

crematorium established in Mount Royal Cemetery, Montreal, through the liberality of two citizens, that this pamphlet is issued.

HISTORY OF CREMATION.

Cremation was practised by the primitive Aryans who consigned the bodies of the dead to the flames in the belief that by that means alone the body could be transformed into a spirit. The accounts of Casar, Diodorus of Sicily and others, of the mortuary customs of Gaul and those practiced by the Druids, clearly prove that the ancient inhabitants of France and Britain burned their dead, while among the Scandinavians the custom prevailed until the Ninth and among the Slavs until the Eleventh century. At one time all the great nations of the world, the Egyptians, Persians and Chinese excepted, practiced cremation either wholly or in part. The Egyptians staunchly adhered to their custom of embalming. The Persians, as followers of Zoroaster, paid high reverence to fire and would not feed it with decomposing substances. Similar reverence for earth and water led them to refrain from using either for the disposal of the bodies of the dead, and these were accordingly laid exposed in certain places called "Dakhma," where they speedily became the prey of wild beasts and vultures. If a corpse was promptly devoured it was esteemed a great honor, for it was inferred that a person must have been very bad indeed if even beasts would not touch him after death. In China while cremation has been practiced it is, comparatively speaking, a modern practice, dating back to the introduction of Buddhism. The ancient usage of burial has generally been more favored. Cremation was practiced by both the Greeks and Romans. The scanty evidence of the facts which led to its abandonment in favor of burial, go to