

THE
DEDICATION
OF
GREEN MOUNT CEMETERY.

JULY 13TH, 1839.

BALTIMORE:
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1839.

GREEN MOUNT.

GREEN MOUNT was the name given to the country seat of the late ROBERT OLIVER, in the vicinity of Baltimore. During his life, Mr. Oliver spared no expense in beautifying it; and, aided by its natural advantages, he left it, at his death, a highly ornamented and most lovely spot. It was purchased from his heirs by an association of gentlemen, who appropriated sixty acres of it to the establishment of the public cemetery, whose dedication gave rise to the ceremonial, of which the following pages are the record.

The dedication took place on the grounds, in the open air, in a grove of forest trees, on the evening of Saturday, July 13th, 1839.

DEDICATION
OF
GREEN MOUNT CEMETERY.

THE hour for commencing the ceremonies of the dedication having arrived, the Musical Association of Baltimore, who lent their most valuable services on the occasion, sang the following chorale, from the oratorio of St. Paul:

Sleepers wake, a voice is calling,
It is the watchman on the walls:
Thou city of Jerusalem!
For lo! the bridegroom comes!
Arise, and take your lamps!
Hallelujah!
Awake, his kingdom is at hand,
Go forth to meet your Lord!

When the opening was concluded, the following Prayer was delivered by the Rev. WILLIAM E. WYATT, Rector of St. Paul's church, Baltimore.



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A D D R E S S .

MY FRIENDS—

We have been called together at this place to distinguish, by an appropriate ceremonial, the establishment of the Green Mount Cemetery. It is gratifying to perceive, in this large assemblage of the inhabitants of our city, a proof of the interest they take in the accomplishment of this design. To a few of our public-spirited citizens we are indebted for this laudable undertaking, and I feel happy in the opportunity to congratulate them upon the eminent success with which their labors are likely to be crowned.

It is a natural sentiment that leads man to the contemplation of his final resting place. In the arrangement of the world there is no lack of remembrancers to remind us of dissolution. This unsteady navigation of life, with its adverse winds, its sunken rocks and secret shoals, its dangers of the narrow strait and open sea, is full of warning of shipwreck, and, even in its most prosperous conditions, awakens the mind to the perception that we are making our destined haven with an undesired speed.

Childhood has its dream of destruction; youth has its shudder at the frequent funereal pageant that obtrudes upon his gambols; manhood courts acquaintance with danger as the familiar price of success, and old age learns to look upon death with a cheerful countenance and to hail him as a companion. This theatre of life, is it not even more appropriately a theatre of death? What is our title to be amongst the living, but a title derived from mortality? That extinction which tracked the footsteps of those who went before us and overtook them, made room for us, and brought us to this inheritance of air and light:—they who are to follow us will thank Death for their turn upon earth. He is the patron of posterity, and the great provider for the present generation. We subsist by his labor; we are fed by his hand; to him we owe all this fabric of human production, these arts of civilization, these beneficent and beautifying toils, these wonder-working handicrafts and headfancies, that have filled this world with the marvels of man's genius. From Death springs Necessity, and from Necessity all man's triumphs over nature. Look abroad and tell me what has brought forth this beautiful scheme of art which we call the world; what has invented all this enginery of society; what has appointed it for man to toil, and given these multiform rewards to his labor; why, with the rising sun, goes he forth cheerily to his vocation, and endures the heat and burden of the day with such good heart. It is because Death has taught

him to strive against Hunger and Want. Without such strife, this fair garden were but a horrid wilderness—this populous array of Christian men but some scattered horde of starving cannibals. Again look abroad, and tell me what is this universal motion of the elements, this perpetual progress from seed-time to harvest, these silent workings of creation, and unceasing engenderments of new forms,—what is this whole plan, but a mass of life ever springing from the compost of death,—sensible, breathing essences, melting away like flakes of snow, millions in every moment, and out of their destruction new living things forever coming forth? Look to our own race. Even as the forest sinks to the earth under the sweep of the storm, or by the woodman's axe, or by the touch of Time, so our fellow men fall before the pestilence, or by the sword, or in the decay of age. The dead a thousand-fold outnumber those that live :

All that tread

The globe, are but a handful to the tribes
That slumber in its bosom.

