

alone every week, and then proceeds to say:—"Apart from the fact that this (cremation) is only another and a clumsy way of burying the body, I doubt a general acquiescence in such a mode of disposing of it, and fear that the tendency may be to preserve it, and that room must be found somewhere for the 3,000 urns or other vessels capable of receiving it. What are we to do with these urns? Are we to reopen our church vaults (happily closed, though still uncleansed) for their reception, or take them into our houses and move them with our furniture with every change of abode? How will our sons' sons, who have lost all interest in us, feel disposed to treat them?" &c. Mr. Haden, therefore, is an advocate of burial, and he lays down six propositions on the subject, which we venture to condense. The earth, he contends, is the natural destination of all organized bodies that have lived and that die on the earth's surface. The evils cremationists complain of are not inseparable from interment, but are wholly of our own creation. These evils are twofold—the preservation of bodies too long before burial, and the enclosing of them in thick wood or metal coffins, so as to exclude the "beneficent agency of the earth." Air, he says, merely decomposes, the earth resolves and assimilates, and, therefore, any attempt to exclude the latter is a vain attempt to resist a Divine ordinance, and a wanton injury to the health and lives of the community. The debt of nature is not paid

in full until earth is returned to earth, ashes to ashes, and dust to dust. In five or six years a body, interred in a natural way, would disappear, except a few crumbling bones and other dry and friable portions. Instead of doing this, our practice is to enclose the dead, and continue the process of putrefaction indefinitely to no useful purpose.

The plan of the writer is simply this, that if a coffin is used at all, "it should be of the thinnest substance," or "a coffin, the top and sides of which admitted of removal after the body has been lowered into the grave, or a coffin of some light permeable material, such as wicker or lattice work, open at the top, and filled in with any fragrant herbaceous matter that happened to be most readily obtainable. A layer of ferns or mosses for a bed, a bundle of sweet herbs for a pillow, and as much as it would still contain after the body had been gently laid in it of any aromatic or flowering plant for a coverlet—such a covering, in short, as, while it protected the body from the immediate pressure of the earth, as effectually as the stoutest oak, would yet not prevent its resolution." This new scheme has something reasonable as well as practical and sentimental about it, and may yet be realized in actual practice. Still it must not be forgotten that there is no subject on which men are more conservative in their notions, especially as it is bound up with confused notions of a religious dogma.

---

## CURRENT LITERATURE.

---

MR. GREG dons again the prophetic mantle and utters his Cassandra message through the medium of the *Contemporary Review*. His article on the "Right Use of a Surplus" is not made up, however, of lugubrious prophecy of all that cannot be averted. On the contrary, it is, in the main, eminently practical and sound. The first reflection that occurs to the writer is that in every age there is some special duty prominently presented—some abuse to reform, or some danger to avert. The mischief is that the old evils and the old issues are perpetuated long after they have ceased to be of any importance. "The notions, the animosities, and the fears of the fathers are frequently transmitted to the sons, who live under the reformed régime, and have an entirely different set of dangers to contend against; yet they go on repeating phrases and formulas that have lost their meaning, fighting against antagonists that are dead and buried, or at

least have become shadowy and insignificant, and pursuing objects that perhaps have already been pursued too far. The prevalent habit of mind, the direction or set of principles and maxims, survive the circumstances which were their origin and justification; and, like all such survivals, become noxious as soon as they cease to be useful. Weapons and tools should be religiously buried when they have won their victory and finished their work." Mr. Greg proceeds to show how this has been the case in financial matters, by giving a sketch of the monstrous abuses in expenditure, and the onerous and invidious system of taxation against which our fathers contended. Everything is now changed, wages are higher, food is cheaper, the incidence of taxation has been adjusted, every vexatious impost has been abolished, customs duties have been reduced to a minimum, and yet people are still crying for further remissions. The gist of the writer's