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AN

ADDRESS

DELIVERED ON THE

CONSECRATION

OF THE

WORCESTER RURAL CEMETERY,

SEPTEMBER 8, 1838.

BY LEVI LINCOLN.

Boston:

DUTTON AND WENTWORTH, PRINTERS,

Nos. 10 and 12 Exchange Street.

1838.



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By transfer

OCT 25 1915

WORCESTER, SEPTEMBER 8, 1838.

To the Hon. LEVI LINCOLN :

I have the honor officially to communicate to you the following vote of the Trustees of the Rural Cemetery, passed at their meeting, this day.

“ *Voted :* That the thanks of the Trustees be presented to the Hon. Levi Lincoln, their President, for the eloquent and interesting Address, delivered by him, this day, at the consecration of the Rural Cemetery in Worcester: and that he be respectfully requested to furnish a copy for publication.”

With respectful regard,

I am yours, &c.,

WILLIAM LINCOLN, *Secretary.*

*To the Secretary of the Trustees
of the Worcester Rural Cemetery :*

THE Address, which the Trustees of the Cemetery Grounds have been pleased to honor with an expression of their approbation, was induced by a respectful deference to the wishes of those, who invited the service, and a faithful desire to manifest the sympathy of personal regard for the accomplishment of an object, which had become deeply interesting to the feelings of others.

It was hastily prepared, under many circumstances of embarrassment, and without a thought, that its impression would reach beyond the moment of delivery.

To its *local* and *personal* references, so cherished of memory and friendship, I ascribe the kindness with which it was received, and the flattering request for its publication. If the copy will add any thing to the gratification of those to whom it was addressed, it is gratefully due to their indulgent estimate of its interest, and through you, I herewith, respectfully submit it to their disposal.

Worcester, Sept. 12, 1838.

LEVI LINCOLN.



A D D R E S S .

WE are assembled, my Friends, upon an occasion as impressive as it is novel. We come from the bustling scenes of business, from the crowded streets, the noisy resorts of labor or of pleasure, to this secluded grove, the quiet repose of nature ; to that stillness and peace, which reigns uninterrupted by the controversies of the world, and is undisturbed by the restless strivings and the unsatisfied competitions of men. We have retired, for a few moments, from all customary engagements, to select the spot, where, when *we* shall be separated from the mighty congregation of the *living*, *our remains* shall rest, and *our names* be inscribed with the mightier congregation of the *dead*. Here, in the quiet and retirement of the place, with the clear blue sky over our heads, and the green turf beneath our feet, surrounded by the primæval forest, the pure brook, and the unchange-d works of the Creator, we may devote our hearts to sober contemplation, and the expression of our lips to thoughts, which may profit us now, and will be well for us, hereafter, and forever.

It has been the care of all ages of the world, and of all nations of men, to mark with tokens of affection and respect, the disposition of the remains of the dead. The funeral pile has been erected, that their ashes might be gathered to the sacred urn. The process of embalming has been applied to preserve the body from decay. The Sarcophagus and the Tomb have kept precious relics long in the remembrance of the bereaved. The Cenotaph, the monumental Column, and the broken Shaft point to the repose of Heroes, and Patriots, and public Benefactors, while the simple Head-Stone marks the spot, where unobtrusive merit and humble worth find a burial place. Garlands and flowers have strewed the Bier of Youth and Beauty and Innocence, and the Willow and the Cypress are the recognized emblems of the tenderness of wounded affection, and the fidelity of unsolaced grief ; and where there was naught but the new raised earth to denote the place of interment, the tear of the Mourner has made fresh the sod of the Grave. Here, then, we pause, to ponder upon the purpose of our meeting together ; to contemplate the solemn stillness of the scene ; to summons to this now consecrated spot the hallowed associations of the living with the dead ; for here, in future, shall be traced the inevitable connexion of the one with the other.

The mighty Rivers flow not more certainly to the Ocean, than all, which are of time, are surely gathering to eternity. Where now, are the People

and Nations, which dwelt, in ancient days, on all the face of the Earth? Where the great, and the powerful, who erected Monuments, and built Cities, and constructed Palaces to endure forever, and bear their names and their glory through the current of continuing time? Where the Palaces, and the Cities, and the Monuments themselves? Alas, for the old world!—its only record is in the Deluge of Waters! And for the Postdiluvian ages; how stands the account with them? Man and the works of man's hands have fallen together. From the most ancient to the most recent; from the Pyramids of Egypt to the frailest works of human device, the walled City, the Tower of strength, the Senate House and the Market Place, the resorts of business, "where men most do congregate," with the men themselves, have already yielded, or are fast hastening to decay. This is the inevitable doom. Rare memorials, now and then discovered, tell of generations which have passed away, of arts, and sciences, and conditions of civilization and refinement, marking periods of intellectual cultivation and improvement, now lost to the knowledge of the world. The fullest record, which could be furnished of the great family of Man, of the millions upon myriads of millions from creation down, would be but an imperfect registry of the almost infinite multitude, *who have been born to die*; less even, in the comparison, than the brief remembrance of a name, when contrasted