In the midst of these tokens, do we stand in need of lectures to remind us that we are but for a season, and that very soon we are to be without a shadow on this orb? Child of the dust, answer! Confess, as I know in your secret breathings you must, that in the watches of

the night, when wakefulness has beset your pillow, or in the chance seclusion of the day, when toil has been suspended, nay, even in the very eager importunity of business, and often in the wildest moment of revelry, this question of death and his conditions has come unbidden to the mind, and with a strange familiarity of fellowship has urged its claim to be entertained in your meditations. Thus death grows upon us, and becomes, at last, a domestic comrade thought.

Kind is it in the order of Providence that we are, in this wise, bade to make ourselves ready for that inevitable day when our bodies shall sleep upon the lap of our mother earth. Wise in us is it, too, to bethink ourselves of this in time, not only that we may learn to walk humbly in the presence of our Creator, but even for that lesser care, the due disposal of that visible remainder which is to moulder into dust after the spirit has returned to God who gave it. Though to the eye of cold philosophy there may be nothing in that remainder worthy of a monument, and though, in contrast with the heaven-lighted hopes of the Christian, it may seem to be but dross too base to merit his care, yet still there is an acknowledged longing of the heart that when life's calen-
ture is over, and its stirring errand done, this apt and delicate machine by which we have wrought our work, this serviceable body whereof our ingenuity has found something to be vain, shall lie down to its long rest in some place agreeable to our living fancies, and be permitted,

in undisturbed quiet, to commingle with its parent earth. The sentiment is strong in my bosom,—I doubt not it is shared by many,—to feel a keen interest in the mode and circumstances of that long sleep which it is appointed to each and all of us to sleep. I do not wish to lie down in the crowded city. I would not be jostled in my narrow house,—much less have my dust give place to the intrusion of later comers: I would not have the stone memorial that marks my resting place to be gazed upon by the business-perplexed crowd in their every day pursuit of gain, and where they ply their tricks of custom. Amidst this din and traffic of the living is no fit place for the dead. My affection is for the country,—that God-made country, where Nature is the pure first-born of the Divinity, and all the tokens around are of Truth. My tomb should be beneath the bowery trees, on some pleasant hill-side, within sound of the clear brattling brook; where the air comes fresh and filled with the perfume of flowers; where the early violet greets the spring, and the sweet-briar blooms, and the woodbine ladens the dew with its fragrance;

Where the shower and the singing bird,
Midst the green leaves are heard—

where the yellow leaf of autumn shall play in the wind; and where the winter snow shall fall in noiseless flakes and lie in unspotted brightness;—the changing seasons

thus symboling forth, even within the small precincts of my rest, that birth and growth and fall which marked my mortal state, and, in the renovation of Spring, giving a glad type of that resurrection which shall no less surely be mine.

I think it may be set down somewhat to the reproach of our country that we too much neglect this care of the dead. It betokens an amiable, venerating, and religious people, to see the tombs of their forefathers not only carefully preserved, but embellished with those natural accessories which display a thoughtful and appropriate reverence. The pomp of an overlabored and costly tomb scarcely may escape the criticism of a just taste; that tax which ostentation is wont to pay to the living in the luxury of sculptured marble dedicated to the dead, often attracts disgust by its extravagant disproportion to the merits of its object; but a becoming respect for those from whom we have sprung, an affectionate tribute to our departed friends and the friends of our ancestors, manifested in the security with which we guard their remains, and in the neatness with which we adorn the spot where they are deposited, is no less honorable to the survivors than it is respectful to the dead. "Our fathers," says an eloquent old writer, "find their graves in our short memories, and sadly tell us how we may be buried in our survivors." It is a good help to these "short memories," and a more than pardonable vanity, to keep recollection alive by monuments that may

attract the eye and arrest the step, long after the bones beneath them shall have become part of the common mould.

