

**CREMATION INCREASINGLY POPULAR.**

It is cheering to note the steadily growing popularity of cremation in the United States. While at the Fresh Pond crematory of New York city there were incinerated in 1900 about six hundred bodies. A newly organized cremation company anticipates that by introduction of improved methods it will be able to increase the number more than a hundred per cent. With the furnaces at present in use by the Fresh Pond crematory, to consume a body requires from two to four hours. The directors of the new company guarantee to do the work in half an hour. Truth to tell, it has hitherto required three days to transact all the business involved in a cremation. Upon application to the incineration authorities, arrangements were perfected for conversion of the body into ashes on the following day. The next step was to convey the body to the crematory and deposit it in the retort. "On the third day one could call for the ashes." In the language of a director, you can, under the new regime "call him up over the 'phone in the morning, bring the body over immediately and in an hour go home with the ashes."

Cremation societies have been greatly handicapped by popular prejudice, but that has now been largely overcome. They affect to have discovered that their two worst enemies are women and the church. We quote from the New York Sun:

"Louis Lange, president of one of

these societies, says that men often come to him and tell him how they pine to be cremated after death, how they have labored with their loving wives to bring them around to the same view and of how dubious they feel about the future. The burning question with these men seems to be, how to get the wife to agree to the burning. They say she'll be sure to bury them if they happen to die first. The conviction a man may have, that he won't lie easy in his grave under those circumstances doesn't help him much. But apparently, in some cases his uneasiness reaches the widow. For Mr. Lange says that women often come to him and say:

"I can find no rest! My husband wanted to be cremated, but I, basely persuaded, put him in a grave! Now I want him disinterred and cremated." Hard is the way of the transgressor! comments Mr. Lange.

"Yes, and expensive, too. Think of having a cemetery lot and a granite tombstone for the exchange and barter column! It would be a worse plight than that of the 'widower who would like to exchange a lady's riding habit for anything useful.'

At Fresh Pond there is but one furnace and but one chapel for funeral services. The new crematory is to have five. Said a director by way of explanation: "We don't want to have one funeral party sitting on the front steps waiting for another one to get out."

It appears that the number of voluntary cremations in the city of New York exceeds that of any other city either in Europe or the United States. There are more incinerations in Paris than in

America because in Paris all paupers and unclaimed bodies from the hospitals and the morgues are burned in a public crematory. The only exceptions to the hostile attitude of the church to cremation are the Episcopalians. Not only do their ministers often officiate at the crematory; many of their famous men like Bishop Potter, Bishop Lawrence, Dr. Rainsford and Dean Hodges have shown cremation societies marked favors. Both the German emperor and the Pope are against incineration, deeply prejudiced.

The number of crematories in the United States in 1884 was two. Twenty-five is the present number. Moreover, from forty-seven in 1885 the number of cremations became in 1900, 10,000. It transpires that while in actual number of incinerations New York remains at the head of the class, San Francisco is a good second and the number of cremations in proportion to population is far greater in the metropolis of the Pacific Coast than in New York City. The Odd Fellows' crematory of San Francisco, by the bye, enjoys the distinction of being the finest in the world.

Burial of the corpse is a relic of barbarism. It is unclean, revolting; scantily considerate of the dead and a menace to the living. Cemeteries occupy much valuable land that could be used to better purpose and by pollution of the water-supply of cities annually slay unnumbered thousands.—Californian.

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