

**VARIOUS**

QUAINT

EPITAPHS

# Various Quaint Epitaphs

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*Quaint Epitaphs:*

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# Various Quaint Epitaphs

## INTRODUCTION

This collection of epitaphs was started in a very modest fashion about thirty-five years ago, when the compiler found great pleasure in searching all the graveyards near her Vermont home for quaint inscriptions upon old tombstones. It was neither a morbid curiosity nor a spirit of melancholy that attracted her to the weather-beaten slabs of marble and slate, but rather a fondness for studying human eccentricity as revealed in whimsical epitaphs. In almost every graveyard one can find

"Some frail memorial still erected nigh,  
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture decked"

and these have given many hours of pleasure to one who finds in such sombre elegies of the dead most interesting reflections of the living.

As the only purpose of carrying on such odd researches was to satisfy a fondness for freakish ingenuity, much less interest was found in the thousands of amusing epitaphs that are penned by writers for comic papers or by wags in general. Fictitious inscriptions lack the charm of authenticity, which in the case

of epitaphs is decidedly more desirable than imagination. All selections which could not be definitely located are classed by themselves, but many of these are known to have actually existed, though for varying reasons the collector is unable to vouch for their exact locality.

In a few instances the names have been changed, where it was thought that verbatim copies of the epitaphs might prove invidious to the relatives or friends of the dead. It is hoped that the division into localities will prove a convenience to a majority of readers, who naturally will not care to read such a book through at one sitting, but rather to pick it up now and then when in the mood for such light entertainment as it can afford. The spelling has necessarily been changed at times from the antiquated and almost hieroglyphic forms which would defy the most careful typography; but in general the orthography and punctuation are copied verbatim from the originals.

The compiler trusts that it is not an act of unreasonable presumption to publish a book of epitaphs when so many already exist. In fact it was partly because of the numerous requests for an examination of her collection that the plan of publishing it was adopted. Such an ambitious consummation of her pleasant labor never occurred to her until her original note-books became badly worn and torn in their travels from friend to friend, from town to town, and it is hardly an exaggeration to say that they have been from Portland to Portland, from Augusta to Augusta, in response to the urgent requests of those who have in some manner heard

of their existence. If her collection is as kindly received in book form as it has been in its less pretentious condition, the editor will feel that its publication was not due to an immoderate confidence in its variety and general interest.

SUSAN DARLING SAFFORD.

Boston, Mass., April 6, 1895.

# MAINE

## Winslow.

Here lies the body of Richard Thomas, an Englishman  
by birth, a Whig of '76—a Cooper by trade, now food for  
worms. Like an old rum puncheon whose staves are all  
marked and numbered he will be raised and put together  
again by his Maker.

Here lies the body of John Mound  
Lost at sea and never found.  
Here lies one Wood enclosed in wood,  
One Wood within another.  
The outer wood is very good,  
We cannot praise the other.

## Portland.

The little hero that lies here  
Was conquered by the diarrhœa.

## Gridiwokag—1635.

Beneath this stone now dead to grief  
Lies Grid the famous Wokag chief.  
Pause here and think you learned prig,

This man was once an Indian big.  
Consider this, ye lowly one,  
This man was once a big in—jun.  
Now he lies here, you too must rot,  
As sure as pig shall go to pot.

## **In the same churchyard**

Here Betsy Brown her body lies.  
Her soul is flying in the skies.  
While here on earth she oftimes spun  
Six hundred skeins from sun to sun,  
And wove one day, her daughter brags,  
Two hundred pounds of carpet rags.

Eastport.

## **"Transplanted"**

Kittery—1803.

I lost my life in the raging seas  
A sovereign God does as he please.  
The Kittery friends did then appear,  
And my remains they buried here.

We can but mourn our loss,  
Though wretched was his life.  
Death took him from the cross,  
Erected by his wife.

Bath.

Our life is but a Winter's day.  
Some breakfast and away.  
Others to dinner stay and are well fed.  
The oldest sups and goes to bed.  
Large is his debt who lingers out the day,  
Who goes the soonest has the least to pay.

## **John Phillips**

Accidentally shot as a mark of affection by his brother.  
After life's fever, I sleep well.

# NEW HAMPSHIRE

Hollis.

Here the old man lies  
No one laughs and no one cries  
Where he's gone or how he fares  
No one knows and no one cares.  
But his brother James and his wife Emeline  
They were his friends all the time.

Here lies our young and blooming daughter—  
Murdered by the cruel and relentless Henry.  
When coming home from school he met her,  
And with a six self shooter, shot her.

Here lies Cynthia, Stevens' wife  
She lived six years in calms and strife.  
Death came at last and set her free.  
I was glad and so was she.

In youth he was a scholar bright.  
In learning he took great delight.  
He was a major's only son.  
It was by love he was undone.

Here lies old Caleb Ham,

By trade a bum.  
When he died the devil cried,  
Come, Caleb, come.

Peak Cemetery.

## **Thomas Culbert**

The voice of a stepfather beneath this  
Stone is to rest one, shamefully robbed  
In life by his wife's son, and Esq Tom  
And David Learys wife

**(The above is a verbatim copy.)**

Guilford.

## **Josiah Haines**

He was a blessing to the saints,  
To sinners rich and poor,  
He was a kind and worthy man,  
He's gone to be no more.  
He kept the faith unto the end

And left the world in peace.  
He did not for a doctor send  
Nor for a hireling priest.

