

**FUNERAL MANAGEMENT
AND COSTS: A
WORLD-SURVEY OF
BURIAL AND CREMATION**

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By

QUINCY L. DOWD



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'Tis worth a thousand years of strife,
'Tis worth a wise man's best of life,
To lessen, be it but by one,
The countless ills beneath the sun.

—ANONYMOUS

The dreariest spot in all the land
To death they set apart;
With scanty grace from Nature's hand,
And none from that of art.

For thus our fathers testified
That he might read who ran,
The emptiness of human pride,
The nothingness of man.

—WHITTIER

To preserve the living and make the dead to live, to keep men out of their Urnes, and discourse of humane fragments in them, is not impertinent unto our profession: whose study is life and death, who daily behold examples of mortality, and of all men least need artificial *mementos*, or coffins by our bedside, to minde us of our graves.—SIR THOMAS BROWNE, M.D. (1605-82), in the epistle dedicatory to *Hydriotaphia, Urne-Buriall*.

PREFACE

The studies and suggestions contained in this book are offered to the considerate attention of intelligent and sympathetic helpers and protectors of humanity. Therefore this world-survey of burial costs is commended to municipal boards of health, clubs for civic welfare, members of the Federation of Women's Clubs, trades unions, leaders of social settlements, economic experts, physicians, and lawyers, and to the American church and clergy, missionaries, and consuls; also to other groups of semi-public servants, be they superintendents of cemetery associations and cremation societies, sextons, the American Undertakers' Association, or members of the American Stone Trade, the International Mausoleum Company, and industrial insurance companies.

The book has for its purpose to awaken your interest especially in certain significant and heart-moving facts brought out by this investigation, which, while setting forth the efficient municipal management of burial and protective provision made by European states and cities for people bereaved, plainly show the urgent need in America for similar municipal control and public protection on behalf of all citizens alike.

FOREWORD

This unique investigation is a journey of discovery along the border-line between life and death. It traverses a no-man's-land which almost all of us in America must orient for ourselves, as one by one, or family by family, the living carry their dead across it. Then it is found by the bereaved to be indeed an unknown country, all unexplored, but known in part only to those upon whose business interests and personal consideration we must depend for the disposition of our dead.

But here is a man who steps in between—between bereaved hearts and the business of burial, which they are all too uninformed and distraught intelligently to transact; between the honor and tribute which they would pay to the dead and the costs which are likely to entail debt and dangerous deprivation to the living; between inherited customs or senseless and superimposed usage and temporarily abdicated common sense or prudence; between the solitude of sorrow and the intrusion of commercialized appeals to vulgar vanity under the guise of love's own loyalty; between the exploitations of predatory pride within or of commercial greed without and the law of the land, which might at least protect from extortion, but which almost everywhere, except in Switzerland and France, stands so silent as to give consent.

The author speaks to bereaved hearts as the pastor and family counselor he has long been. To them and

to the community also he likewise speaks as one who has experienced much and traveled far and wide to observe more of the worse and better ways of the living with the dead. Out of that experience and observation he has much to offer that is as considerate of the living as of the dead; that reckons alike with the sanctities of the past, the emotions of the present, and the welfare of the future; that discriminates firmly yet justly between customary costs of funerals and ghoulish preying upon the torn tendrils of the heart; that invokes enough of the state's authority to protect from extortion without invading personal preference, based upon definite information concerning values and prices charged.

Facts gleaned far and wide abroad and very close at hand are frankly stated, interestingly grouped and illuminatingly described, but they are always dealt with as the "heart-moving facts" which moved the author to observe, interpret, and pass them on for the personal protection and help they should give and for the public welfare and progress which they should promote.

Those of us who have dwelt and served close to the human side of this border-line where we have seen the living sacrificed to the dead, lifelong sorrows and ills added to bereavement, and burdens borne from the grave to be placed upon the cradle, appreciate the author's dedication of this appealing volume to the many groups to which one or another of us may belong. He need make no apology for going so far afield from the house of mourning and the cemetery as to address