

**EPITAPHS FROM THE OLD
BURYING-GROUND IN
CAMBRIDGE. WITH NOTES**

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Epitaphs from the old burying-ground in Cambridge. With notes by William Thaddeus Harris

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WILLIAM THADDEUS HARRIS

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FROM THE
OLD BURYING-GROUND
IN
CAMBRIDGE.



WITH NOTES,
BY
WILLIAM THADDEUS HARRIS,
JUNIOR SOPHISTER IN HARVARD COLLEGE.



CAMBRIDGE:
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1845.

P R E F A C E.

MORE than three years ago, having read in President Quincy's "History of Harvard University," that the Reverend Henry Dunster, the first president of this institution, was buried in Cambridge, near the seat of his labors, I was led to look for his grave-stone in our old burying-ground. Though unable to find any inscription to his memory, I soon became interested in conning the old Latin epitaphs, and began to copy and compare them with those contained in Alden's collection, and found much pleasure in thus passing some of my leisure hours. After a considerable number had been copied, it occurred to me that a collection of all the inscriptions might interest other persons, and might be of some use to the biographer and the historian. With this impression, I was encouraged to continue what had been begun only for amusement; and thus the present collection has been made, and is now offered to the public.

The settlement of this town, originally called Newton or the New Town, was begun in 1631. In 1632 was built "the first house for public worship at Newtown, with a bell upon it," and on the 11th of October, 1633, Rev. Thomas Hooker was ordained pastor, and Mr. Samuel Stone, teacher. Early in the year 1636, Mr. Hooker and his congregation removed to Hartford, Conn. "These people and Church of *Christ* being

thus departed from New-towne, the godly people, who came in their roomes, gathered the eleaventh Church of *Christ*, and called to the Office of a Pastor, that gracious sweete Heavenly minded, and soule-ravishing Minister, Mr. *Thomas Shepheard*." Thus, on the 1st of February, 1636, was formed the first permanent church at Newtown. In 1636 an appropriation was made by the General Court for a public school, and in 1638, Rev. John Harvard, of Charlestown, having made a large addition to this appropriation, the School became a College, bearing the name of its benefactor, and the town was called Cambridge.

The first mention in the Town Records of a grave-yard bears date January 4, 1635, when, after various enactments, "It is further ordered that the Burying-place shall be paled in; whereof John Taylcot is to do 2 Rod, Georg Steele 3 Rod and a Gate, Thomas Hosmer 3 Rod, Mathew Allen 1 Rod, and Andrew Warner appointed to get the remainder done at a publick charge and he is to have iii^l. a Rod."

As late as the year 1702 the grave-yard was leased out as a pasture for sheep, as appears from the following records:—

"At a meeting of the selectmen, 10 March, 1700-1: Leiv^t. Aaron Bordman requesting that he might have the improvement of the Burying-yard, (to keep sheep in) the selectmen did consent that he should have the improvement of said yard, (for the use above mentioned) for one year next ensuing; provided he would cut the gate of said yard in sunder, and hang the same with suitable hooks and hinges, also fix a stub-post in the ground, and a rail from post to post cross the gates, for them to shut against; all to be done in good workman-

like order ;— which the said Bordman promised to do.”
March 31, 1702. “ It was then concluded, that Liev^t.
Aaron Bordman should have the improvement of the
Burying-yard for this present year, he paying for the
same six shillings.”

In the burying-ground there are several monuments,
consisting of a horizontal slab of hard stone, resting
upon a foundation of brick or slate. In the upper sur-
faces of these slabs, are cavities, of various shapes,
designed to admit a softer stone, or, perhaps, a leaden
tablet, bearing an inscription. Either by the ravages of
time, or by some sacrilegious hand, these tablets have
been removed, and thus no memorial is left of those
whose ashes rest beneath. In several places the foun-
dations of monuments have been found, sunk beneath
the surface of the soil.

It is rather surprising, that, in this age of improve-
ment, Cambridge should fall behind her neighbours, and
suffer her ancient grave-yard to lie neglected. Interest-
ing as it is from containing within its limits the “ tombs
of the prophets,” the spot is often visited by the curious
stranger ; but it is to be feared that he as often leaves
it with feelings of regret at its desolate appearance.

Many of the tombs are without the names of the own-
ers ; many of the grave-stones have been broken, and
more are broken every year ; brambles abound instead
of shrubbery ; and what might be a beautiful cemetery
is converted into a common passage-way. Unfitting is
it, indeed, that the sod beneath which rest the ashes of
a Shepard, a Dunster, and a Mitchel, should be rioted
over by every vagrant schoolboy.

In the following pages will be found a complete trans-
cript of the epitaphs in the burying-ground, from the

earliest date to the year 1800. In the years succeeding 1800, with a few exceptions, the names only of those, to whose memory monuments have been erected, are given.

The arrangement, nearly chronological, is according to New Style, in which, it must be remembered, the number of the year differs by *one* from that in Old Style, with respect to all dates between the 1st of January and the 25th of March, with which day the year began, according to O. S. For instance, under the year 1663, in this book, is a death purporting to have taken place March 5, 1662; this is probably correct by O. S., as the year 1663 would not commence till March 25th, but, according to New Style, the year 1663 began on the 1st of January preceding.

In several instances the chronological arrangement has been deviated from, to avoid dividing a long epitaph. Such instances occur on pages 70, 113, &c.

With regard to any discrepancies which may appear between the statements in the notes and those in Farmer's excellent "Genealogical Register," I will merely say, that I have, in all cases, followed the original Records of the Church and Town in preference to any other authority.

Beside the Church and Town Records, free use has been made of Farmer's Register, Holmes's Cambridge, Allen's Biographical Dictionary, Quincy's and Peirce's Histories of Harvard University, Thomas's History of Printing, and of several town histories.

I take this opportunity to render my grateful acknowledgments to Rev. Lucius R. Paige, the indefatigable antiquary and matchless Town Clerk of Cambridge, both for his personal advice and assistance, as well as

for his kindness in giving me free access to the Records in his possession.

To Mr. W. S. Tiffany, of the Senior Class in Harvard University, I am indebted for the design of the Vassall Monument, which graces my Appendix.

Probable as it is that many errors will be detected in the following pages, it is hoped that such will be regarded with an indulgent eye, and not attributed to any want of care on the part of the author.

CAMBRIDGE, May, 1845.

