

# Saint Mary's Beacon

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LEONARDTOWN, MD., THURSDAY MORNING, JANUARY 7, 1886.

ESTABLISHED 1822.

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Seasoned Lumber and flooring kept under cover.  
Sept 11, 1884—v.

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I MOST respectfully inform the public that I have just completed a new horse and can furnish

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Oct 2, 1884—v.  
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Oct 18, 1883—v

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NEW STORE!

The firm formerly known as Mrs. Bliz & Jones has mutually dissolved partnership and will now be recognized as

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Thinking our patrons for past favors, we solicit a continuance of the same. We assure the public that our best efforts shall be made to keep a handsome and fashionable assortment of all

MILINERY,

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Having just returned from Baltimore with a well assorted stock, we are prepared to accommodate the most fastidious customer. Call and examine our stock.

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Oct 28, 79—v

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Mrs. E. R. BELL is now prepared to accommodate permanent and transient boarders at

WHITE HALL, LEONARDTOWN,

at the following rates:  
Breakfast and supper, 25 cents each.  
Dinner, 35 " "  
Horse feed, long and short combined, 25c.  
Nov 13, 84—v

1886

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1886

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AND LIGHT WEIGHT OVERCOATS

FROM THE OLD AND LONG-TRIED HOUSE OF

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### NOAH WALKER & CO., CLOTHIERS AND MERCHANT TAILORS,

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**LIFE AND DEATH.**  
The rose that scents the air,  
And sweetly breathes away,  
Knows not this every drop of blood  
But leaves it nearer to the light,  
Nor can it taste in its own cup  
The odor of its own decay.  
The dew that rests the flower,  
And softly slips the dewdrops,  
Enjoys the lifetime of its life,  
And then in a delicious sleep  
Descends into some other flower,  
And, weeping, dies in its own cup.  
The Day, whose wings are brightly  
Expand majestic over us,  
Exceeds his life, yet lives in light,  
While close behind him, in the night,  
Pursues him in his shining suit,  
And, like a specter, wears his pall.  
And Life and Death are Light and Shade,  
And each enshades the other's breath;  
From Death's cold ashes Life is made—  
As roses spring where roses fade—  
And Life in his sublime parade  
Is still the unconscious sire of Death.  
—Edmond Merivale.

[Reprinted from the Transactions of the Medical and Chirurgical Faculty of the State of Maryland, 1885.]

**THE NON-NECESSITY OF ANY RADICAL CHANGE IN THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF DISPOSAL OF THE DEAD.**

BY GEORGE H. ROBE, M. D.

Following the lead of some supposed sanitary authorities, many medical men and a small but enthusiastic minority of the general public have of late years expressed views decidedly antagonistic to the time-honored custom of burial in the earth as a measure for the disposal of the dead. As a remedy for certain admitted evils connected with interment, incineration is proposed. It may be worth while to examine the question whether cremation is really an unobjectionable substitute for our present method of disposal of the bodies of those who have paid the debt of nature.

The first argument usually advanced in favor of cremation is one that should receive the most careful attention and have great weight in deciding the question. It is asserted with much positiveness that decaying bodies primarily pollute the soil in which they are buried, and that secondarily the ground water and ground air are necessarily contaminated with the products of organic decomposition.

The further inference is then drawn that the ground water rendered impure in this manner, gains entrance to springs or wells and contaminates the sources of our drinking water, and so gives rise to insanitary conditions, or positive disease. The air over burial grounds, being assumed charged with the gaseous products of decomposition is also accused of being a cause of unhealthiness.

In spite of the general impression of the unfavorable influence of the vicinity of cemeteries upon the health of the living, there is very little trustworthy evidence upon this point. The often quoted example of the *Cimetiere des Innocents* in Paris, and of some of the intra-mural burial grounds of London cannot be accepted as absolutely conclusive. And even if it were positively established that over-crowded and badly managed burial grounds are a menace to the health of those living near them, the objection would not be valid against properly conducted methods of earth burial.

