

## III.

## REMARKS ON THE CREMATION OF THE DEAD; ESPECIALLY AS PRACTISED IN JAPAN. (ILLUSTRATED BY THE EXHIBITION OF A SERIES OF DRAWINGS BY JAPANESE.) BY JOHN ALEXANDER SMITH, M.D.

That cremation of the dead formerly existed throughout Britain is a fact well known to antiquaries, and the various cinerary urns preserved in our museums show its early prevalence in our own country.

Burying the dead, I need scarcely say, is also of the greatest antiquity. These different usages have, with few exceptions, been practised by different nations at various periods over the whole world. Speaking generally, burying has been the Christian, and burning the Pagan fashion or custom throughout the ancient world. I am not learned enough to know how this has come to pass; if, indeed, the question has been already discussed and solved, I have not been fortunate enough to find its solution, and may be excused in offering at least a mere suggestion on the origin of these different customs.

In the earliest book of the Holy Scriptures,—in Genesis, chapter iii.—the inspired writer gives the account of man's fall from his original state of "knowledge, righteousness, and holiness." In verse 19 the Lord says to Adam—"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Whether these words were afterwards taken as a command to inter the dead I do not know; we at least read of nothing to indicate that in these earliest times of man's history any other custom was followed. It is not, however, until long afterwards that we find any record of the actual burying of the dead, when we have the picturesque scene described of the princely Abraham bowing down before the children of Heth, and buying the cave of Macpelah as a burying-place for his dead. The custom of burying the dead was followed by his descendants, save in a few exceptional cases, as in that of Saul (1 Samuel xxxi. 11-13):—"And when the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead heard of that which the Philistines had done to Saul, all the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul, and the bodies of his sons, from the wall of Beth-shan, and came to Jabesh,

and burnt them there" (probably to prevent further indignities being done to the dead). "And they took their bones, and buried them under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days." At a later date, as in the Book of the Prophet Amos (vi. 9 and 10), we have also apparently a reference to the existence of the custom of cremation in a time of captivity and pestilence:—"And it shall come to pass, if there remain ten men in one house, that they shall die. And a man's uncle shall take him up, and he that burneth him, to bring out the bones out of the house, and shall say unto him that is by the sides of the house, Is there yet any with thee? and he shall say, No." The early practice of worshipping God by sacrifice, slaying an animal and burning it with fire on an altar, as emblematic of a substitutionary sacrifice for their own sins, might also perhaps tend indirectly to favour the custom of burying the dead, and thus the funeral ceremonies could in no way appear to approach or interfere with the burnt offering or sacrifice to the Almighty. At the same time, many of the other families of men who had fallen away from the worship of the true God into idolatry and paganism, changed, it may be, the appointed sacrifice into a fiery offering to Baal the Sun; though they seem still to have retained the idea of the fire being somehow a purifying thing, kindling a fire in which they burnt their sons and their daughters; a sin into which the people of Israel themselves were constantly falling, and associated with this worship there were debaucheries and abominations of every kind. Could this be the origin of the cremation of the dead?—passing them finally through the fire to Baal, and the joys of a sensual and pagan heaven; as was also done in figure by the worshippers themselves, when they passed in their pagan services through the fires lighted in honour of Baal.

The early custom of inhumation had doubtless a reference to the death, burial, and speedy resurrection of our Lord. It might also have reference to the Christian belief in the resurrection of all the dead, though in the case of any of them it was probably more a matter of sentiment than aught else,—as to the Almighty nothing is impossible, and the seed sown in death can, of course, be raised a glorified body, however the corporeal remains be disposed of. Whatever may have been the origin of these customs, we find that both have prevailed in our own country in early times over all the land.

Remains of the buried dead are found in short built stone chambers or cists, the body having been bent together and laid on one side, the limbs much flexed and drawn up to the body, and along with it, various clay urns or food vessels, more or less ornamented, have been found, with sometimes weapons, &c., generally of stone, laid beside them. In other cases the buried body has been laid at full length in a long stone cist, formed of pavement-like stones placed upright around it, with covers over all. We find also in different parts of the country short stone cists, which, instead of containing the remains of a buried body, preserve simply the incinerated ashes of the burned dead, in some cases enclosed in a cinerary urn of stone or clay. In other cases, again, the large cinerary urn containing the burnt remains is not protected by any cist or upright flagstones placed around and over it; but the urn is simply inverted over the ashes, which have been laid on a large flat stone. Along with these burnt remains we sometimes find bronze implements of different kinds. These inurned burnt remains are found under large cairns of stones, or tumuli of earth, in which, or in closely resembling structures, we also find occasionally the buried remains of the dead.

