

**MOUNT HOPE CEMETERY,
DORCHESTER AND WEST
ROXBURY: WITH THE EXERCISES
AT THE CONSECRATION,
THURSDAY, JUNE 24, 1852**

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Mount Hope Cemetery, Dorchester and West Roxbury: With the Exercises at the Consecration,
Thursday, June 24, 1852 by Various

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VARIOUS

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MOUNT HOPE CEMETERY

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DORCHESTER AND WEST ROXBURY:

WITH THE

Exercises at the Consecration,

THURSDAY, JUNE 24, 1852.



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MOUNT HOPE CEMETERY.

IMPRESSED with the imperative necessity of providing against the increasing evils resulting from the practice of burying the dead within the limits of this populous city, a number of gentlemen, about a year since, united their efforts, and entered into a plan for procuring a commodious tract of land in the immediate vicinity—which, while its situation should be conveniently near to the inhabitants of the metropolis, might, at the same time, possess all the requisites and attractions of a Rural Cemetery.

Such a spot, after diligent research, was found lying upon the borders of our two neighboring towns, Dorchester and West Roxbury. It comprised an area of eighty-five acres—a space more than tenfold greater than the aggregate contents of all the grounds in Boston that have been used as places of sepulture for the last two and a quarter centuries. This spot, for its natural beauties, its combined readiness of access, and complete seclusion from the busy world, recommended itself at once, as presenting every desirable property in reference to the object in view. Negotiations with the several owners of the land were therefore opened forthwith; and the result is, the purchase of the whole tract, at a fair valuation. Having been fully paid for, it is now secured by the most undoubted title, and has become the undisputed and unquestionable domain of the corporation of Mount Hope Cemetery.

The subject of preventing and remedying the continued perils and pernicious effects of intramural interments, had long occupied the earnest attention of our municipal government. In 1850, the then mayor, Mr. Bigelow, in an address to the city council, after having alluded to the fact that more than 5000 deaths had occurred in Boston within the preceding year,

strongly urged "the necessity of making early and adequate provisions, beyond the boundaries of the city, for the burial of the dead." "Every one of our cemeteries," he remarked, "is already full, to an extent which, in a greater or less degree, is prejudicial to the public health."

Acting upon this suggestion, a joint special committee, appointed by the city government, made a critical inspection of every suitable site for the contemplated purpose, within reasonable distance from the city. The grounds now constituting Mount Hope Cemetery excited their most favorable consideration, and would have commanded their ultimate preference. Some difference of views, however, in regard to certain details connected with the subject, led to the conclusion that the desired object might be more successfully accomplished if left to individual enterprise, and its subsequent concerns confided to the control of an association of shareholders, personally interested in the promotion and continued duration of the undertaking, and duly organized under the perpetually binding provisions of our State laws.

In strict conformity with the requirements of the Revised Statutes, this company was regularly incorporated in the year 1851—on the 19th of November in which year it elected its first board of officers, as follows: Hon. John H. Wilkins, President; Francis O. Watts, Esq., Treasurer; Owen G. Peabody, Esq., Clerk; and Messrs. B. T. Loring, J. K. Porter, S. H. Jenks, E. H. Holbrook, and Wm. Brown, Directors. A code of appropriate by-laws for the guidance of the members, a system of suitable regulations for the management of the grounds, and all the requisite forms for the legal conveyance and protection of family lots, &c., have been framed and adopted. In fine, every measure has been carefully and advisedly taken, for establishing the Cemetery on the most secure, permanent, and satisfactory basis, and for its unchangeable occupancy as a sacred home for the dead "until time shall be no more!"

Already, this extensive field of "the great teacher" exhibits striking indications of its admirable fitness for the mournfully

interesting purpose to which it is devoted. Numerous family lots have been selected and enclosed, and several early graves have received their tenants. Its forest-tracts, densely filled with noble evergreens—its hill-tops “crowned with closed wood”—its rocky clefts and secluded dells, with running streams and living springs—its expanded lawns and gently swelling slopes, clothed in brilliant verdure,—have been everywhere intersected by capacious avenues, branching alleys, and romantic pathways. Under the plastic hand of Mr. Haggerston, the tasteful and scientific superintendent, these charming improvements have sprung forth as it were by magic; and the whole territory now presents a spectacle of varied natural beauty, blended with harmonious combinations of artistic skill, surpassed by few if any similar spots in New England.

The ceremony of consecrating these grounds, and thereby placing a permanent seal upon their character and destination, took place on the 24th of June, 1852, in the midst of a delightful grove near the centre of the Cemetery, under the open sky, and in presence of a numerous and deeply-interested auditory. The exercises on that occasion were eminently impressive, affecting, and worthy of remembrance. The narrative which herein follows, will, it is trusted, carry with it no small portion of the religious feeling which pervaded the assembled participants in these solemnities. May it contribute to foster and preserve corresponding sentiments of veneration through all successive ages!

ORDER OF SERVICES

AT THE

CONSECRATION OF MOUNT HOPE CEMETERY

IN

DORCHESTER AND WEST ROXBURY,

ON THURSDAY, JUNE 24, 1852.

VOLUNTARY, BY THE GERMANIA SERENADE BAND.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS, BY HON. JOHN H. WILKINS,
PRESIDENT OF THE CORPORATION.

INVOCATION, BY REV. DANIEL SHARP, D. D.

SELECTIONS FROM SCRIPTURE, BY REV. JAMES H. MEANS.

ORIGINAL HYMN—BY HON. GEO. LUNT—CHOIR,
WITH ACCOMPANIMENT BY THE BAND.

ADDRESS, BY REV. F. D. HUNTINGTON.

CHORAL—M. LUTHER—BY THE BAND.

PRAYER, BY REV. NATHANIEL HALL.

POEM, BY EPES SARGENT, ESQ.

SELECTED HYMN—PEABODY—CHOIR,
WITH ACCOMPANIMENT BY THE BAND.

BENEDICTION, BY REV. HUBBARD WINSLOW.

VOLUNTARY,

BY THE GERMANIA SERENADE BAND.

PRAYER FROM DER FREISCHUTZ—WEBER.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS,

BY HON. JOHN H. WILKINS, BOSTON,

PRESIDENT OF THE CORPORATION.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—

Before proceeding to the more interesting and important exercises of the occasion, it has been made my official duty to ask your indulgence while I offer a few introductory remarks.

Within comparatively a short period, great and important changes have taken place in the public sentiment, here and elsewhere, in relation to intramural interments, or interments in the close and confined atmosphere of a city. In both the old country and the new, the current of opinion is setting strongly against the practice, and very justly, on account of public health and individual comfort.

But independent of sentiment and feeling upon the matter, the confined and cramped condition of the city of Boston imposes upon its inhabitants the almost absolute necessity of looking beyond its municipal bounds for accommodations for interment.

With a view to meeting an imperative public want, the cemetery of Mount Auburn was established. That enterprise has been eminently successful, and, to a certain extent, has met the demands of a great public exigency. But the high cost of lots in that enclosure, and the expense of passing to and from it,