I think we too much neglect this care of the dead. No one can travel through our land without being impressed with a disagreeable sense of our indifference to the adornment and even to the safety of the burial places. How often have I stopped to note the village grave-yard, occupying a cheerless spot by the road side! Its ragged fence furnishing a scant and ineffectual barrier against the invasion of trespassing cattle, or beasts still more destructive; its area deformed with rank weeds,—the jamestown, the dock, and the mullen; and for shade, no better furniture than some dwarfish, scrubby, incongruous tree, meagre of leaves, gnarled and ungraceful, rising solitary above the coarse, unshorn grass. And there were the graves,—an unsightly array of naked mounds; some with no more durable memorial to tell who dwelt beneath, than a decayed, illegible tablet of wood, or if better than this, the best of them with coverings of crumbling brick masonry and dislocated slabs of marble, forming, perchance, family groups, environed by a neglected paling of dingy black, too plainly showing how entirely the occupants had gone from the thoughts of their survivors. Not a pathway was there to indicate that here had ever come the mourner to look upon the grave of a friend, or that this was the haunt of a solitary footstep bent hither for profitable meditation. I felt my-

self truly amongst the *deserted* mansions of the dead, and have turned from the spot to seek again the haunts of the living, out of the very chill of the heart which such a dilapidated scene had cast upon me. Many such places of interment may be found in the country.

It is scarce better in the cities. There is more expense, it is true, and more care—for the tribute paid to mortality in the crowded city renders the habitations of its dead a more frequent resort. But in what concerns the garniture of these cemeteries, in all that relates to the embellishment appropriate to their character and their purpose, how much is wanting! Examine around our own city. You shall find more than one grave-yard enclosed with but the common post and rail fence and occupying the most barren spot of ground, in a suburb near to where the general offal of the town is strewed upon the plain and taints the air with its offensive exhalations. You shall observe it studded with tombs of sufficiently neat structure, but unsoftened by the shade of a single shrub—or, if not entirely bare, still so naked of the simple ornament of tree and flower, as to afford no attraction to the eye, no solicitation to the footstep of the visiter. That old and touching appeal, “*siste viator,*” is made to the wayfarer from its desolate marbles in vain; there is nothing to stop the traveller and wring a sigh from his bosom, unless it be to find mortality so cheaply dealt with in these uncheery solitudes. We have cemeteries better than these, where great expense has

been incurred to give them greater security and more elaborate ornament; but these too—even the best of them—are sadly repulsive to the feelings, from the air of overcrowded habitation, and too lavish expenditure of marble and granite within their narrow limits. This press for space, the result of an under estimate, in the infancy of the city, of what time might require, has compelled the exclusion of that rural adornment so appropriate to the dwellings of the dead,—so appropriate because so pure and natural—the deep shade, the verdant turf, the flower-enamelled bank, with their concomitants, the hum of bees and carol of summer birds. I like not these lanes of ponderous granite pyramids, these gloomy, unwindowed blocks of black and white marble, these prison-shaped walls, and that harsh gate of rusty iron, slow moving on its grating hinges! I cannot affect this sterile and sunny solitude. Give me back the space, the quiet, the simple beauty and natural repose of the country!

The profitable uses of the Cemetery are not confined to the security it affords the dead: The living may find in it a treasure of wholesome instruction. That heart which does not seek communion with the grave, and dwell with calm and even pleasurable meditation on the change which nature's great ordinance has decreed, has laid up but scant provision against the weariness or the perils of this world's pilgrimage. "Measure not thyself by thy morning shadow, but by the extent of thy grave,"