The short stone cists containing the remains of buried bodies have been considered the graves of the early British races of our island, though many of them may be of later date; while the long-shaped cists have been supposed to belong to the people of a later date, and of these many may be comparatively modern in character. We know that the Romans in many cases buried their dead, and their remains have been found in stone coffins<sup>1</sup> in different parts of England. In other instances they and their legionary soldiers of different nations burned their dead; and remains have been found that were supposed to have been the *Bustum*, or place of burning, along with well-like shafts sunk in the ground in which the ashes of the dead were believed to have been placed. In the notice of the Roman antiquities found near Newstead, Roxburghshire, I have described the discovery of remains which I supposed might be explained as of this character.<sup>2</sup>

The Norsemen also burned their dead, and there is little doubt that many of the stone urns, and others containing incinerated bones, dis-

<sup>1</sup> See *Crania Britannica* of Dr Davis and Thuruam, &c.

<sup>2</sup> See *Archæologia Scotica*, vol. iv.

covered in the northern parts of our island, are those of Norsemen. We know also that many of the Saxon races like the Norse burned their dead over all the Continent, as well as in our own country. This subject is fully described by M. Wylie, Esq., B.A., F.S.A., in a valuable memoir on "The Burning and Burial of the Dead," published in vol. xxxvii. of the "Archæologia." He gives historical evidence of the use of cremation on some parts of the Continent of Europe down even to the thirteenth century.

The times, however, when these various ways of disposing of the dead began or ended in our own country, or whether, as is highly probable, they were carried on simultaneously by the different races in different parts of the land, and, so to speak, overlapped each other in time, as seems most likely, we have not as yet been able very satisfactorily to determine. Then, again, when Christianity began to prevail throughout the country, the Church we know strictly prohibited such heathen customs, with all their cruel and debasing rites and associations, and enforced to the best of its ability the interment of the dead.

In the meantime, therefore, we must be content to wait, and gather up such facts as seem to bear on these different questions, hoping to be able to get them more fully explained at some future time.

In June 1866 a valuable memoir on the Brochs or Round Towers of Orkney, by George Petrie, Esq., Corr. Mem. S.A. Scot., Kirkwall, was laid before the Society (and is now published in our "Archæologia Scotica," vol. v.) Mr Petrie there tells us that a whole series of short stone cists, containing the burnt remains of the dead, some being enclosed in stone urns, were discovered in the mound which covered the ruins of the Broch of Okstrow, in the parish of Birsay, Orkney. These Mr Anderson has shown to have been probably the remains of Norsemen, and has called our attention to the fact that cremation was used among them down even to the tenth century.<sup>1</sup> We do not now therefore consider it necessary to assume the very great antiquity of this style of burial, and all the more when Mr Anderson has shown us, in his valuable and exhaustive paper on the "Brochs of Caithness," &c., that there is every reason to believe the brochs themselves belong to a period long

<sup>1</sup> See notice by Mr J. Anderson of Description by Ahmed Ibn Fozlan of the Incrementation of a Norse Chief, Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot., vol. ix.

posterior to the Roman occupation of the southern parts of Britain, and probably to that of the Norse descents on the coasts of Scotland, just before their occupation of the country; he supposes from the fifth to the ninth centuries.

In the distant East cremation still remains in use for at least the high caste natives of Hindostan and Siam; while further to the east the Chinese generally bury their dead in long-shaped coffins, the body being stretched at full length.

In the islands of Japan, again, both customs still prevail at the present time,—the dead being simply interred, which is denominated the *doso*; or burned, which is styled the *quasau* or *kasu*. In many cases a large valuable porcelain jar is used as a coffin, or a wooden barrel-like coffin, called *Haya oke* or ready-made coffin, by the poorer classes. The body is placed in these coffins in a flexed position, the hands raised as in prayer, and the legs drawn up to the body, somewhat like the position of the dead in the short cists of this country, but sitting, and not lying, as in the latter. The leaves of a particular plant are used to fill up the coffin, and in some special cases many small bags of vermilion are added for the same purpose. This tub-like coffin is next covered by the *quan*,—a movable square-shaped outer coffin, made of a fine kind of wood (with white ornaments), or of white pasteboard for the common people; which is ornamental in character. In some cases, however, a long narrow coffin is occasionally used where the body is laid at length; it is named the *Rekwan* or sleeping coffin.