with the busy scenes, the exciting interest, the active and engrossing duties of the longest life. Where now, in our own recently discovered Country, are the Pilgrim Fathers of the Land? Where their *Descendants*, in successive generations, down to our own age, or that of our immediate Progenitors? Go with me, my Friends, to the neighboring Church Yard, not the *first*, neither the *second*, within the short period of the settlement of the Town, but to that, which was laid out within the remembrance of many of us, to serve the occasion of the population for coming generations, as was thought, now, in our own day, tenanted to the full, and closed, from its very preoccupation, to the admission of new families. Forty two years since, and he who now addresses you, then a satchelled School Boy, stood by the side of a new made grave, in what was designated, and has been since known, as the *new Burying Ground*. It was open to receive the corpse of a tender and interesting Child, a victim to the ravages of a fatal epidemic, which, in that memorable year of 1796, cut down the bright hopes and made desolate the fond hearts of many Parents. The place seemed almost well chosen for security from the contagion of the pestilence. It appeared then, a secluded and bye spot, and scarce near enough to the settlement of the village to be conveniently accessible, in the inclement season of the year. The records of the Town show, that the lot contains *less than one acre*

and an half of land. It was originally set apart from a much more considerable tract of public property, and no other reason can be assigned for the narrow limits to which it was restricted, than the prevailing opinion, that its use could not soon, if ever, be needed. Count you now, the numbers, which forty years have gathered to the company of that little one. Which *of us*, then Inhabitants of the Town, finds not the inscription of his family name, on the grave stone of some departed Relative? There, whole families have been garnered together. There, he who marked the lone and solitary Grave of the Infant, now reads the mementos *of three* generations of his own kindred, Grandfather, Father, and Brother, in near proximity to each other. But I forbear these painful reminiscences. They come home to many of us, with too melancholy freshness for personal self-possession. The lesson, which they impress, is full of instruction. It teaches the shortness of time and the worth of its improvement, the value of life and the vanity of the world;—the importance of the acquisition of treasures of knowledge, and moral virtue, and Christian graces, here, that they may furnish a Store House of Happiness for future possession, and enduring enjoyment, hereafter.

Having incidentally adverted to a *first*, and *second*, Burying Ground, it may not be deemed inappropriate to the occasion, that I briefly recur to the history of their location. The earliest interment

was in 1717, and is supposed to have been, on what is now the school lot, at the corner of Thomas and Summer Streets. The remains of 28 persons, according to several published accounts, and of 30, by some traditions, were deposited there, previous to the year 1730, when the Burial Ground upon the Common, was opened for use. What proportion this mortality bore to the existing population, for the intermediate period of 13 years, it is now difficult to ascertain, or wherefore the abandonment of the spot, after so frequent occupation. Within the observation of many present, it seemed to be an appropriate and fitting place for interment. The ground was sufficiently elevated and dry, and primæval oaks cast thickly their shadows over the rude mound of earth, and simple stone heap, which marked the rest of the departed. We may only now conceive, that in the paucity of settlement, and the obstruction, which, in that early day, the low meadow and the swelling stream might occasionally have interposed to passage and communication, convenience suggested a new selection, and thus, the original site of the place of sepulture was changed. But how striking the thoughts suggested by the contrast, which that change has occasioned! Instead of the loneliness, and sad and solemn stillness of the Grave Yard, all *there*, is now teeming with life, and jocund with health, and hope, and enjoyment. The youth unconsciously frolics over the

ashes of those, who planted civilization in the wilderness, and subdued the roughest works of nature to the noblest purposes of human art. In the accomplishment of that highest of moral objects, effected by the virtue of our ancestors, the provision by *law* for the maintenance of *free schools*, it was declared, that their establishment was “to the end, that learning might not be buried in the Graves of our Forefathers, in Church and Commonwealth,” and *here, on the very Graves of the Forefathers of Worcester*, has Learning reared its Temple, and Science and Education are reading lessons of wisdom, derived alike, from acquisitions of knowledge and the laws of nature. Instead of the Trees of the primitive Forest, *there*, is planted, and watered, and nourished, that Tree, the foliage of which never withers, and the fruit of which is to eternal life. It is no offensive desecration of the spot, that the School House has been reared on the site of the Burial Place, for the sweetest memorials of the dead are to be found in the admonitions they convey, and the instructions they give, to form the characters, and govern the conduct, of the living. I am aware, indeed, that vulgar prejudice and ignorant superstition have, sometimes, attached a mysterious inviolability to the Tomb:—that, even the neglected earth of the Grave Yard has been so regarded, that cultivation or ornament would be pronounced a sacrilegious invasion of its sanctity. I may be pardoned, the recital of an