is the solemn invocation which the departed spirit whispers into the ear of the living man. The tomb is a faithful counsellor, and may not wisely be estranged from our view. It tells us the great truth that Death is not the Destroyer, but Time; it counsels us that Time is our friend or foe as we ourselves fashion him, and it warns us to make a friend of Time for the sake of Eternity. That this instruction may be often repeated and planted deep in our minds, I would have the public burial ground not remote from our habitations. It should be seated in some nook so peaceful and pleasant as to beguile the frequent Rambler to its shades and win him to the contemplation of himself. And though it should not be far from the dwellings of men, yet neither should it be cheapened in their eyes by bordering too obviously on the path of their common daily outgoings. Screens of thick foliage should shut it out from the road-side, or reveal it only in such glimpses as might show the way-farer the sequesterment of the spot, and raise in his mind a respect for the reverence with which the slumber of the dead has been secured. There should evergreens relieve the bleak landscape of winter, and blooming thickets render joyous the approach of spring. Amongst these should rise the monuments of the departed. Here, a lowly tablet, half hid beneath the plaited vines, to tell of some quiet, unobtrusive spirit that, even in the grave, had sought the modest privilege of being not too curiously scanned by the world; there, a rich column on the

beetling brow of the hill, with its tasteful carvings and ambitious sculpture, to note the resting place of some favorite of fame or fortune. At many an interval, peering through the shrubbery, the variously-wrought tombs should unfold to the eye of the observer a visible index to that world of character which death had subdued into silence and grouped together under these diversified emblems of his power. There, matron and maid, parent and child, friend and brother, should be found so associated that their very environments should communicate something of the story of their lives. Every thing around him should inspire the visiter with the sentiment that he walked amongst the relics of a generation dear to its survivors. The sanctity and the silence of the place, with its quiet walks, its retired seats beneath overhanging boughs, its brief histories chronicled in stone, and its moral lessons uttered by speaking marble,—all these should allure him to meditate upon that great mystery of the grave, and teach him to weigh the vocations of this atom of time against the concerns of that long eternity upon which these tenants of the tomb had already entered. What heart-warnings would he gather in that meditation against the enticements of worldly favor! How soberly would he learn to reckon the chances of slippery ambition, the rewards of fortune, and the gratifications of sense!

We misjudge the world if we deem that even the most thoughtless of mankind have not a chord in their hearts

to vibrate to the solemn harmony of such an atmosphere as this. There is no slave of passion so dull to the persuasions of conscience, no worldling so bold in defying the proper instinct of his manhood, but would sometimes steal to a place like this to discourse with his own heart upon the awful question of futurity. Here would he set him down at the base of some comrade's recently erected tomb, and make a reckoning of his own fleeting day, and then, with resolve of better life,—a resolve which even the habit of his heedless career, perchance, has not power to stifle—go forth stoutly bent on its achievement. Hither, in levity would stray many a careless footstep, but not in levity depart. The chance-caught warning of the tomb would attemper the mind to a sober tone of virtue, and long afterwards linger upon the memory. To this resort, the heart perplexed with worldly strivings and wearied with the appointments of daily care, would fly for the very relief of that lesson on the vanity of human pursuits which this mute scene would teach with an eloquence passing human utterance.

Such considerations as these have not been without their weight in prompting the enterprise which we are assembled this day to commemorate. Our friends, to whom the city is indebted for this design, have with great judgment and success, in the selection of the place and in the organization of their plan, sought to combine the benefit of these moral influences with the external or physical advantages of such an institution. This Ceme-

tery, like those which suggested its establishment, will be maintained under regulations adapted to the preservation of every public observance of respect which the privacy and the sanctity of the purposes to which it is dedicated may require. Indeed, such institutions of themselves appeal so forcibly to the better instincts of our nature, and raise up so spontaneously sentiments of respect in the human bosom, as to stand in need of little rigor in the enforcement of the laws necessary to guard them against violation. The experience of our people in their usefulness is limited to but few years; yet, brief as is the term, it is worthy of observation that no public establishment seems to have excited a more affectionate interest in the mind of the country, or enlisted a readier patronage than this mode of providing for the repose of the dead. Within the last ten years, the cemeteries of Mount Auburn and Laurel Hill have been constructed. They already constitute the most attractive objects to the research of the visiter in the environs of the cities to which they belong. Scarce an inhabitant of Boston or Philadelphia who does not testify to the pride with which he regards the public cemetery in his neighborhood. No traveller, with the necessary leisure on his hands, is content to quit those cities without an excursion to Mount Auburn or Laurel Hill; and the general praise of the public voice is expressed in every form in which the home dweller or the stranger can find utterance to pay a tribute to these beautiful improvements of the recent time.