The rite of cremation is followed principally by a branch or section of the Buddhists styled the Monto people. Buddhism is believed to have been probably introduced from Corea some 1250 years ago, and its followers now belong mostly to the middle or merchant classes. The Emperor, the Daimios or nobles, and the higher classes profess the Sinto religion, or rather the *Kami-no-mitsi*, the way of the Kami, or worship of the spirits of deified men or gods, the ancient religion of the country; these all bury their dead. Latterly some kind of fusion of the different religions or sects has been ordered by the Emperor. Something, I understand, somewhat like a disestablishment has taken place, and an improved Sinto religion is at present being arranged, combining the best parts of each of the others, which is styled the *Jo-tei* or the True God;

so that it is not improbable the cremation of the dead may now be brought to an end. At the same time I understand the Emperor or Mikado liberally allows other religions, and Christianity itself, to be tolerated in his dominions.

My friend, Adam B. Messer, M.D., surgeon, R.N., returned lately from Japan, and brought with him from Yeddo a number of coloured drawings by native artists; among these were a series illustrating the rites of burial by cremation. The exhibition of these drawings, I thought, might interest the members of the Society, and at my request he kindly left them with me. I have also had an opportunity of showing them to a young Japanese gentleman who is at present studying medicine in Edinburgh, and shall attempt to describe them, giving, as a sort of running commentary, the information I have thus been able to gather. I trust it may be of some interest, as showing how the details of this very ancient and wide-spread form of burial, by cremation, are followed out where it still lingers among this active, intelligent, and now rapidly changing community, perhaps just before its complete extinction in this remote part of the earth.

I. In the first picture we have the dying man represented lying on a large mattress on the floor, a small rolled-up cushion or mattress for a pillow, and he is covered by a large and thick quilt or gown. In front of the bed is a red-robed high priest kneeling at his devotions. Beside the sick man are ladies and attendants; and in the next room, as we see through the open partition, a Japanese physician is kneeling in front of a low case of drawers, and apparently preparing a potion for the sick man.

II. In the second picture we have the patient dead, and seated, nearly naked, on a large inverted tub, in which the body has been washed, and two men, naked, except a white cloth round the loins, holding him up, while a third, standing behind him, is shaving his head, the hair falling into a cloth held in front by the two assistants; there is a bucket for water beside them, and two lighted candles on tall stands or candlesticks, for it is night. Three mourning females are crouched at some distance from them, their faces covered by the large sleeves of their dresses, and one of them holds up in her hand another candle on a short stand.

III. In the next we have the same three men, two of them placing the dead body, now partially wrapped in a white winding-sheet, in a flexed

position in the rather tall tub or barrel-like coffin of wood, while the third is bringing forward the square-shaped outer coffin, or *quan*, to put over it. Behind them lie the two square poles upon which the coffin is to be placed, and by which it is to be borne away. There are also the lights beside the men, but it is now morning; close by them is a low table with dishes of rice, an incense-box for burning incense, flower-pots, and other articles; a single large sword, showing the rank of the deceased, lies on the floor beside them. Behind the screen, which partially surrounds the party round the coffin, we see in the background a lady mourning, her head enveloped in her dress and bowed to the ground, and beside her a gentleman trying to comfort her; in front and behind are various ornamental dishes with refreshments.

IV. The next picture is again a night scene. The coffin is finished and set upon the long poles; above the plain *quan* there is now a white ornamental canopy or pediment of an ogee shape, with a vase atop, from it a roll or bead passes down each of its angles, curving up into a terminal ornament; and white drapery falls from it over the *quan*. White is the mourning colour in Japan, and on each of its sides there is the blue circular badge of the family of the deceased. In front of the coffin is a low table with incense-box, sticks burning in the stand, and dishes with rice, &c.; before it a priest is squatted, rosary in hand, conducting some funeral service, and behind him the group of the family and friends. In an adjoining room we see a party of friends seated on the ground around low tables, and partaking of refreshments, with bowls and chopsticks in their hands, and dishes of rice, &c., before them.

