remains of the dead. An urn, to begin with, is a far more beautiful thing than a coffin, and is capable of a great variety of artistic treatment. An urn containing the ashes can be buried in a quiet country churchyard just as well as a coffin, or as the ashes are entirely harmless we could revert to the original custom of interring our dead in monuments inside a church. Or again for those who prefer them, columbaria can be provided for the reception of urns, which can either be seen or hermetically sealed up in a niche, to rest there in perpetuity. It is repugnant to feeling to have human bones interfered with after interment, and this often happens in case of burial in a cemetery. The *requiescat in pace* is not always for good and all.

When a town overgrows its boundaries the cemetery is used as a building ground, and in older cities human bones are often found whilst digging trenches for foundations. The Swiss, for instance, have a playful way of treating the bones of their dead. They reverently consign the mortal remains to earth, yet do not allow the bones to remain there in peace indefinitely; for the Switzer considers the surface of his dear land too valuable to be overspread with the remains of his forefathers. He therefore, after a lapse of about twenty years, digs up the bones and stacks them in bins around his chapels and churches. A grim sight indeed whilst attending service in such a chapel to see around the living the bones of hundreds of those who have passed away ranged tier upon tier in open bins around the wall, their skulls grinning out towards us whilst resting on their thigh-bones.

Individual sentiment must decide which is the more preferable: the chill attributes of the cemetery, its drear and dismal reiteration of the passing hence and its sanitary imperfections—perhaps the nearest and dearest to our hearts lies in hideous attenuated transmutation, the prey of worms and the like—or those of the crematory mausoleum with its more cheering sanctity, its perfect hygiene, and its capabilities both in

regard to architectural and sculptural effect as a fitting collective monument to those who have passed away. Surely such an edifice rearing itself in majesty from a Campo Santo, verdured and relieved by nature's own floral embellishments, with its chaste arcadings and loggia, their pillars rising from flower-beds to relieve the sombrous solemnity of the array of monuments upon the walls in the sculptured groups between the lengthy porticos is preferable to the vast flesh-chilling cemetery with its monotonous stone slabs. Here we have two methods of effecting one and the same end—a dual end—the disposal of the dead and the erection of mementos to them.

Reasons for Cremation.

Looking through books on cremation I found the following:—

Cremation effects in one hour that which it takes years to do if the body is buried. The process of cremation absolutely prevents all possibility of pollution of water or contamination of air, whereas a burial is always noxious and sometimes dangerous.

Cremation, if generally adopted, would avoid the necessity of adding to our large and costly cemeteries.

Cremation offers facilities for a return to the ancient practice of interment in churches.

Cremation removes the possibility of being buried alive.

Cremation is easily arranged for and less expensive than the ordinary form of burial where a private grave is used.

Cremation interferes with no religion or rite.

Cremation admits of the same ceremony as if ordinary burial were resorted to.

Cremation has been recognised by Parliament, which has approved of 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.

Cremation provides a much more effective safeguard against foul play than in the case of ordinary burial, and is the only real protection of society against secret crime.

Cremation is the only remedy for the present day unnatural condition of burial, facilitating the disposal of the dead reverently and decently without danger to the living.

Example of Crematorium.

The Golders Green Crematorium, in London, which is here described, was designed by Sir Ernest George. It stands in its own grounds, which are pleasantly

undulating and are surrounded by a belt of sheltering trees. Within this belt and following generally its inner line is a circular carriage road. On either side of the road fine groups of beautiful flowering trees and shrubs have been planted, the central space being an open lawn. The main part of the ground is kept as a garden, but a portion has been set aside for the erection of private columbaria. In the fore-court is an ample porch giving access to the chapel which, including its gallery, is 70 feet long by 25 feet wide, and will seat about 300 persons; it also contains a large organ. A waiting-room and vestry are beneath the gallery. The internal walls are panelled in oak to the height of the doors, above which the arcaded brick walls carry an open timbered roof. The catafalque, composed of rare marbles relieved with bronze, harmonises with the surroundings and adds to the dignity of the simple design of the interior. A rose window is at one end and at the other is a range of arcaded windows kept high to leave wall space for a future cloister, which is to be an important feature. The cloister will be open on its garden side, in it will be made grants in perpetuity of space for the erection of monuments and family tombs, and thus afford a covered space where works of art may be set up as memorials to the dead without fear of damage from the weather. The columbarium is a tower-like building in four stories, its walls fitted with niches to receive urns containing ashes. The chapel at the crematorium is available for any form of service or ceremony, religious or secular, desired by the friends of the deceased.

The Campo Santo in Genoa is on a far grander scale than the London Crematorium, and is placed among beautiful mountains overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. It is built entirely out of white marble, and is generally used by the inhabitants of the town.

Here follow some extracts from the Cremation Act of 1902, passed by the British Parliament, to show some of the conditions under which cremation is carried out.

No cremation of human remains shall take place except in a crematorium of the opening of which notice has been given to the Secretary of State.

It shall not be lawful to cremate the remains of any person who is known to have left a written direction to the contrary.

It shall not be lawful to cremate human remains which have not been identified.

No cremation shall take place until the death of the deceased has been duly registered.

The Act contains about five pages, and ensures against foul play, also sees to it that the ashes are treated with all respect due to human remains.

ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS TO THE ASSOCIATION BYE-LAWS.

The following additions and amendments to the bye-laws of the Association received the assent of His Excellency the Governor-General-in-Council and were published for general information in the Union Government Gazette No. 920, of 11th October, 1918 (Government Notice No. 1371).

His Excellency the Governor-General-in-Council has been pleased, under the powers vested in him by section twenty-nine of the Architects' Private Act, No. 39 of 1909 (Transvaal), to approve of the following amendments and additions to the by-laws published under Government Notice No. 574 of 1910:—

Status of Salaried and Absentee Members.

The following new clauses to be added:—

29. (d) Every member registered or hereafter registering shall be considered, *ipso facto*, practising, save as herein provided, and any member ceasing practice or claiming to pay reduced subscriptions by reason of being a salaried assistant or absent from the Transvaal or South Africa shall be exempted or entitled to abatement as provided by the Act and by-laws only if he shall have given to the Registrar written and properly substantiated notice, and such exemption or abatement shall in any case be effective only for each complete year of subscription. Any member who shall intend to recommence practice shall immediately give written notice thereof to the Registrar.

29. (e) For the purpose of these by-laws, a salaried assistant shall be a registered architect who, while registered in terms of the Act, is ordinarily and regularly employed at a fixed salary, and who shall not for any part of his time perform any work whether for remuneration or otherwise under the title of architect except for and in the name of his regular employer.

Unprofessional Conduct.

The following to be substituted for the present by-law clause No. 51 (h):—

Knowingly taking part in any competition, the conditions of which are expressly and for stated reasons disapproved by the Council.

The following new clauses to be added:—

51. (i) Attempting in any way to secure work for which a competition is in progress except as competitor and in accordance with the conditions of that competition; and that present clause No. 51 (i) be renumbered No. 51 (m).

51. (j) Attempting to influence the award of a competition otherwise than as assessor or authorised adviser.

to in By-law No. 36 (d), to see that no member shall