anecdote in illustration of the remark. It was but a few years since, that in the execution of an order of the Town for the removal of the School House near the Common, from the acclivity of the ledge of rocks in front of the Baptist Meeting House to the level and more commodious site, at the foot of the Hill, this prejudice was singularly manifested. It happened to me to be associated in that service, as an incident to other duties, with a respected Fellow Citizen. On the morning after we had designated the precise spot on which the Building was to be placed, and had directed the preparation of the foundation, that Gentleman called upon me, in much alarm, with information, that serious threats of personal violence, and of the destruction of the House itself, had been uttered, should the contemplated removal be made. It was represented, that the ground over which the foundation was to be laid, contained several ancient Graves, which public sympathy would not permit to be thus violated. Although these Graves, if indeed any were there, were without monuments, and of strangers whose *names even* were unknown, yet, upon inquiry, I found no little excitement on the subject, in the minds of several worthy people, and especially those of color, who apprehended, that the site covered the remains of some of their race. It was in vain, that the convenience and appropriateness of the selected location were insisted upon, and the consideration urged, that, in placing the

foundation for the Building, the depth of no grave would be reached, and the remains of no person could be disturbed. The objectors yielded nothing to the force of these suggestions. I then appealed to their regard for the uses of the edifice, and beg'd them to reflect, that it was devoted to the noblest of all purposes, instruction in that knowledge, which was, itself, the best preparation for death ; and that so glorious should I deem a like monument to my memory, that I would then willingly consent, that a School House should be erected over my remains. And so it was agreed. Either satisfied by the proposition, or ashamed of the unreasonableness of the interference, the objection was withdrawn. The School House was removed to the place where it now stands, and upon the point of the agreement, if I may be permitted to have, in this rural Cemetery, a Grave, the Association need little fear, that the *form of the monument* will ever violate any of their restrictions.

A reservation and Grant by the original Proprietors of the Town, were the source of the location, near the Common, of the *second*, or what is termed, by way of eminence, the "Old Burial Ground." The grant was of a larger tract, for a *Training Field*. Under what authority, or by what process of encroachment, part of the lot became appropriated to its present use, cannot now be traced. It was recognized as a place of Burial, as early as 1730, when the first interment was made there.

With this spot are associated the tenderest recollections of our aged inhabitants. There rest the remains of many of those who strove together in the work of the settlement of the Town, of those who endured the privations and sufferings consequent upon its defence, and the protection of themselves and their families from Indian incursions and massacre ; and of those also, with scarce a surviving remnant, who in a later period, encountered the hardships and perils of the revolutionary conflict, and sought peace and security for themselves, only through the achievement of their country's freedom and Independence ; Bands of devoted Christians, faithful Patriots, and self-sacrificing men, of a rank of merit and moral worth, such, as in no age, was ever excelled. To them and their blood, the present generation is almost a stranger. The direct lineal descendants of these men among us, are but as a handful. Time and mortality which have cut off some families ; change of worldly circumstances which has caused the removal elsewhere, of others ; and that influx of new population, which business and the spirit of enterprize introduce to a favorable position for employment ; have left but few, who can now claim affinity to the Tenants of that ancient Church Yard. It were happy, if there were more, to take an interest in its fitting appearance ; to replace the decayed monument ; to revive the effaced inscription upon the tombstone ; to pluck the wild weed,

the briar, and the thistle, from beside the Grave, and plant there instead, the rose, the laurel, and the evergreen. It were well even, that veneration for the character of these pilgrim settlers of the soil ; valiant defenders of liberty ; generous benefactors of their race ; should secure from their posterity a quiet repose to their ashes, which the recklessness of change shall not hereafter disturb, nor the wantonness of mischief violate. Let, at least, the newly planted tree be spared, to throw its shadow over their graves. Let the walls of the enclosure be in keeping with the sacred occupancy of the place, and may no sentiment of the living intrude there, but of grateful respect for the virtues, and to the memory, of the dead.

The principal place of interment is now the public Burial Ground, a short distance South East from the densely settled part of the Town, on the Pine meadow Road, purchased and laid out in 1828. Although the situation was originally well chosen, yet it has recently become objectionably exposed and common, by reason of the Rail-road, which passes directly through it. The area of ground which it contains, would probably be sufficiently large for all occasions of use, for many years to come ; and were there no other cause, than its limits, for further provision, generations might pass away, before necessity would demand a new location.