V. In the next we have the funeral procession leaving the house, and passing under a high arch of blessed bamboo held by two attendants to avert evil; it is headed by the priest, the bearers following with the coffin borne on the square poles, with a green-leaved plant in a pot on each pole right in front of the coffin; at its sides are standing the mourning females, and behind follow the chief mourners, with dresses projecting in a triangular form beyond their shoulders on each side, and with flat caps of open work of rushes, which fold down somewhat over the face.

VI. The front of the house is next seen, with the blinds drawn down, and the word "Kitu" (Death) on a large label fixed on the screen

of the door. On a table before it a fire-box, &c., and near it a servant, with a white cap, is giving money to beggars gathered in front of the house: passers-by stand to converse about the death.

VII. In this picture the whole of the same funeral procession (or another) is seen passing through the streets: in front a black-robed priest; next, men with lanterns on long poles; then various men walking; next, the bearers, with the coffin now carried shoulder-high; behind them, the chief mourners, wearing their single swords, the handles covered with white; behind them, other men carrying boxes on their backs, covered with black; another man behind carrying apparently the large tub; others and attendants bring up the rear.

VIII. In this we have a priest in red robes conducting devotional exercises in the house visited by death; he has near him, on a stand the *Ifay* (or tablet with the names of the deceased, his own name behind, the new name given him by the priests, in front), on a table on which incense and offerings are placed; behind the priest are the mourning females of the family. He is purifying the house.

IX. In this we find the funeral party in the temple, the coffin placed on tressels or stands before an altar or stepped table covered with white, which has white paper flowers, candles, &c., placed on it; behind it are a party of priests—one in red robes, his hands raised, with rosary, in the centre; on each side of him, other priests with black robes, some with purple, and other blue scarfs or hoods, over them. In the midst is a large pot-like drum or gong, which one of the priests is striking with a white stick; others have cymbals; they appear to be playing and singing some funeral service. To their right the chief mourners are seen seated with their heads uncovered.

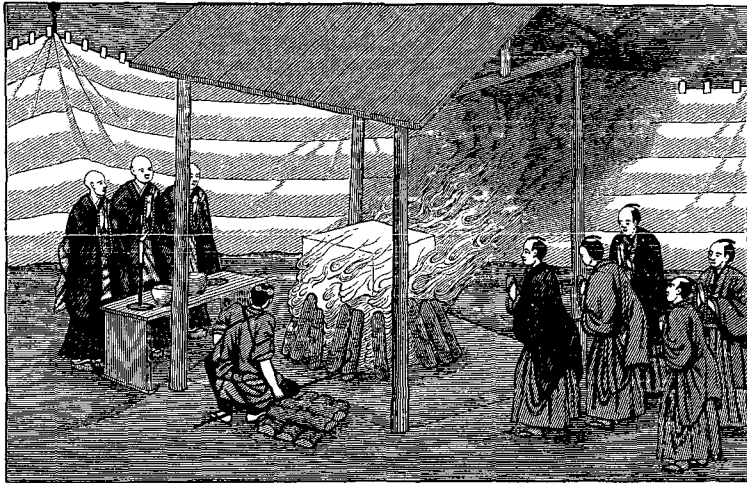
X. In this drawing you have what appears to be a burying-ground, with various monuments, generally short obelisks, raised on two or three plinths, and at the side is a large wooden shed or framed house, with rather a low pitched roof. The boarded end of the house is removed to one side, like a large door, and in the house a dark-robed priest is standing on one side of the tub-like coffin, the circular top of which has been removed by a man on the other side of it. The body of the dead man is seen crouched in the tub; other two men are in attendance, and another has just left, carrying three deep cylindrical water buckets. These men



are all quite naked, except a white cloth round the loins, and it is still bright day.

