

show that it was due to the increasing display and ostentation, and to such lengths did this go that it was no uncommon occurrence for wealthy families to become pauperized by the death of a single relative. This display even went so far as the provision of ornamental and polished woods for construction of the funeral pyre. There is evidence to show that cremation was practiced by the early Christians in those lands in which the custom was in vogue, but finally it was the influence of religion that prevailed upon the authorities of the nations of Europe to stamp out the practice of burning the dead.

However, the ancient history of cremation can have and should have no bearing upon the modern practice. All the objections now open to that of burial applied with equal force in favor of burial as compared with cremation in the early days of Christianity. It was not, indeed, until barely within the past quarter of a century that the application of accepted scientific principles placed cremation on its present footing of undeniable merit and made it an operation consistent with the most urgent demands of decency, respect and sanitation.

MODERN CREMATION.

For many centuries the practice of cremation lay dormant. In 1797 Legrand d'Aussy, a Jesuit father and a member of the Institute of France, loudly proclaimed the necessity of substituting cremation for burial, and upon his proposal a prize of 1,500 francs was voted by the Arcopage for the scientific study of the question. Nothing desirable came from this competition. There was some discussion of ways and means and an attempt at securing an enactment, but it was futile and in the end the subject once more lapsed into dormancy.