Two other Grave Yards, one in the southern, and the other in a northerly section of the Town, have also recently been devoted to the reception of the remains of the dead.

With this reference to the past, and this account of the ample public provision for the present, it might pertinently be inquired, why has this Association of the Rural Cemetery been formed, and the preparation of a new Burial Place, with so solicitous care, and at such extraordinary expense, been made? Neither time, nor regard for the exposure of this Assembly while I detain them in the open air, would permit, in this place, an elaborate answer to the inquiry. Nor, *to those present*, is the explanation necessary. A few months only have passed away, since most of us listened with delight, to an expression of sentiments and a recital of motives, from eloquent lips and in the moving language of the heart, directly applicable to the arrangements, which we have now met to sanction. In a lecture addressed to the Lyceum, at the commencement of the last course, by the late lamented Mr. Bangs, an interesting view was taken of the subject of Cemeteries generally, and especial reference made to the exposed and neglected condition of the public Grave Yards of the Country. The discourse itself, was an illustration of those feelings of affection for the memory of lost Friends, and of respect for the character of departed worth, such as the relation of kindred delights

to cherish, and veneration for excellence will seek to make manifest. The thought and the expression were in beautiful accordance with the pure moral and manly character of the author. He manifested, through life, singular simplicity in the practice of exalted virtues. With talents of a high order, strengthened and enriched by intellectual attainments, a refined and cultivated taste, and a quick sense of propriety, his was a devoted regard to duty, which made means and capacity for usefulness sources of personal enjoyment, securing, in their exercise, pleasure to himself, while conferring gratification and benefits upon his Fellow men. To public trusts he was most faithful; in acts of private beneficence most liberal. He was a native of the town, but had long been absent in the service of the state, and in his premature and sudden death, it seemed almost, as if he had returned among us, but to give his last effort to an object, which had he lived to its accomplishment, would doubtless have secured a spot for a monument to his *name*, where the remembrance of his *worth* will long remain, in cherished and grateful association with the visible memorials of others. For many years, Mr. Bangs was my intimate professional and political associate, and personal friend, the esteemed neighbor of some, and the valued acquaintance of most of you, and in the recollection of his last public office of kindness to *us all*, awakened by the circumstances of this oc-

casion, I trust, I shall be excused a sigh for his loss, and the digression of this passing, but humble tribute of affection and respect, to his memory.

Rural Cemeteries are not the suggestions of artificial taste, or the work of modern innovation. They come from the moving impulses of the heart, and are common to all times and to all people. We learn from history, that with the ancient Egyptians, it was the general practice to bury the dead beyond the confines of their cities. The burial places of the Jews were in the country, upon the highways, in gardens, and upon mountains. The Greeks and Romans reared their monuments among groves, and planted rose trees upon the graves, without the walls but near the great avenues to their cities. In the days of chivalry and Romance, the grave was made by the green bank, or under the shadowy foliage of some spreading tree, where the gurgling of the stream and the murmuring breeze chanted sweet requiems to the manes of the departed. Affliction there consigned to solitude, deep as the seclusion of the desolate heart, the lost objects of worldly affection, and in the solemn calm of undisturbed nature, memory held converse with the spirits of the dead. “The primitive Christians,” says the learned Doct. Rees, “did not allow of burials in *cities*, for the first three hundred years, nor in *churches* for many years after.” It was, at last, but a device of the

priests to extort money from the faithful, under the pretext of buying rest for their souls, which, in the times of Popish superstition, made sepulchres of churches, and sold the right to interment in consecrated burial places. The Chinese, to this day, erect their tombs without their cities “upon hills covered with pines and cypress.” The beauty of the Mohammedan burial grounds is said to excite the admiration of every traveller. A late writer on cemeteries asserts, that “the Afghans,” (a People of Persia,) call their cemeteries “*the cities of the silent*,” and hang garlands on the tombs, and burn incense before them, because they believe that the ghosts of the departed dwell there, and sit, each at the end of his own grave, enjoying the fragrance of these offerings. The Church yards in the environs of Paraguay were so many Gardens. The graves were regularly arranged and bordered with the sweetest plants and flowers, and the walks were planted with orange trees and palms. The Moravians, in their missions, observe the same regularity and decency. The name which they give to a burial ground, is GOD’S GROUND.”

