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CREMATION.

EDITOR OF THE CONSERVATIVE:

Nebraska City, Neb.

Dear Sir: You print December 21st: "Nebraska City is old enough, large enough and wise enough to calmly discuss the propriety of building a crematorium." That is true of every city of like size. To discuss the immeasurably better plan of burning our dead than the horrible practice of burying them. There is not a single valid argument or reason in favor of earth burial. There is no argument of any kind against cremation. But the building of a crematorium? What does it involve? What is the cost, not only in money, but in self-sacrifice? And what the rewards? The Le Moyne building, the first erected in the United States, at Washington, Penn., cost \$3,000. A large endowment was left for its care and use and in no case has any charge been made or allowed, or ever will be. That at St. Paul cost \$15,000, Davenport \$20,000, Chicago \$25,000, etc. And each place requires the constant attention of a skilled person to care for the property and conduct the incineration. It involves everywhere what pioneer reformers have ever met, large sacrifice of time and money and watchfulness, and in this instance a degree of obloquy, and the charge of being a crank or fool. The rewards are not in getting paid, or in thanks, or in adding to the reputation, but in the proud consciousness of right-thinking and right-doing and the firm conviction that in time cremation will be the universal custom.

The promise of the reward is of slow progress and of slight accelerated pace.

To illustrate how needful it is "to discuss the propriety of building a crematorium"—without doing it—a few figures are given: Out of 1,000,000 dead in 1898 in the United States there were less than 1,000 cremations. In Boston 167 were cremated out of 11,000 deaths. At St. Paul, in two years ending Oct. '97, there were 34 cremations only. At St. Louis about 500 in ten years. From this city one in two years with 340 deaths. And here exists the beginning of an organization with 35 names, after two years of quiet, calm discussion in the papers and a discourse for and against it. We could build a crematorium here; there is no prospect of paying expenses of its maintenance; the spirit of the public is not moved in favor of it. If the 200 who die here yearly were all to be cremated then it would meet expenses; but so long as the present proportion of one cremation to 1,000 earth burials obtains, we who promote it must rely on the neighboring cities. It is bound to come! New York City must provide for 70,000 dead each year and that means 17½ acres of ground and 4,000 on the acre. 800,000 have been buried in Pere La Chaise cemetery in the last century and \$80,000,000 expended to beautify the place. In the catacombs of Paris the abandoned stone quarries hold the bones of more than 3,000,000 dead, unknown, forgotten, the overflow from the cemeteries. It is horrible! The four crematories in Pere La Chaise, whose fires never go out, are educating the French.

Those who prefer cremation are the wise ones—the gifted ones. A few names of national fame are given: Baron de Palm, president of the Theosophical Society; Dr. F. Julius Le Moyne, author and orator; Edward Bellamy, author of "Looking Backward," etc; Sam'l. W. Gale, merchant prince of New York; Miss Frances E. Willard, President of Woman's Christian Temperance Union; Prof. Samuel D. Gross, greatest of American surgeons, authors and teachers, in his day; Captain Gridley of the warship Olympia; Anton Seidl, the musical conductor; Sherman Hoar, leader of the young democracy of Massachusetts; Miss Kate Field, authoress and editress; Colonel George E. Warring, chief of sanitation in Havana; Emma Abbott, the almost divine prima-donna; Col. Robert G. Ingersoll, orator, author, thinker; Prof. William Pepper, known in every medi-

cal school in the world; Duke of Westminster, Woking, England, December 24, 1899, etc., etc. And with all these examples the growth of cremation is very slow; yet there is a growth and its calm discussion will quicken it more and more.

In an effort to calmly discuss cremation, five classes will be met; briefly catalogued and without any attempt at illustration there are: 1st. Those who regard it un-Christian, heathenish. 2d. Those indifferent as to what becomes of the body. 3d. Those who believe it a wise sanitary method but not applied to their own bodies. 4th. Those who think they believe in the "resurrection of the body." 5th. The believer in cremation for himself, who regards it as the reverent, wholesome, economical, rational way of disposing of the dead.

Respectfully,

J. M. SHAFFER.

KEOKUK, Ia., Dec. 31, 1899.

IDENTITY.

The best and most useful citizenship is that which identifies itself with the intellectual advancement and the material development of the community. The consciousness of constant endeavor to make your home better, more attractive and beautiful is a condition precedent to that citizenship which founds, builds up and perpetuates.

Young men and women who wish tranquillity and contentment in their old age must identify themselves with a locality, a home, a community, by striving to achieve, to acquire. Having successfully accomplished identification, with the useful and the beautiful in enterprise, during early and middle life, their autumn days—when gray hairs and dimmed eyes signal for the approaching end of the play—will be full of satisfactions and sunshine, like an Indian summer.

"It is our bounden duty to stimulate commerce and agriculture in Porto Rico, and that can hardly be done without modifying the tobacco tariff as applied to that island, although the middle-aged infant industry of Connecticut-grown tobacco may object," the Syracuse Post-Standard (rep.) declares. "And there are other islands and products to be thought of."