

OPINIONS ON CREMATION

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Opinions on Cremation by Various

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VARIOUS

**OPINIONS
ON CREMATION**



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ON
CREMATION.

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Collected and Published by
THE UNITED STATES CREMATION COMPANY (Limited.)
— THE NEW YORK CREMATION SOCIETY.
1889.
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WHAT IS CREMATION?

Cremation is erroneously supposed to be a burning of the body. It is not! *No flame whatever* touches the flesh or bones from the beginning to the end of the process. It is properly and strictly INCINERATION or reduction of the human frame to ashes, and absorption of all the gaseous elements, carried on inside a fire-clay retort, three feet in diameter and seven in length.

An eye-witness describes the process as follows: "As the door of the retort is opened the in-rushing air cools it from white to red heat, and the whole interior is filled with a beautiful rosy light that is fascinating to the eye. The body, decently clad as for burial, is laid in a crib, which is covered with a clean, white sheet soaked in alum. The crib is then put into the retort. The sheet retains its original position and conceals the form until nothing but the bones are left, and these gently crumble into dust as under the mystic touch of an invisible agent. There is nothing repulsive or painful about it; there is nothing which need shock the most refined tastes, nor offend the most delicate sensibilities."

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The United States Cremation Company and the New York Cremation Society, for the purpose of furthering the cause of Cremation, sent out at the beginning of the present year the subjoined circular letter of inquiry to which they have received the following answers:

[CIRCULAR LETTER.]

OFFICE OF THE
 UNITED STATES CREMATION CO. (LIMITED)
 AND OF THE
 NEW YORK CREMATION SOCIETY,

MORSE BUILDING, NO. 140 NASSAU STREET,
 NEW YORK, January 1889.

Dear Sir—As a means of furthering the cause of Cremation, the United States Cremation Company (Limited) and the New York Cremation Society have determined to collect from those whose example will have an extended influence, favorable expressions of opinion on the subject.

The considerations which have led us to adopt this course are briefly as follows: The work of combating the arguments opposed to the reform has ended. One after another the religious objection, the legal objection, the sanitary objection, the sentimental objection and all the other objections have been overcome, and to-day hostility to the reform maintains a perilous existence, based only on prejudice, false sentiment, or blind conservatism.

This victory of theory, however, has yet to be made a victory in practice. The question of to-day is, how to reach that vast majority who prefer to adopt rather than to form an opinion for themselves. The solution seems to be, gather authority. This we propose to do.

Accordingly, we earnestly ask that you will at your earliest convenience favor us with an expression of your views on this

subject, even should it be no more than a brief statement that you heartily approve of Cremation. For doing so much we shall thank you most cordially, and in proportion as you shall do more, so will you augment our sense of grateful obligation.

Respectfully yours,

JOHN TOWNSHEND,
President U. S. Cremation Co. (Limited).
 R. W. G. WELLING,
President N. Y. Cremation Society.

FROM THE REV. EDWARD EVERETT HALE, D.D.,
 BOSTON.

BOSTON, MASS., Feb. 1, 1889.

Dear Sir—I have no doubt that Cremation will work its way into general favor, and I am glad to think so. I am glad to remember that in *Old and New*, now more than fourteen years ago, I published a well considered article urging the reform in burial.

Truly yours,
 EDWARD E. HALE.

FROM EMANUEL BRANDON, MEMBER OF THE BOARD
 OF HEALTH, NEWTOWN, L. I.

WINFIELD JUNCTION, N. Y., March 1, 1889.

Sir—Surrounded as I am in my township by 1,250,000 bodies of slowly decomposing humanity; knowing as I do the bad results sanitarly, with the fact that our little township (Newtown) has almost the highest death-rate in the State, and also having opportunity to observe the method by which your company proposes to solve this "very important question," the disposal of the bodies of the departed; for all these reasons I say that cremating the bodies of our dead ones is the only *humane* method of disposing of the same. I remain, sir,

Yours respectfully,
 EMANUEL BRANDON.

FROM MRS. ROSE TERRY COOKE.