This Cemetery of Green Mount, constructed on the same plan, may advantageously compare with those to which I have alluded. It is more accessible than Mount Auburn; it is more spacious than that in the neighborhood of Philadelphia; and in point of scenery, both as respects the improvement of the grounds, and the adjacent country, it is, at least, equal to either.—I know not where the eye may find more pleasing landscapes than those which surround us. Here, within our enclosures, how aptly do these sylvan embellishments harmonize with the design of the place!—this venerable grove of ancient forest; this lawn shaded with choicest trees; that green meadow, where the brook creeps through the tangled thicket begemmed with wild flowers; these embowered alleys and pathways hidden in shrubbery, and that grassy knoll studded with evergreens and sloping to the cool dell where the fountain ripples over its pebbly bed:—all hemmed in by yon natural screen of foliage which seems to separate this beautiful spot from the world and devote it to the tranquil uses to which it is now to be applied. Beyond the gate that guards these precincts we gaze upon a landscape rife with all the charms that hill and dale, forest-clad heights and cultivated fields may contribute to enchant the eye. That stream which northward cleaves the woody hills, comes murmuring to our feet, rich with the reflections of the bright heaven and the green earth; thence leaping along between its granite banks, hastens towards the city whose varied out-

line of tower, steeple, and dome, gilded by the evening sun and softened by the haze, seems to sleep in perspective against the southern sky: and there, fitly stationed within our view, that noble column, destined to immortality from the name it bears, lifts high above the ancient oaks that crown the hill, the venerable form of the Father of his Country, a majestic image of the deathlessness of virtue.

Though scarce an half hour's walk from yon living mart, where one hundred thousand human beings toil in their noisy crafts, here the deep quiet of the country reigns, broken by no ruder voice than such as marks the tranquillity of rural life,—the voice of “birds on branches warbling,”—the lowing of distant cattle, and the whetting of the mower's scythe. Yet tidings of the city not unpleasantly reach the ear in the faint murmur which at intervals is borne hither upon the freshening breeze, and more gratefully still in the deep tones of that cathedral bell,

Swinging slow, with sullen roar,

as morning and noon, and richer at even tide, it flings its pealing melody across these shades with an invocation that might charm the lingering visitor to prayer.

To such a spot as this have we come to make provision for our long rest; and hither, even as drop follows drop in the rain, shall the future generations that may

people our city, find their way and sleep at our sides. It may be a vain fancy, yet still it is not unpleasing, that in that long future our present fellowships may be preserved, and that the friends and kindred who now cherish their living association shall not be far separated in the tomb. Here is space for every denomination of religious society, leaving room for each to preserve its appropriate ceremonies; and here too may the city set apart a quarter for public use. That excellent custom, the more excellent because it is so distinctively classical in its origin, of voting a public tomb to eminent citizens, a custom yet unknown to us, I trust will, in the establishment of this cemetery, find an argument for its adoption: that here may be recorded the public gratitude to a public benefactor, and in some conspicuous division of these grounds, the stranger may read the history of the statesman, the divine, the philanthropist, the soldier or the scholar whose deeds have improved or whose fame adorned the city. In such monuments virtue finds a cheering friend, youth a noble incentive, and the heart of every man a grateful topic of remembrance. I mistake our fellow citizens if it would not gratify them to see their public authorities adopt this custom.

