

THE LIBERAL.

\$1 per annum, in advance.]

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[Single copies, 3 cts

Vol. XI.

RICHMOND HILL, THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 1889.

No. 37.

"The Liberal"
IS PUBLISHED EVERY
THURSDAY MORNING
AT
THE LIBERAL PRINTING & PUBLISHING HOUSE
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Richmond Hill and Vicinity
No. 34.
Our Cemetery.

To the Editor of THE LIBERAL

Before taking leave of our readers we
will visit one more place of local interest
to us all—the village graveyard. An old
fashioned Book, which we all have, and
I trust, a book we all prize, tells us that
there is but a step between us and death,
and it might be said but two or three
more between us and our place of burial,
for in five minutes we can walk from
Richmond Hill living to Richmond Hill
dead.

The first settler in Richmond Hill was
a dead Indian. This may not appear
very solemn, just as we are approaching
a grave subject, yet it is none the less a
fact. Within the memory of some liv-
ing, before the plot was enclosed for
burial purposes, there stood on the line
of the present fence near the gate the
rotten remains of an Indian tomb. It
consisted of a number of round cedar
logs all of one size, notched at the ends
and joined together like a log house,
those forming the roof nearing each other
until the one in the centre made the
ridge. He may have been one of the
the Mississaugas, who once owned all
this territory, and sold this part, the
"Home District," 648,000 acres to the
whites for \$40,000, the price of a good
farm. Perhaps on his way to the old
fort at Toronto for his share of the Gov-
ernment presents, he had been struck by
the hand of death, and his comrades
buried him by the trail which passed
through the site of our village. These
Indians buried their dead warriors in
hunting dress, with arms for battle or
the chase, so that he would be fully
equipped when he reached the happy
hunting grounds. We can get an idea of
the years that have intervened since that
Indian started for the spirit land, when
we think that sixty years ago those cedars
placed green upon his grave were de-
cayed and crumbling to dust.

We will now enter the sacred spot.
Spring that wakes to life everything but
the dead, has just been lifting winters
sward of fleecy whiteness from off the
surrounding graves, but the lingering
frost still holds in its icy grasp all that
lends attractiveness to an evening stroll,
yet summer evening thoughts may be
none the less acceptable when read in
winter evening's leisure hour, and so in
fancy we will take our usual walk, and
like Hervey, we will "meditate among
the tombs," and talk about those, who,
though dead, yet speak to us as we recall
the memories of the past.

How our thoughts go back on the days
gone by as we wander among the many
mounds that cover those, who, years ago,
have gone on before, and of those we
knew and loved in later days, so near our
feet yet so far from sight. How touch-
ing the sight of those evergreens and im-
mortelles so frequently renewed by the
hand of affection and love, which has
survived the first burst of grief for the
departed one. Those mortuary records
on marble slab and granite monument,
how short they seem "born"—"died,"
the dates so near together—on one the
history of a single day; on another the
history of a century, to them a lifetime
of stern realities, to us a perfect blank.
To the living the dead never grow older.
The babe buried twenty years ago in our
minds is a baby still, our dead children
ever remain to us the same as when they
left us, their forms never alter their faces
never change. Who can write the bio-
graphies of the silent sleepers in our little
"City of the Dead," their joys and sor-
rows, their lights and shades—their suffer-
ings when life was present with them,
and their hopes of the future, on which
they have entered. Not one on earth be-
low, and but one above who will read it
all when the Books are opened.

It all those who have been carried
through that gate were permitted to re-
turn amongst us and take their parts in
the activities of life as in the past, how
thronged our streets would be, how many
would be added to every family—what
joyful recognitions and happy greetings
if we again could grasp our departed lov-
ed ones by the hand, and yet

The time draws on
When not a single spot of burial earth,
Whether on land or in the spacious sea,
But must give back its long committed dust
Inviolate—and faithfully shall these
Make up the full account, not the least atom
Embezzled—none mislaid of the whole tale,
Each shall have a body ready furnished,
And each shall have its own.

Like all its surroundings, the grave
yard has undergone improvements. We
had first the era of wood in tombstones,
when the lines in memory were painted
black on slabs of two-inch cedar, and the
footstones were four by four scantling.
To this succeeded the railing era, when
all who could afford it, enclosed their
plots with bars and pickets. Some of
these were of the rudest construction,
and others that displayed the ingenuity

of the skilled artizan. Within the
writer's recollection the whole yard was
studded with these small enclosures, in
which the June rose flourished, and the
sweet briar spread itself until it peeped
over the top. Some of these were paint-
ed and neatly cared for, others were de-
lapidated and some began to mysteri-
ously disappear altogether.

A worthy deacon in his rounds of
Christian duty called one evening on a
neighbor. There was a cheerful blaze
upon the hearth, illuminating the kitchen
to its farthest corner, causing the polish-
ed furniture to glow with extra brilliancy.
The deacon was received with a cordial
welcome and requested to be seated, but
standing in the middle of the room, he
kept staring into the fireplace. The good
lady somewhat confused, commenced an
apology, in which her husband and pick-
et's got mixed up. The good old deacon's
indignation boiled over, and rushing
from the house he exclaimed, "Mon!
Mon! rob-bing the de-ad to warm the liv-
ing!"

Soon after this there came a manda-
te from the authorities of the church for the
expulsion of the remainder, and these
enclosures which gave a labyrinthine ap-
pearance to the cemetery, all disappeared
excepting that around the family plot of
the Fergusons.

The marble era set in early, the first
headstone marking the burial place of
Raymond, erected in 1828, now shows
the spots and wrinkles of age. All the
original ones were simple slabs of marble
with the record that the sleeper beneath
was born on one day and died on another,
to him the history of a thousand visis-
situdes, to us but a passing glance. Others
of later date are more elaborate in design
and taste, and the same in prose and
poetry. In recommending the merits of
the departed ones some come far short of
the reality and others rather extra-
vagant in the other extreme, reminding us
of a couplet once written on a churchyard
gate.

Here lie the dead,
And here the living—lie.
(TO BE CONTINUED.)

I have been suffering with a bad stom-
ach for a number of years and neglect-
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