



ADORNING THE GRAVE.

ORIGIN OF THE CUSTOM OF PLANTING TREES IN CEMETERIES.

From Periods of Remotest Antiquity Last Resting Places Have Been Thus Marked. Varieties of Foliage Most in Favor and the Significance That Attaches to Them.

Men have always given much thought to the subject of death, and mourners for the dead have striven in many ways to show the depth of their devotion to their departed ones by fitting outward manifestations in their homes, in the sight of the public, and about the graves. The grave is not naturally a place of cheer, but it has been made a slight of corruption, going on beneath the surface of the earth, has been so revolting to sorrowful hearts that they have been glad to bring such ornaments around the place of burial as would be signs of grief and yet be beautiful and, where possible, suggestive of the hopes that look beyond the grave.

AN ANCIENT CUSTOM.

The association of particular plants and trees with the person of the dead, and the shade of death is so far back in the history of man as to seem one of the first instinctive ideas of the human race. There are allusions to it in the most ancient writings and records.

One of the oldest trees thus mentioned was a tree of life which grew at the side of the road that was passed over by the souls of the departed, and the fruit of that tree was the symbol of eternal life. It is probably a remnant of this old belief that sometimes appears in folk lore tales, where the fruit is called the "apple of life."

Way back upon the oldest Assyrian inscriptions is probably the earliest representation known of this tree of life, and although it is very common among the inscriptions, generally guarded by celestial gods, and sometimes also worshipped by royal figures, yet there has been able to ascertain its exact meaning, except that Babylon in its earliest—that is, anti-Semitic—days was its special place of honor, the old name of Babylon, Tigris and Euphrates, signifying "the place of the tree of life."

In Greek legend not merely trees but plants and flowers are connected with the departed. In the Elysian fields—that is, that part of the realm of Pluto where the souls of the good dwell—whole plains were said to be covered with asphodels, the very flowers which the Greeks and Romans were accustomed to place on the graves of the departed as symbols of the future life.

Sometimes in the early Christians days the previous usages of the inhabitants appear in local customs, as in France, where those who prepared the dead for burial were accustomed to scatter in the bottom of coffins beneath the coarse seeds of various plants, probably of those which they were expected to live upon in the new life beyond the grave.

The ancient Egyptians were in the habit of burying bulbs of flowers and wheat with their dead, in the belief that the body was coming to life again and could sow these for use in that new life. Some of these kernels of wheat, after being kept for thousands of years in the mummy case, have been planted by the finders and have produced wheat very much like that which is still growing in Egypt.

The belief in future existence probably led to the custom of planting trees on or near tombs, especially the cypress, which was regarded as a type of both life and death. The tree growing over the grave was also considered an emblem of the soul, becoming immortal.

The bay, according to Sir Thomas Browne, was originally adopted as a symbol of the resurrection, because when to all outward appearance it is dead and withered, it will unexpectedly revive from the root and its branches attain their former vivacity.

Evergreen trees, whose growth is like a pyramid or spike, whose top points heavenward, are emblematic of eternity; of these the arbor vitae and cypress are the most famous.

The weeping birch, the willow and Australian casuarina, with foliage bending to the earth, find their natural places in churchyards as emblems of human sorrow.

THE YEW TREE.

The yew tree has been considered an emblem of mourning from an early day. The Greeks adopted it as such from the Egyptians; the Romans from the Greeks, and the Britons, after Caesar's invasion from the Romans. Through such associations, for so long a period, the yew acquired a meaning of sacred symbolism which everywhere made it an ornament of consecrated churchyards. Hence it is very seldom cultivated elsewhere, although its wood is very valuable.

It is a little singular that such a strong growing tree as the yew should have maintained its place in England after the Saxons came in, for one of their peculiar superstitions was that the trees prey upon the bodies of the dead who rest beneath their shade.

At one time it was the universal custom to carry branches of the yew tree in the solemn procession to the grave, depositing them upon the earth.

In Wales we have the evidence of another superstition in the custom of planting the mountain ash, or rowan tree, in the grave yards as a protection against evil spirits, but with the usual idea of the funeral tree.

The walnut tree, whose shade is said to produce death, is in some countries a funeral tree, and both the elm and the oak are connected with the grave by their indescribable qualities, on account of which they are used to-day for coffins, just as the ancients used the cypress and the cedar.

The tree, as being full of life and as ever pointing upward, has been connected with graveyards from the beginning, but a deeper and more tender symbolism has been attached to the shorter lived and more beautiful flowers, which, in many hues and varied forms, have been so woven into the history and legends of all the nations of the world. Their use in connection with the dead began very early in the times when records were first made, and with the first tales of human existence mention is made of them.