## **Mrs. Josiah Haines**

Here beneath these marble stones  
Sleeps the dust and rests the bones  
Of one who lived a Christian life  
T'was Haines's—Josiah's wife.  
She was a woman full of truth  
And feared God from early youth.  
And priests and elders did her fight  
Because she brought her deeds to light.

Pembroke.

Here lies a man never beat by a plan,  
Straight was his aim and sure of his game,  
Never was a lover but invented a revolver.

Jaffrey.

A free negro, Amos Fortune, settled in Jaffrey more than one hundred years ago, though warned off as a possible pauper, and left one quaint bit of history—his estate, to the town. Part of it bought the communion service still in use (1895.) On the

gravestone of his wife is this inscription:—

Sacred to the memory of Violate, by purchase the Slave of Amos Fortune, by marriage his wife, by fidelity his companion and solace, and by his death his widow.

# VERMONT

Our little Jacob has been taken away to bloom in a superior flower pot above.

My wife lies here.  
All my tears cannot bring her back;  
Therefore, I weep.

**This little buttercup was bound  
to join the heavenly choir**

Burlington.

Beneath this stone our baby lays  
He neither crys or hollers.  
He lived just one and twenty days,  
And cost us forty dollars.

Charity wife of Gideon Bligh  
Underneath this stone doth lie  
Naught was she e'er known to do  
That her husband told her to.  
Here lies the wife of brother Thomas,

Whom tyrant death has torn from us,  
Her husband never shed a tear,  
Until his wife was buried here.  
And then he made a fearful rout,  
For fear she might find her way out.

He first departed, she a little tried to live without him.  
Liked it not and died.

His illness lay not in one part  
But o'er his frame it spread.  
The fatal disease was in his heart  
And water in his head.

## **In memory of Elizabeth Taylor**

Could blooming years and modesty and all thats pleasing to  
the eye,

Against grim death been a defence,  
Elizabeth had not gone hence.

Died when young and full of promise  
Of whooping cough our Thomas.

She lived with her husband fifty years  
And died in the confident hope of a better life.

Stop dear parent cast your eye,

And here you see your children lie.  
Though we are gone one day before,  
You may be cold in a minute more.  
Little Teddy, fare thee well,

Safe from earth in Heaven to dwell.  
Almost Cherub here below,  
Altogether angel now.

## **On a tombstone for man and wife**

In sunny days and stormy weather,  
In youth, and age, we clung together.  
We lived and loved, laughed and cried  
Together—and almost together died.

Windsor.

## **Behold! I come as a thief**

Death loves a shining mark.  
In this case he had it.

Stowe.

## **Erected by a widower in memory of his two wives**

This double call is laid to all,  
Let none surprise or wonder.  
But to the youth it speaks a truth,  
In accents loud as thunder.

Stranger pause as you pass by;  
My thirteen children with me lie.  
See their faces how they shine  
Like blossoms on a fruitful vine.

## **A rum cough carried him off**

Here lies the body of old Uncle David,  
Who died in the hope of being sa-ved.  
Where he's gone or how he fares,  
Nobody knows and nobody cares.

The body that lies buried here  
By lightning fell, death's sacrifice,  
To him Elijah's fate was given  
He rode on flames of fire to heaven.

Stay, reader, drop upon this stone  
One pitying tear and then be gone:  
A handsome pile of flesh and blood  
Is here sunk down in its first mud.

## **I was somebody—who? is no business of yours**

My wife from me departed  
And robbed me like a knave;  
Which caused me broken hearted  
To sink into this grave.  
My children took an active part,  
To doom me did contrive;  
Which stuck a dagger in my heart  
That I could not survive.

### **Pious**

Open thine eyes Lord  
I come! I come!

## Sacred to the memory of three twins

My glass is run; yours is running.  
Remember death and judgment coming.

This stone was got to keep this lot.  
Her father bought. Dig not too near.

Grim death took little Jerry,  
The son of Joseph and Sereno Howells,  
Seven days he wrestled with the dysentery  
And then he perished in his little bowels.

Newfane

.

Oh, little Lavina she has gone  
To James and Charles and Eliza Ann.  
Arm in arm they walk above  
Singing the Redeemer's love.

# MASSACHUSETTS

Malden

.

## Phebe Sprague

In the sixteenth year of her age,  
Natively quick and spry  
As all young people be,  
When God commands them down to dust,  
How quick they drop you see.

Melrose

.

When I am dead and in my grave  
And all my bones are rotten,  
If this you see, remember me,  
Nor let me be forgotton.

Wendell

.

## **Mary Hardy Goss Hill Sawin**

Orphan of affection and grief, adopted by aunt and grandsire,  
nurse of their hospital home.

Wife and widow of Dea John Hills.

Happy wife in rural home of Thomas Sawin eight years.

Often prisoner of calamity and pain.

Exhile of inherited melancholy fifteen years.

Patient waiter on decay and death.

Lover of all who love Jesus.

Here lies the body of Samuel Proctor

Who lived and died without a doctor.

Under these stones lies three children dear;

Two are buried at Taunton and I lie here.

Bromfield

.

## **In memory of Stephen Pynchon**

One truth is certain when this life is o'er,

Man dies to live and lives to die no more.

Marshfield

.

**Julia Webster Appleton**

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