There is something in the spectacle of a living generation employed in the selection of their own tombs that speaks favorably for their virtue. It testifies to a rational, reflecting piety; it tells of life unhaunted by the terrors of death, of sober thought and serene reckoning of the past

day. Our present meditations have not unseasonably fallen upon these topics, and I would fain hope that they will leave us somewhat the wiser at our parting. The very presence of this scene, in connection with the purpose that brought us hither, sheds a silent instruction on the heart. How does it recall the warning of scripture, "Go to now, ye that say to-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell and get gain; whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away." This grove now untenanted by a single lodger, this upland plain and all these varied grounds, in the brief space of a few generations, shall become a populous dwelling place of the dead. Hither then will come the inmates of yon rapidly-increasing city, in their holiday walks, to visit our tombs, and gaze upon the thick-strewed monuments that shall meet them on every path. Amongst these some calm moralist of life, some thoughtful observer of man and his aims, will apply himself here to study the past—his past, and whilst he lingers over the inscriptions that shall tell him of this busy crowd who so intently ply what we deem the important labors of to-day,—alas, how shrunk and dwarfed shall we appear in his passing comment! A line traced by the chisel upon the stone shall tell all, and more perhaps than posterity may be concerned to know, about us and our doings. Which of us shall reach a second generation in that downward journey of

fame? How many of these events which now fill our minds, as matters belonging to the nation's destiny, shall stand recorded before the eye of that aftertime? How much of our personal connection with present history, these strivings of ours to be noted in the descent of time, these clamorous invocations of posterity, these exaggerations of ourselves and our deeds shall be borne even to the beginning of the next half century? Here is a theme for human vanity! Let it teach us humility, and in humility that wisdom which shall set us to so ordering our lives, that in our deaths those who survive us may be instructed how to win the victory over the grave. Then shall our monuments be more worthy to be cherished by future generations, and the common doom of oblivion, perchance, be averted by better remembrancers than these legends on our tombs. In this anticipation we may find something not ungrateful in the thought, that whilst all mortal beings march steadily onward "to cold obstruction," we sink into our gradual dust upon a couch chosen by ourselves, with many memorials of friendship and esteem clustered around our remains, and that there we shall sleep secure until the last summons shall command the dead to arise, and call us into the presence of a merciful God.

It does not fall to my province to pursue these reflections within the confines to which they so plainly lead us. Such topics belong to a more solemn forum, and a better provided orator: I dare not invade their sacred field.

My task required no more than that I should present those public considerations which have induced the establishment of this Cemetery; the subject has naturally brought me to the verge of that sublime mystery, from which, in reverence only, I turn back my steps.

In closing my duties at this point, I may assume, without transcending my assigned privilege, to speak a parting word. Our thoughts have been upon the grave—our discourse has been of death. It is good for us to grow familiar with this theme; but only good, as weighing its manifold conditions, we deduce from the study its urgent persuasions to a life of piety and virtue.

So live, that when thy summons comes to join
 The innumerable caravan that moves
 To the pale realms of shade, where each shall take
 His chamber in the silent halls of Death,
 Thou go not like the quarry slave at night,
 Scourg'd to his dungeon; but sustain'd and sooth'd
 By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
 Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
 About him and lies down to pleasant dreams.

When Mr. Kennedy had finished speaking, the following Hymn, composed for the occasion by FRANCIS H. DAVIDGE, Esq. was sung, as the first had been, to the tune of Pleyel's German Hymn.

H Y M N .

Fount of Mercies—source of love,
 List the hymns we raise to thee ;
 From thy holy throne above,
 Heedful of our worship be.

Creatures of thy sov'reign will,
 At thy feet we humbly bend ;
 Let thy grace our bosoms fill,
 Be our comfort—be our friend.

Here beneath the sunlit sky,
 With thy gifts around us spread ;
 We beseech thee—from on high—
 Bless these dwellings of the dead.

Guard them when the summer's glow,
 Decks with beauties, hill and dale ;
 Guard them when the winter's snow,
 Spreads o'er all its mantle pale.

Here—when wearied pilgrims cease,
 O'er life's chequered scenes to roam,
 May their ashes rest in peace,
 'Till thy voice shall call them home.

Then, oh then—their trials done,
 Bid them rise to worship thee,
 Where the ransomed of thy Son,
 Join in endless harmony.

The ceremonies of the dedication were then concluded with a Benediction from the Rev. J. G. HAMNER, Pastor of the fifth Presbyterian church in Baltimore.