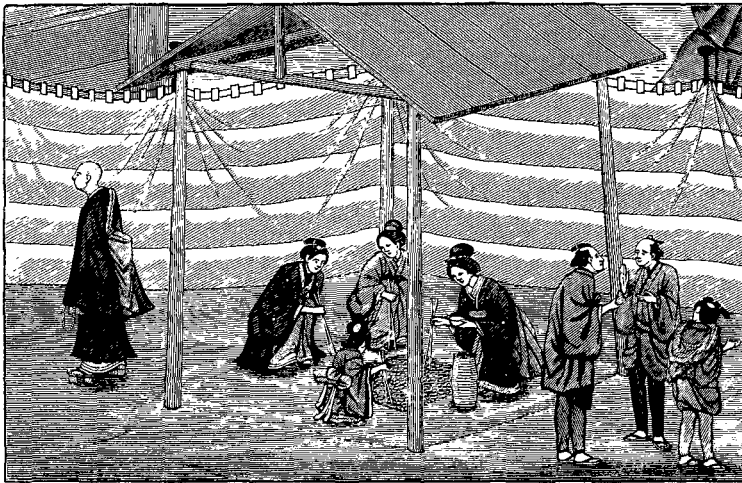
XI. In the next picture you see the funeral party leaving the temple and going out to its surrounding grounds, where refreshments are being apparently handed about by attendants carrying trays on their shoulders ; the chief mourners are the last to come out,—having been nearest the coffin,—and the officiating priests.

XII. This picture shows the blackness of night : the wooden house is in the centre of it, but it is now reduced merely to the framework or supports



of a house, with a roof, the whole sides having been removed. In a depression in the centre of its floor the square coffin is seen, apparently covering the round one ; all around, and sloping up to it, a number of short, thick billets of wood are built, which are blazing fiercely. In front of it a man is seated on his hams, with a long iron fork in his right hand, and at his right side a number of billets built up in readiness to supply the fire. On the right side of the blazing coffin, from which columns of dense

black smoke are passing away to leeward, there is a low table, with a lighted candle and various vessels on it. Behind it stand three black-robed shaven priests, their hands raised as if in prayer, with their rosaries depending from them. All look towards the blazing fire. On the opposite side stand a group of men, also looking at the burning mass of firewood and the unornamented *quan*. They have their hands also all raised as if in prayer. The whole scene is shut in from the rest of the ground by a large white screen of cloth, hung apparently by a rope to the top of large and strong poles. (See the annexed top of the drawing.)



XIII. The next picture represents the same scene, but now lit up by the bright blue sky of day. The same white screen shuts in the wooden house, or rather mere framework, and in the centre of its floor there is simply a square depressed portion thickly sprinkled over with white ashes. Round this depression a gentleman, two ladies, and a little girl, the members of the deceased's family, are stooping, each picking up with a pair of long rods or sticks, like extra long chop-sticks, the little bits of

incinerated bones, and putting the ashes into cups in their hands, and by-and-bye into the tall barrel-shaped yellow clay urn which stands beside them. A black-robed priest, with purple sash or hood, and rosary in hand, is walking away from this group to the right; on the opposite side are two men conversing, and beside them a boy with a red cloth slung over his back, in which to carry away the urn with its contained ashes. (See the preceding woodcut.)

XIV. This picture shows us part of the outside of a temple, and the monuments of the graveyard, generally plain obelisks set on double or triple plinths; some, however, have pediments on top, and two long inscribed wooden poles are standing beside different tombstones,—a sign of a recent interment. In the foreground a man is crouched beside a small open grave, which he has just been digging with the assistance of an iron hoe, and a larger wooden hoe, with an iron edge, is lying beside him. At his side a man is handing him the urn, having now a small lid fixed upon it, which he has just received from a boy beside him, the boy being engaged in folding up the red cloth which formerly covered it; and to the right of the boy another man is coming forward with a bucket, and stick or ladle in it; either of cement, to fix the top of the urn, and cover it with, as is done, or perhaps simply of water. Behind the man, crouching beside the grave and watching the urn with much interest, there is a lady and gentleman, the widow and son, probably, of the deceased.

XV. The next scene is apparently an entertainment at home, with the priest and a few guests and attendants, numerous small tables covered with dishes of rice and sweetmeats (no animal food being eaten during mourning), with plates, &c., lying about. In the background is seen the *Ifay* or tablet inscribed with the old and new names of the deceased, and incense is burning, and food vessels, &c., are also placed before it.

