

"Yet within our very city graveyards fester and decay,
Where our pale and puny children pluck the buttercups and stray;
And at times some 'jerry' builder desecrates the grassy bed,
Casting to the winds of heaven ashes of the sacred dead.

"But the time is not far distant when this question we must face—
Life and health will be the problem for this growing populace;
For the custom now prevailing like its followers must die,
And the urn will claim our ashes, closed for aye to mortal eye."

BLOOD WONDERS.

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I.

THOSE who have visited the museums of the old cities will remember the peculiar feeling that crept over them at the sight of the instruments of justice and of torture here commonly collected and preserved, the legacy of earlier times. Here lies in rank and file apparatus of rare form such as only the inventive cruelty of the middle ages could contrive—the thumb-screw and the stock, the Mecklenburg instrument and the Pomeranian cap, and all those frightful instruments of torture the mere names of which inspire terror. The steel glistens and everything is in order, as though at each moment it was to be brought into use. And while the traveller smilingly tries the sharpness of the edges, in the joyous consciousness that a more enlightened age has put forever out of use these witnesses of the barbarous administration of justice, yet at the same moment a shudder seizes him as he thinks of the blood that has cleaved to these instruments, of the lamentation and the tears which they have extorted, of the innocent lives which through them have so often been offered up.

In the history of nature we meet with phenomena which fill us with a similar mixed feeling. These appearances are in themselves of an anything but extraordinary kind, often indeed of little scientific interest; but the superstition and religious fanaticism of earlier centuries has, now on this