One of the gases produced in largest quantity by decaying corpses is carbon dioxide, and yet Smolensky found that in one of the old cemeteries of Munich the percentage of carbon dioxide in the ground air was less than half of that found in the soil of a place used for the deposit of offal of various kinds. Pettenkofer was so little impressed by the supposed deleterious influence of the gases of decay that he selected the cemetery above referred to as the site of the new Hygienic Institute of Munich.

The generally observed good health of workmen in cemeteries and knackereries contradicts the opinion that the gaseous emanations from decaying animal matter are necessarily dangerous to health. Many workmen so employed are quite ready to testify to the contrary, although such testimony would not perhaps be considered as trustworthy evidence.

Experiments of Buchner, Nageli and others have shown that micro-organisms are not moved by air currents if the organisms are attached to a moist surface. It is only when both the organisms and the surface upon which they are resting are quite dry that they are readily taken up and carried hither and thither in currents of air. This would indicate the diffi-

culty of conveying the germs of any disease from a decaying cadaver. An observation of Miquel is recorded which has likewise a bearing upon this point. He found that the air of the Parisian cemeteries was only slightly richer in bacteria than the air at the observatory of Montsouris, while the air of the city of Paris contained these organisms in a vastly greater proportion.

Similar results have been obtained when the water from wells in or near cemeteries has been examined. Such wells, as a rule, furnish water of equal or greater purity to that obtained from places inhabited by human beings and where the soil is more or less polluted. There is abundant negative testimony, likewise, in the demonstrable absence of any special tendency to disease in persons who constantly consume such drinking water. A paper by Dr. J. F. A. Adams, published in the Mass. State Board of Health Report for 1875, gives strong testimony to this view. The facts recorded by Dr. Adams can hardly fail to convince any unprejudiced reader of the very intangible nature of the evidence relied upon by those who offer cremation as a rational substitute for inhumation on sanitary grounds.

The advocates of incineration further claim that certain infectious diseases, such as cholera, typhoid fever, measles, small-pox, scarlet fever, and diphtheria may be communicated through the air, water, or soil polluted by the corpses of those dead with the diseases mentioned. This claim has been so persistently made that it will probably cause some surprise when I state that no trustworthy observations are on record which would afford a safe basis for such a conclusion. The many opportunities for infection by this channel which have been furnished by destructive epidemics of yellow fever, small-pox, cholera, diphtheria and typhus fever have hitherto remained unimproved by the respective diseases. Most of the observations quoted as evidence by writers prove the dangers of burial during epidemics, lack accuracy and hence cannot be relied upon. The same authors neglect wholly the strong negative testimony which the epidemics of yellow fever in Savannah in 1876, and of Memphis and New Orleans in 1878 and 1879 furnished against the danger of cemetery burial in times of epidemic. I am prepared to maintain that the greatest violence of the disease in the above epidemics was not manifested in the vicinity of the cemeteries. Of the small-pox epidemic in this city in 1883, the same could be asserted.

It is further claimed by its advocates that cremation would be an economical measure if substituted for burial. This claim is an absurd one for the cost of a burial or an incineration is what those who conduct it choose to make it. I venture to say that the cost of the services within the crematorium at Lancaster or at Brooklyn will be fully as great as the expense of a first-class funeral within the gates of Greenmount or Baltimore cemeteries. The cost of reaching the cemetery is an incidental item and cannot properly be included in the total.