XVI. We now come to the last of the series—the graveyard, with its monumental obelisks. To the right side a screen, or wooden wall. On the left of the picture the lower part of a pillared entrance to a temple perhaps; if not, simply another monument. In the centre of the picture, two figures, a lady and a gentleman, kneel in the attitude of prayer, with rosaries in hand, in front of two plinths, one above the other, of a monument, on which the needle of the obelisk

is laid horizontally, ready to be set up at the proper time. These plinths are placed on the small grave in which the urn was buried, and on the top of the upper plinth there is an oblong hollow cut in the stone, in which water has been poured ; on each side of this is placed a tall pot containing a green-leaved shrub, and in front of it there is also a bowl containing some food or offering of some kind. Behind the kneeling figures another lady and two gentlemen or attendants, are coming forward ; and on the opposite side, near two large wooden buckets, there is the young man with the red cloth slung over his back, as if he was carrying another urn to its final destination. He is speaking to a young girl, to whom he is giving a red flower. The pair of white lanterns on long poles, of the funeral procession, are now apparently stuck into the ground near the grave. And so this pictorial funeral service ends,—with the inurned ashes carefully buried, and over them the monumental stone inscribed with the names of the deceased, some pious inscription, and also bearing the circular badges of his family or clan, or that of its princely head.

Many books have of late years been written about Japan, but in some of the older books fuller details of these funeral ceremonies are given ; and in especial in the “ Illustrations of Japan,” by M. Titsingh (formerly chief agent to the Dutch East India Company at Nagasaki), we have details of the ceremonies both at their marriages and funerals. I refer to the edition translated from the French by Frederic Shoberl, London, 1822. He tells us that at Nagasaki the ceremony of the *quaso* took place on the summit of two mountains, Kasougasira and Fondesi Yama, the former to the south and the latter to the north of the city ; that there was on each of them a hut called *okubo*, about 18½ feet square ; above it a small window, and a door on the side next the road. The coffin is taken there by the friends after the usual temple services. In the centre of the hut is a large well of freestone ; outside of the door the coffin or tub is taken out of the *quan* by the servants or by the bearers, and placed over this well, in which the *Ombos*, a class of people little better than beggars, keep up a great fire with wood until the body is consumed. Each of these *Ombos* have two poles of bamboo, with which they pick the bones out of the ashes. The first bone is taken up by two of them with four sticks, which is called *alibasami*, or to lift up on opposite sides. For this reason two persons will never lift up together any meat or food

whatever with the sticks they use for eating: it would be an omen of ill-luck. The *Ombos* deliver this bone, with their four sticks, to the eldest son or the nearest relation, who is provided with an earthen urn, into which he puts the bone with his right hand. The other bones are collected by the servants or porters, and poured with the ashes into the urn, the mouth of which is closed up with plaster. The bearers then take up the urn and carry it in their hands to the grave, to which flowers, the *sioho*, or box of incense, and the *quan* are likewise carried; but the flags and lanterns are thrown away or given to beggars. The parents, friends, and the priest who reads the hymns, follow the urn to the grave, in which it is immediately deposited. It is filled with earth, on which is laid a flat stone; this is also covered with earth, and after it has been well stamped down and levelled, the *quan* is placed over it. At the expiration of forty-nine days the *quan* is removed, and the *sisek*, or tombstone, is put in its stead. People of quality or rich tradesmen cause a hut to be erected near the grave, where a servant is stationed for the purpose of noting down the names of all those who come thither to pray; his presence also serves to protect the *quan* and other things from being stolen during the seven weeks. At the expiration of this time the eldest son, or other nearest relative, calls to return thanks to each of the persons whose names are upon the list. Bishop George Smith, D.D., of Victoria, Hongkong, in his "Ten Weeks in Japan," London, 1861, tells us, on the authority of a native friend, that the burning of the dead is not now practised at Nagasaki, "but that it is universally practised at Miako" (p. 148), then the capital of the spiritual emperor.

Mr H. A. Tilly, in his work on "Japan, the Amoor, and the Pacific," London, 1861, says—"Burning the dead is also common at Japan, and a place is set apart for that purpose behind the town of Hakodadi" (p. 117).

In this changing country, however, if my Japanese informant is correct, with the removal of the Emperor to Yeddo changes may have taken place at Miako since Bishop Smith's book was published; and the ceremony of incremation may have become still more and more rare over all the country of Japan.

