



# The Victorian Celebration of Death

*James Stevens Curl*

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## **The Victorian Celebration of Death** James Stevens Curl

In this beautifully illustrated and well-researched book Professor Curl has rescued much fascinating material from undeserved oblivion, and his work fills a genuine gap. From humble working-class exequies to the massive outpouring of grief at the State funerals of Wellington and Queen Victoria herself, *The Victorian Celebration of Death* covers an immense canvas. It describes the change in sensibility that led to a new tenderness towards the dead; the history of the urban cemeteries with their architecture and landscapes; the ephemera of death and dying; State funerals as national spectacles; and the utilitarian reactions towards the end of the nineteenth century. Combining wit with compassion, Curl wears his learning lightly, and his taste for the eerie is delicately balanced by this literary personality. He has resurrected many valuable and extremely interesting aspects of nineteenth-century attitudes to death and the disposal of the dead; Curl's achievement is as well-ordered as any sumptuous funeral, and is lucid as well as entertaining, with many surprises and associated delights.

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