Since 1776 all interments in churches and cities have been prohibited in France, and to this prohibition may be referred the origin of the beautiful cemetery of *Pere la Chaise*, situated just without the walls of Paris. The ground is described as “laid out with taste and elegance, diversified in position,

beautified with shrubs and flowers, and appropriately adorned with monuments—some interesting from their historical recollections, some touching from the simplicity and tenderness of their inscriptions, all neat, decent, and appropriate to the solemnity of the scene.” But why go to other countries or other times, for illustrations of the promptings of natural taste, or the dictates of affectionate regard for the living, or the remains of the dead, in the selection of becoming places of sepulture. In our own fresh, fair land, in its early settlement and sparse population, a chosen spot in the cultivated field was the planters burial ground, and every grave by the tree of the orchard became a rural cemetery. So rest the bones of many a Pilgrim Patriot;—the raised sod his monument, and his epitaph written only on the hearts of those, who reverently laid him beneath it.

An able and interesting report, recently made by the trustees, and given to the public, has anticipated the exposition which I had intended, of the design, and progress, and completion of this Cemetery ground:—and what more remains for me now to say? Standing here in your midst, with all the preparation of the place in full view before us, it needs not, that I point you to its picturesque beauties, or mark how art has improved, or taste embellished, the loveliness of nature. The broad avenue, and the winding path are before you.

The open plain, the gently rising hill, the easy sloping declivity, the natural rivulet, and the miniature lake of artificial creation, are among the diversified objects of this attractive spot. Here are the deep shade of the evergreen tree, and the pure cold water of the perennial fountain, to sooth and refresh the weary and the disconsolate. Even solitude's self may here find retirement, and melancholy her chosen food for meditation. In the capaciousness and diversity of the grounds, and the order of their arrangement, the requirement of every taste will be satisfied. The head of the humble may be laid low in the glen, and the green moss gather upon the dampness of the grave stone, or the ashes of the world's favored ones be mingled with the dust of the hillock, and the sculptured marble upon the mound, proclaim the end of earth's greatness. Sympathies and feelings will select the spot where congenial associations cluster, and that spot will become sacred to affection and the love of virtue. Religion shall find here, a temple in every grove, and prayer an altar on every mound. The throng of the idle multitude shall not obtrude within these walks, nor the din of the world's cares disturb the quiet of these shades, nor the footsteps of business cross the pathway to the tomb, nor the swift heel of pleasure press the bosom of the fresh tenant of the grave. It was a sentiment of piety beautifully expressed, that "a Burial Ground should be a sol-

emn object to man, because in this manner, it easily becomes a source of useful instruction, and desirable impressions. But when placed in the centre of a Town, in the current of daily intercourse, it is rendered too familiar to the eye to have any beneficial effect on the heart. From its proper venerable character, it is degraded into a mere common object, and speedily loses all its connexion with the invisible world in a gross and vulgar union with the ordinary business of life." And so, in truth, it is. I stood, my Friends, a few days since, with a melancholy and mortified heart, within the enclosures of our oldest Burial Grounds :—sacred spots ; how desecrated and neglected ! Well does the emphatic language, in the report of the Trustees, apply to their condition. "The state into which they have fallen, shows little reverence or regard for those who sleep beneath their sods. There are not within our territory, any outlots or distant appendages of any of the farms, more rough, overgrown with brambles, bushes, and weeds, or desolate or forbidding than our elder Burial places. Indeed, amid the neat cultivation around, they seem the only spots, which are entirely neglected and abandoned to decay." The dilapidated wall of the "old Grave Yard" is not even a defence against the inroads of the stray cattle of the streets, while the public situation of the place, in the centre of the Common, and with roads on all sides, exposes it to every

mean and vulgar encroachment of man. The surface of the earth is broken and uneven—Many graves are without monuments, and many monuments are crumbling, or fallen. There is neither order, nor decency of appearance, nor protection, in this *Home of the Dead*. It seems, indeed, an unheeded and forgotten place, by which, men pass unconscious. Were the Inhabitants generally, as well aware of its present state, as I have been made by recent observation, they would need no stronger incentive to a double purpose; to clear, and secure, and seal inviolably *that* Ground from further intrusion, and give to *this* Cemetery the interest of a personal concern, in their own last habitation.

It was assigned as a reason, by the Romans, for the prohibition, in the law of the Twelve Tables, that no dead body should be buried or burned within the City, and no sepulchre should be built, or funeral pile raised within 60 feet of any house, without the consent of the owner of the house, that “burial was designed not for the sake of the dead, but of the living.” The attention of the medical faculty, both in Europe and this Country, has been arrested, by the incongruous proximity and unwholesome associations of the habitations of the living with the receptacles of the dead, and every where are efforts now making to remove the Sepulchres from the midst of cities and populous villages. I will not detain you with a recital

of the offensive and loathsome facts, alike prejudicial to health as destructive of enjoyment, which recent inquiries on this subject, have elicited. They have not been made known, without their proper effect, in already causing a discontinuance of interments in many of our large cities. New York has now her suburban burial places. Philadelphia has planted, on Laurel Hill, her "Field of Peace;"—and near our own metropolis, in solemn order, but unrivalled beauty, stands lovely Mount Auburn,—"GARDEN OF GRAVES"! Many of our principal towns are following these salutary examples, and we trust, the time is not far distant, when regard to health, and a cultivated sentiment of propriety will give to *all* our burial places the retired situation, and tasteful arrangement, of a *rural cemetery*.