PITTSFIELD, MASS., Feb. 22, 1889.

Dear Sir—I consider Cremation heathenish.

Yours truly,

ROSE TERRY COOKE.

FROM THE REV. J. E. RAYMOND, NEW YORK.

269 W. 125TH STREET, }
NEW YORK, Feb. 2, 1889. }

Dear Sir—Any objection to the practice of Cremation must be founded either upon ignorance, superstition or sentiment. The enlightened Christian conscience must approve it. It is one of those great reforms which are possible only in an age of scientific progress, and which make their way in spite of bigotry and conservatism.

When prejudice and fanaticism are overcome, the adoption of Cremation will be almost universal. It is only a matter of time.

Yours very truly,

J. E. RAYMOND.

FROM THE REV. W. N. SEARLES, NEW YORK.

NEW YORK, Jan. 30, 1889.

My Dear Sir—"Earth to earth, *ashes to ashes*, dust to dust." At least so much support from the Christian civilization of these times. To the average mind it does seem like a severe innovation, almost an outrage against the sacred, but it is possible to *educate—educate* even the obstinate. It is a question of *buried* or *burnt*. The disinfecting qualities of *earth* and *fire*. Available space for the one, greater economy of the other. I think Cremation will win inside of another century.

Respectfully,

W. N. SEARLES.

FROM THE RT. REV. HENRY C. POTTER, BISHOP
OF NEW YORK.

DIOCESAN HOUSE,
29 LAFAYETTE PLACE,
NEW YORK, Jan. 22, 1889. }

My Dear Sir—In reply to your inquiry of the 21st instant, I beg to say that I have no prejudice unfavorable to Cremation, and indeed, in view of the curiously inadequate and singularly unintelligent arguments, attacks and denunciations which have been employed by those who are hostile to it, I have been rather disposed to sympathize with those who are seeking to introduce it.

But the argument of most effect in its behalf is one which must be made by scientific men, and especially by physicians. I wait to hear more explicitly and more fully from these, for when it can be shown that any such plan best conduces to the health and well-being of large communities, it will be likely to find general acceptance.

Very truly yours,
H. C. POTTER.

FROM THE REV. EDWARD A. LAWRENCE, SING
SING, N. Y.

SING SING, N. Y., Feb. 6, 1889.

Dear Sir—In response to yours of January 19th, I am glad to say that my sympathies are with all forms of funeral reform, and especially with the advocates of Cremation. Whether it ever be universally adopted or not, it is only just that the unreasonable and unreasoning prejudices against it should be done away, and way made easy for those who prefer Cremation to burials. Agitation and discussion, the use of the press, platform and pulpit, will do much to diffuse sound views on this subject.

As a clergyman I shall be glad to bring the matter at the

proper time to the attention of those who listen to me. But I want more exact, multiplied, conclusive medical testimony. The sanitary argument will most quickly explode old prejudices.

Hoping that you will furnish us effective ammunition, I am
yours, with best wishes,

EDWARD A. LAWRENCE.

FROM GEORGE W. BOSKOWITZ, M.D., NEW YORK.

Dear Sir—I heartily approve of Cremation, and wish that *my body* shall be disposed of in that manner.

Very respectfully,

G. W. BOSKOWITZ.

FROM MRS. J. C. CROLY (JENNIE JUNE), NEW YORK.

148 EAST 46TH STREET, }
NEW YORK, Jan. 30, 1889. }

Dear Sir—In reply to your note, I can state very truly that I am heartily in sympathy with the Cremation Society, considering such disposition of human remains as the wisest, cleanest, most healthful and economical method of disposing of what is no longer of any use, and must in time become a positive source of injury. If graveyards continue to be filled, the cities of the dead will in time become more populous than the cities of the living, and will threaten the existence of populous communities. Justice to the living, and the sentiment we cherish for the dead, seem to me best satisfied by the quick diffusion of the shell they no longer inhabit, and the possession of that in-urned residuum, which like a lock of hair or the remnant of a robe they have worn, we may keep and guard.

Sincerely yours,

J. C. CROLY (J. J.)