[Since this paper was read to the Society a curious example has just occurred of how old and almost forgotten customs may be brought again.

into general notice; the subject being this very custom of cremation, and it has found supporters even among some of the philosophers of our own country, at least among our southern neighbours. In the great Exposition held at Vienna last summer, the Professor of Pathological Anatomy of Padua, Dr Le Brunetti, exhibited the remains of dead bodies on which he had practised the old fashion of cremation according to what he perhaps considered a new and improved method, and he advocated a return to its use from various so-called hygienic and economic reasons. An English philosopher, Sir Henry Thompson, following Dr Brunetti, has taken up the advocacy of the system, and has written in the "Contemporary Review" for January 1874, London (and since published separately), an article on "The Treatment of the Body after Death," giving various scientific and economic reasons for expediting by burning the decay and dissipation to its original elements of our mortal bodies. In the next number of the "Contemporary Review," February 1874, no doubt, there appeared a paper by Philip H. Holland, M.R.C.S., Medical Inspector of Burials, entitled "Burial or Cremation: a Reply to Sir Henry Thompson," showing, as he considers, the advantages of the old system of inhumation, and by giving up the old graveyards, when overcrowded, and the adoption of extramural cemeteries, the little need there is of such a change as that of cremation, from any consideration whatever. Still, the system of cremation seems to have a rather unexpected charm for some people, who seem perhaps rather fond of following our more advanced philosophers, and the question has been taken up, and articles written on it, in our medical journals, and even in our daily newspapers; so that the subject has suddenly assumed a most unexpected and extraordinary interest.

I quote some extracts from these papers which will show sufficiently that the recent agitation of the subject is threatening to bear fruit in the direction of at least an attempt being made to reintroduce the cremation of the dead:—

"*Cremation of the Dead.*—Sir H. Thompson's paper on cremation has been translated twice into German—once in Cologne and once in Gratz in Austria—in the latter case with an introduction by Dr Kopl, formerly physician to the late King of the Belgians. In consequence of this joint publication, the Communal Council of Vienna has adopted, by a

large majority, the proposal of one of its members to establish in the cemetery the necessary apparatus for cremation, the use of which will be optional and open to all. Following this, the Communal Council of Gratz, which contains a population of 100,000, has decided to consider a like proposal. A veritable agitation of the question has arisen in both places."—*British Medical Journal*, London, March 1874.

"The number of persons who have enrolled themselves as members of the Cremation Society in Zurich amounts to at least 400. Professor Weith has gone to Italy to consult with the professors there who are engaged in studying the practical methods of burning the body."—*British Medical Journal*, London.

"*Cremation in London*.—As the first step in an agitation for the introduction of cremation into this country, a declaration, issued and circulated by a newly-formed Cremation Society, is being signed to some extent in the metropolis to the following effect :—' We disapprove of the present system of burying the dead, and desire to substitute some mode which shall rapidly resolve the body into its component elements by a process which cannot offend the living, and shall render the remains perfectly innocuous. Until some method is devised we desire to adopt that usually known as cremation.' The agitation, it is stated, will also be conducted with a view to have the system legalised for those who desire to have their bodies burned in this country, and to that end to have a furnace erected in order to see if those who advocate the system can succeed in proving their assertions in favour of this mode of disposing of dead bodies. The examples of the municipalities of Dresden and Leipsic are quoted in support of this proposition, they having granted permission to erect a furnace in order that the experiment may be fairly tested."—*Scotsman*, Edinburgh, April 1874.

Lastly, the well known London periodical, "Punch," has had various jokes on the subject. I shall only quote the following :—

"PERSONS WHO WOULD BENEFIT BY CREMATION—CHARWOMEN."

I cannot, however, think it will be consonant to the taste of our Scottish people, who are perhaps not so easily moved as some of our Southern neighbours, all whose feelings, and prejudices it may be, are in favour

of burying the dead in their quiet graveyards; and all the more in these days of wide-spread railway communication, when the dead of our great cities may now be so easily taken to cemeteries beyond the towns, in any convenient neighbourhood. Instead of rapidly dissipating the remains of the dead in fierce fires, with, it may be, clouds of dense smoke polluting all the country round; or consuming them, as has been recently suggested, in improved furnaces specially prepared for the purpose;—not to speak, as has been well remarked, of the great assistance such a system might give to screen criminals from punishment by thoroughly destroying all medico-legal evidence which might otherwise be obtained from the examination of the remains of the dead body itself, even long after it had been committed to the earth. I have already said it may be merely a matter of sentiment; still, in place of any such fast and fiery dissolution of the body, it is surely more in accordance with all our cherished feelings of watchful care and love for the departed, to lay their mortal remains quietly down to rest in a fixed place apart, there gently to return to their kindred dust—the seed from which in due time the Almighty shall cause to spring the glorified body, a fit habitation for an immortal spirit.]

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