It becomes not the delicacy of my personal relation to the liberal donors of the property in these beautiful grounds, that I should express, as another might well do, the language of eulogy upon *their* acts of munificence. The gift is an acceptable offering, and through the agency of an association, having the approval of the Representatives of the people, and the protection of the law, the land has been prepared, and with this day's solemnities, is forever devoted to its sacred uses, in receiving the remains, and perpetuating the memory of the dead. Let there be, *now*, no querulous and unseasonable objections to its contemplated occupancy.

The right of proprietorship is, of necessity, by purchase, for the sole purpose of the creation of a fund, made absolutely requisite to the care and preservation of the cemetery. The price is, probably, within the ability of most of those, whose inclination or taste would lead them to seek a resting place for themselves, and their loved ones, in the silent retreat, beneath the deep shade of the funereal grove. Some, doubtless, from habits of thought and early association will continue to prefer the more usual and familiar places of interment : others will be indifferent : and a few there *may* be, whose narrow means will deny them *here*, the indulgence of the possession of a burying ground. But let none complain, for so it is with all worldly acquirements. Situation and circumstances should control the desires as they rule the destinies of men. Many of the gratifications which the place can offer, will be the gratuitous enjoyment of all. Its clean paths, and tranquil groves, and soft air fragrant with the pine ; its mausolea and monuments ; the modest, ceaseless, ever varying productions of nature, and the tasteful and appropriate decorations of art, will invite hither, the free access of every visitor. They will add another, also, to the many attractions of our interesting town, in the eyes of strangers, and thus give increased inducements to a residence among us.

Nor let the apprehension be indulged, of want of capacity in the extent of the grounds, for the requirements of future accommodation. They are ample, beyond the anticipation of need, for many years to come, and if, hereafter, there shall be greater demand, such is the favorable situation of the place, that the occasion would furnish both opportunity and means for enlargement.

The task which was assigned me, is now performed. I pause here, in thoughtful contemplation! We stand, this day, upon the virgin soil of this fair field, with which no crumbling clay of humanity ever yet has mingled. Tomorrow, it may be ours to inhabit it. Henceforth, when we here assemble, it will be, in silence and in tears, to commit the remains of some loved one to the dust over which we have trodden; and again and again, shall the grave be opened, until, one after another, *all* shall be gathered to their mother Earth. But, “thanks be to God!” in the touching eloquence of an Address, delivered on a like occasion with the present, with which I conclude: “Thanks be to God! the evils which he permits have their attendant mercies. The voice of consolation will spring up in the midst of the silence of these regions of death. The mourner will revisit these shades with a secret, though melancholy pleasure. The hand of friendship will delight to cherish the flowers and the shrubs that fringe the lowly grave, or the sculptured monument. *Spring* will invite

hither the footsteps of the young by its opening foliage ; and *Autumn* detain the contemplative by its latest bloom. The votary of learning and science will here learn to elevate his genius by the holiest studies. The devout will here offer up the silent tribute of pity, or the prayer of gratitude. The rivalries of the world will here drop from the heart ; the spirit of forgiveness will gather new impulses ; the selfishness of avarice will be checked ; the restlessness of ambition will be rebuked ; vanity will let fall its plumes ; and pride, as it sees ' what shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue,' will acknowledge the value of virtue as far, immeasurably far, beyond that of fame."



A P P E N D I X .

AT a meeting of the Proprietors of the Rural Cemetery in Worcester, on Monday the twenty-seventh day of August, 1838, it was ordered, that the report presented by the trustees, be printed under the direction of the secretary, for the purpose of explaining to the public, the purposes of the association, and giving information of the progress of a work designed for the common benefit. The report follows :

R E P O R T .

The Rural Cemetery in Worcester having been so far completed that the ground may now be dedicated to the dead, the Trustees respectfully submit to the Proprietors a statement of the origin and progress of the work, and of the arrangements which have been made to effect the purposes of the association.

It was long desired, that a cemetery should be formed, where those who had lost relatives and friends, could gather the relics of the departed members of their families, and deposite the remains of those who were dear to them, with confidence that they should rest undisturbed. The difficulty of procuring funds for the purchase, enclosure, ornament, and preservation of a suitable tract of land, delayed the execution of the plans proposed to accomplish the object.