The ancients planted the asphodel and the mallow around the tombs of the deceased, believing that their seeds gave nourishment to the dead.

The holy basil or tulasi is regarded by the Hindus as a most sacred herb, and is grown in every temple and dwelling of devout Hindus and their colonies. See Narada singing the praises of the immortal plant, which it says is perfection itself. It is supposed to protect those who cultivate it from every misfortune, and sanctifies and guides them to heaven through the belief that the tulasi opens the gates of heaven to the devout worshiper. In this it was probably the origin of the saffron plant mentioned in "Arabian Nights." When a Hindu dies they place upon his breast a leaf of tulasi; when dead they wash his head in water into which he has dropped some flax seeds and tulasi leaves—Detroit News.

Change of Insurance Agency.

Lee Taylor & Co. have removed to No. 101 North Main, under Citizen's Bank, 30-35.

Take stage for Stillwater at Orlando. W. W. Snyder, Manager. 44-45.

Cabs for sale at the Zephyr Mills, \$1.50 per load delivered. Telephone 169. 26-27.

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Most invigorating pain-killing strengthening plaster. It is a safe, strong, dry and of Potent Drugs and Chemicals. Dose.

THE LAST CRICKET.

Trill, trill, trill.
Sweet and shrill.
From the dark side of a stone;
Summer is flown away.
Clover is made into hay,
Autumn skies are still;
Trill away, little cricket!
Out in the dark alone.

Trill, trill, trill.
The sun sets still,
Never a katydid about
And the fiery torches are burned out.
Trill away, little cricket!
The stars listen, no doubt.

Trill, trill, trill!
A summer tune
Makes not November June.
Everything has an end.
And so has thy song, little friend!
Trill! the frost nips, that art still!
—Bess Thayer Hinchliffe

LOST IN THE MOUNTAINS.

Some six years ago, while connected with a botanical establishment in North Carolina, I had business for the firm, that carried me into the neighborhood of the far famed Black Mountain range. My errand accomplished, I lingered in the vicinity for a day or two, in order to do a little prospecting on my own account.

I had long been desirous of making the ascent of Mount Mitchell, that heavenward soaring "Mounth of the Blacks," rendered doubly interesting because of its superior altitude and of its pinnacles ensurining the dust of its intrepid discoverer—the story of whose tragic death has so often been repeated.

Having spoken of this intention to the mountaineer with whom I was staying, he advised my going round to the Bumcombe county side, and there procuring a guide to make the ascent with me, as there were terrible paths cut from that direction. However, he went on to say, I did not care to take up all this trouble, but could procure a guide for me on this side, although, he cautioned me that we would find the route exceedingly rough and not little dangerous.

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Now, this idea of taking a guide with me was not well received by the mountaineer, who, I think, was not very fond of music. Indeed, it was the very last thing I wanted to do. I was young, self-reliant, and full of the spirit of adventure. Besides, I wanted something to brag about among my youthful friends on my return, and what better could I have than that I had made an ascent, alone, of the gloomy Blacks? Perhaps, also, I might discover a new peak, perhaps even one of the superior altitude to the towering Mount Mitchell, and, thus hand my name down to posterity along with those of Dr. Mitchell, Gen. Cleggman, and other famous explorers.

Filled with these thoughts and aspirations, I procured a generous lunch from the wife of my mountaineer, and, under pretense of time to spend the day and night with an old trader, who lived five miles away on the Caes river, I set off at daybreak the next morning on my adventurous journey.

I had made close inquiries in regard to the various foot paths up the mountain sides, and had, as I thought, the correct bearings of the route I ought to pursue pretty well fixed in my mind. Indeed, the peak I desired to reach was in full view of my friend's front door, and I was of the opinion that he would follow the course of the stream, with the exception of a small piece of corn dodger and fried bacon, the mountaineer's inevitable daily diet. So great had been my distress of mind for the past six or seven hours, all thought of hunger had been completely driven away, although I had long ago become aware that I was suffering terribly from thirst. The sound of the trickling water, therefore reminded me again, and most forcibly, of this want. I soon found the tiny stream, making its way through the huge rocks in the huge rock near where I had thrown myself.

My thirst slaked, and a small portion of my lunch partaken of, I was preparing to start off once more on what I now realized, only too painfully, was a hopeless sort of wandering, when a thought struck me with sudden hopefulness. I would follow the course of the stream.

Surrounding the range was a numerous large watercourse, nearly every one of which had its source near the summits of the peaks. I did not doubt that this tiny trickle was the headwaters of some one of the numerous creeks in the valley below. I had much difficulty at first in tracing out the thread like flow of water, but gradually it grew more and more distinct, till, finally, I had all that I could do to maintain my footing upon the slippery rocks and roots along its course.

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