The third advantage claimed for cremation likewise falls to the ground when examined in the light of experience. During times of the epidemic prevalence of disease, it is said, the bodies of the dead can be more rapidly and effectually disposed of by burning than by burial. A brief calculation will at once show the fallacy of this. In an epidemic of cholera the number of deaths daily might very greatly exceed the ordinary daily death-rate. It must be evident that the crematory "plant" sufficient for ordinary uses would be totally inadequate during an epidemic. The average number of deaths daily in this city during the past year was a fraction under 23. Under the best conditions at present attainable, probably at least four cremation furnaces would be necessary to properly dispose of these. But suppose an epidemic of cholera or yellow fever, and a rise in the death rate of one hundred or more a day, would it be possible to reduce to ashes all these bodies with the arrangements for ordinary (may I be permitted to say "every day") use?

On the other hand does any one suppose that a community would be prepared for such a contingency by sinking a fund in furnaces that might or might not be used for the incineration

of human bodies, but which could be applied to no other useful purpose whatever?

It is also claimed that in time of war cremation would be a more rapid and effective method of disposing of those killed in action than burial. On the battle-field of Sedan this was attempted, but with a conspicuous want of success. The perambulatory crematorium recommended by Mr. Essie for use in the field, will probably not be added to the quartermaster's stores during the present century.

I have shown, I think, that the advantages claimed for cremation over burial are illusory. But there are positive objections which outweigh all the advantages claimed. In cases of criminal poisoning cremation would destroy all evidence of the crime, and the ends of justice would be defeated. This is a fatal objection to the general adoption of this method of disposing of the dead.

I have not touched upon the sentimental phase of the question. And yet, this is a point of view which cannot be ignored. The overwhelming majority of the people are tenacious of old customs, and advocacy of general cremation gives their conservatism a rude shock. It may be conceded that the ancient funeral pyre is a more poetic way of consuming the dead body than the slow consumption going on in the grave; but there is a vast difference between the throne of fire where were scattered the ashes of Sardanapalus, and an ordinary furnace blast, "fired up" like the blast in an iron foundry. There is in the latter no sentiment or illusion. Who could idealize a quick roast in a reverberatory furnace!

From a somewhat careful study of this subject, I believe the following conclusions are justified.

1. Cremation is not necessary as a sanitary measure, under conditions prevalent in this country.
2. Cremation has no advantage on the score of economy over interment.
3. Cremation fails to meet the requirements of epidemics or wars, as well as burial.
4. Cremation is objectionable from a legal point of view, as criminal poisoning would often pass undetected if incineration were general.
5. It fails to comply with the emotional demands of our nature, by substituting a harsh and unseemly procedure for the more poetic and sentimental slow dissolution going on in the grave.

Nothing in this paper is, however, intended to approve of violations of sanitary laws so frequently met in cemeteries. These places should always be kept under strict supervision, guided by a proper code of sanitary regulations, and all infractions of these should be promptly punished. It is conceded that intramural cemeteries are objectionable in many respects, but when bodies are properly buried in suitable soil, their decay goes on rapidly and without giving rise to offensive or deleterious emanations.

\*Let me add a few facts which are well established, and which may be readily verified by reference to sanitary publications. At the *Cimetiere des Innocents* in Paris in 1785-86, more than five thousand corpses in all stages of decomposition were exhumed. No evil effects from breathing this contaminated air were observed in the workmen or in those living in the vicinity. At the *Pere la Chaise* in the same city, over 200 exhumations are made every year at varying periods after interment. No bad results have been noticed in the grave diggers.

During and after the Franco-Prussian war exhumations were conducted on a large scale. The records are silent as to any ill effects upon the workmen.—*Hyg., Dictionary of Hygiene.*

In an English blue book published on this subject in 1850, many instances are quoted where grave diggers had pursued their avocations from ten to twenty-two years without experiencing any ill effect therefrom.

Four Lives Saved. Dr. Bull's Cough Syrup relieved four of my children of a most alarming attack of Whooping Cough, from which their throats and necks became so swollen as to prevent them from swallowing. Nothing would give them even temporary relief, until this Syrup was tried. One bottle, on one night, saved their lives. I verily believe. Geo. W. Earhart, Captain of Police Baltimore, Md.