The condition of the public burial places, and the changes which had visited or threatened them, strongly illustrated the necessity of making permanent provision for the security of the sepulchres of the dead. More than one hundred and fifty years had passed since Worcester was first settled. Some of the earliest planters were slain, bravely defending from the savage, the

soil they had redeemed out of the wilderness: some were cut off by the sudden incursions of the Indian enemy: some perished by hardship and sickness; and they were buried in the fields they had cultivated. The memorials raised over their graves had been obliterated, and even the spots where those graves were made, had been forgotten. The burial place where twenty-eight others of the first dead were deposited, known by tradition and record, had been desecrated and applied to common uses, the mounds levelled, and the headstones scattered. The more recent cemeteries, once retired and solitary, had been surrounded with the buildings of an increasing population. By the construction of the Boston Railroad, portions of the two most modern burial fields, had been thrown into that highway. It seemed probable, in the rapid course of improvement, that the necessity of furnishing convenient homes for the living, might, at no distant period, require the entire removal of the habitations of the dead. The conversion of a part of these grounds into roads, shew, that even the veneration for the departed was compelled to yield to the demands of public accommodation. The neglected condition they exhibited, held out warnings, that when the children who revered the parents should be gone, that briars and weeds might spring over the graves of their fathers, and that in future time, carriages might be driven over their dust, when those who would have protected it from violation, were themselves gathered to their rest.

In the year 1835, the inhabitants of Worcester in their municipal capacity, purchased about twenty acres of land westward of the village for a burial place. It was resolved that this field should be encompassed with walks, and ornamented with shade trees. Many individuals endeavored to obtain from the town consent that a portion of the lots should be conveyed by grants to any person who would pay the compensation of ten dollars for each, and to his heirs forever, that by gaining a title and vested right, the perpetual use of a little spot to bury their dead might be secured; but the request was urged without success. It was provided, that the head of a family, after any of the inmates

of his household had deceased, might designate an allotted space on the plan; but the possession must necessarily be retained, subject to the same contingencies which had been experienced in the other grounds. That *unalienable and perpetual occupancy*, which can only be obtained by a grant of the soil itself, did not follow on this arrangement. It prevented all previous embellishment of the land, by restraining the selection to the hour when the visit of death had made the home desolate, and pressed too heavily on the hearts of its inmates to permit their thoughts to be busied with the choice of graves: and it excluded all those who had not been so happy as to have families around them, from seeking, for their departed friends, a resting place in that cemetery. Recently, after one interment had taken place in this field, the town voted that it should be sold, and a fresh instance was thus given of the uncertainty of the destination of the public burial places.

With the view of securing a place for the dead which should not be subject to the changes and casualties desecrating other grounds, the Hon. Daniel Waldo selected and purchased a tract of land, containing nearly nine acres, situated about half a mile north from the Court House, at the cost of \$1400. An association having been formed, to receive the gift of this land, and to prepare it for the uses contemplated, in order to give as much perpetuity as it was possible to bestow, an act of the legislature of Massachusetts was obtained, approved Feb. 23, 1838, granting corporate powers to those who should become proprietors, and appointing the lands they should acquire, *forever*, for a Rural Cemetery, and for the erection of monuments in memory of the dead. The first meeting of the corporation, was held March 15, 1838, when by-laws were established, and trustees elected to take the care of the common property and business. Mr. Waldo conveyed the land he had purchased, gratuitously and without any pecuniary consideration, reserving only for himself a lot 20 feet square. On examination, it was found that a more extensive front upon the road would be needed, and Stephen Salisbury, Esq., made a donation of about half an acre of land,

covered with fine forest trees, forming a valuable addition to the grounds.

While the primary purpose of the cemetery was to secure the undisturbed rest of the dead in all future years, in forming a burial place, it was desirable to follow the examples which have been approved by public taste, at Mount Auburn, and in the vicinity of the cities and large towns.

A topographical survey and plan of the ground was made by James Barnes, Esq., the accomplished engineer of the Western Rail-road. The surface having been cleared and smoothed, avenues and paths were constructed, under the superintendence of some of the trustees, and of an experienced landscape gardener. Neat and substantial fences were erected along the boundary lines. The lots have been laid out by Mr. C. H. Hill, a skilful and accurate surveyor, and the cemetery is now prepared to be consecrated by the prayers of the living to the repose of the dead.

The surface is beautifully undulating. Without bold swells or steep hills, it exhibits many eminences of graceful outline, and valleys of gentle declivity. On the north and south sides it is belted with the original forests. The area is principally covered with trees of moderate size and stature, and fair appearance. Through the middle, flows a small rivulet, which may be spread out by artificial works, so as to form the best ornament of the scenery. A little pond, without inlet or outlet, exists at the foot of one of the knolls, so supplied from a perennial spring that its waters neither overflow the margin nor leave the bed dry. The walks, sweeping in gentle curves around the prominent points, have been laid, with reference both to convenience and embellishment, so as to afford ready access to every part, and to increase the natural beauty.