A disciple of Blackstone, at Albany, Ga., was met carrying home a possum. He was asked, "Hello, J., what is that?" "Possum." "What are you going to do with him?" "I'm going to have a big possum supper." "How many will be there?" "Two—me and the possum."

**A Prophecy for 1886.**—Some one has unearthed an old prophecy for the year 1886 of a decidedly uncomfortable character. It appears that in the Church of Oberemmel, near the city of Treveri, in Germany, there is a stone tablet some centuries old, on which is cut the prophecy; verse in prose it may be rendered:

"When Mark shall bring us Easter and Anthony shall sing praises at Pentecost, and John swelling the censer at the feast of Corpus Dimini, then shall the whole earth resound with weeping and wailing."

Now, it so happens that next year Easter falls on St. Mark's day, Pentecost on that of St. Anthony of Padua, and Corpus Domini comes on St. John the Baptist's day, June 24th. Here, then, are the first conditions of the prophecy fulfilled, so that now believers in prophecies and anxious-minded persons generally have only to sit down and think of everything disagreeable that can possibly happen to this poor old planet and the dwellers thereon between January and December, 1886. And, really, if the cyclones and earthquakes and epidemics and "wars and rumors of wars" of the years 1882-3-4-5 are to be eclipsed, the prospect is an agreeable one.

Major E. B. Hill, Culpeper, Va., who has handled Powell's Fertilizers for several years says: "I enclose you a few certificates; you can mention Mr. P. Aylor, a good farmer, who recommends the Powell Fertilizers. I could send you more if necessary, but the Powell's brands are so well and favorably known in this section no advertising is required." Address Brown Chemical Co., manuf'rs, Baltimore, Md.

For want of self-restraint many men are engaged all their lives in fighting with difficulties of their own making, and rendering success impossible by their own cross-grained gentleness; whilst others, it may be much less gifted, make their way and achieve success by simple patience, equanimity and self-control.

Every part of the body is filled with veins and arteries; the last carrying pure blood to build up the tissues—the first carrying away waste matter. Pure blood is necessary to health, and the waste, if not removed, is poisonous. Dr. Walker's California Vinegar Bitters stimulate the organs that separate the poisonous waste from the body.

What a grand, great country this is with its vast territory, its big rivers, its pretty women and its Veni Vidi Vici cure. It's Salvation Oil.

A definite and honorable calling is like the girl of Thor, the thunder god. The tighter you buckle it the stronger you grow. Your capacity for labor within human limits is in direct proportion to the strength of your purpose.

The spirit of liberty is not content, as some people imagine, a parody of our own particular rights, but respect for the rights of others and an unwillingness that any man, whether high or low, should be wronged or trampled under foot.

Sitting Bull seems to have made considerable progress in civilization since he went into the museum business. The first time he went to a hotel he spread his napkin on his chair and sat down on it. Last week he visited a hotel at Bismark, D. T., and after writing his name in the register, threatened to scalp the clerk unless he was given a room on the parlor floor, next to the bar.

It is not unusual for a sporting man to talk horse after being out all night.

Men's heads are something like omnibuses—the empty ones make the most noise.

Question for debating clubs: "Can a man while asleep in the daytime, have the nightmare?"

Josh Billings wrote: "I have known a man who was so pious that when he went fishing on Sunday he always prayed to the Lord for good luck."

Billy's little sister had fallen and hurt her nose, and she cried a great deal over it. Hearing his mother tell her to be careful lest she'd spoil it the next time, he said: "What's the good of a nose to her? She never blows it."

"I don't like the November weather," said a pretty Bloomingdale girl, who has a beau. "It is too cold for outside courting and hardly cool enough to keep a fire in the parlor."

After suffering with Nervous Prostration for years, take Dr. Hensley's Celery, Beef and Iron and be cured.

A modern philosopher says that "women who excite the greatest love are often ugly." They are also generally rich, he could have added.

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