The expenses incurred for clearing, ornamenting, and preparing the grounds, and for erecting fences, have amounted to the sum of \$1000. Some of the trustees have devoted many weeks of labor and attention to the execution of the plan without compensation.

The trustees have proposed to consecrate the ground by appropriate exercises, on Saturday, the eighth of September next. An address will be delivered, and religious services performed, at three o'clock of the afternoon of that day.

As the proprietors have acquired by donation the site which would have cost sixteen hundred dollars for the purchase, it might be supposed, that after the repayment of the expenditures already incurred, the owners might make partition of the lots among themselves, without charge. It is obvious, however, that future expenses must be met for the purpose of keeping the avenues and passages in repair, maintaining that perfect neatness, in itself the highest ornament, preserving the monuments which may be erected from dilapidation, renewing the inscriptions as they shall grow indistinct by decay, constructing a receiving tomb, and improving the tract already owned. For these objects, it becomes desirable to form a fund, the income of which may be appropriated for the preservation and ornament of the cemetery. That all who desire may be enabled to procure a spot where their kindred and friends may rest secure from removal, the lots are to be offered for sale at public auction, immediately after the services of the dedication. Whatever any individual may pay for a burial place, will be applied to his own benefit, by the appropriation of the funds raised by the sale, under the direction of the proprietors, to the purposes of the cemetery.

The lots have been laid out along the paths and avenues. Each extends fifteen feet on the front and twenty feet to the rear, and contains three hundred square feet of surface. The trustees, having estimated the sum necessary for the preservation of the ground, have fixed a valuation on the lots, with reference to the probable expense of preparing the space for monuments, varying from twenty-one to thirty-five dollars each.

Every purchaser of a lot becomes a member of the corporation, entitled to a vote in its meetings, and to direct the application and use of its property. The character of the monuments to be erected is left to the taste and feeling of the proprietor, and to his own peculiar views of the mode in which he will perpetuate the memory of his ancestors, or his own name.

It has been the intention of the liberal donors of the cemetery, and of those who have associated to give practical effect to their views, at the least possible charge which would enable them to attain the object, to furnish to every citizen the opportunity to be proprietor of a *perpetual* and honorable place of burial for his kindred. The most ancient grounds, where the ancestors of some of our inhabitants repose, have been destroyed, and the graves of thirty-eight members of the families of the earliest husbandmen of Worcester cannot be distinguished from the common earth. Those more recent church-yards, which have been closed by municipal authority, now brought amid the noises of business and the crowded buildings of the town may possibly be traversed by new highways, or devoted to other uses. The state into which they have fallen shows little reverence or regard for those who sleep beneath their sods. There are not within our territory, any out-lots or distant appendages of any of the farms, more rough, overgrown with brambles, bushes, and weeds, or desolate and forbidding than our elder burial places. Indeed, amid the neat cultivation around, they seem the only spots which are entirely neglected and abandoned to decay. Should the plan proposed meet with public favor, we may safely trust, that the graves of those we have revered and loved, made amid the quiet walks and tranquil shades of the cemetery we have formed, will remain unmolested, and that neither play ground, road, nor mart for merchandise, will be established over their relics.

All which is respectfully submitted.

WILLIAM LINCOLN, *Secretary.*

L I N E S

ON THE DEDICATION OF THE RURAL CEMETERY.

The following lines on the Consecration of the Rural Cemetery were first published in the *National Ægis*.

Home of the coming dead !
The spot whereon we tread,
Is hallowed ground :
Here earth in sacred trust,
Shall hold their sleeping dust,
Until her bonds they burst,
And rise unbound.

Here shall the weary rest,
And souls with woes oppress'd,
No more shall weep :
And youth and age shall come,
And beauty in her bloom,
And manhood to the tomb :—
Sweet be their sleep !

Around their lowly bed,
Shall flowers their fragrance shed,
And birds shall sing :
On every verdant mound,
Love's offering shall be found,
And sighing trees around,
Their shadows fling.

The stars all night shall keep,
Their vigils while they sleep :
And the pale moon

Shall lend her gentle ray,
To light the mourner's way,
Who seeks at eve to stray,
 And weep alone.

But there's a holier light!
Hope with her taper bright,
 On every tomb,
Points upward to the sky:
There every tear is dry:
There is no mourner's sigh,
 Nor death nor gloom.

Father! to *Thee* we bow
In adoration now,
 And bless thy love,
For the assurance given
Of life with Thee in Heaven:
Though here by tempests driven,
 There's rest above.

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