

THE
HISTORY
OF
UNION, CONN.,

FOUNDED ON MATERIAL GATHERED BY

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE CEMETERIES OF UNION.

THE OLD CEMETERY—THE NORTH CEMETERY—THE NEW CEMETERY—THE EAST CEMETERY.

TO the antiquarian the "old burying ground" at Union is a more interesting spot than any other in town. For there,

"Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell forever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep."

This is the spot which the first settlers selected as a place in which to bury their dead. It was originally a part of the ten acres reserved for public uses. The first person ever buried in it was William Ward, Sr., who died June 8th, 1731. His remains rest near the centre of the yard, but the grave is marked by no stones. This is the case with a great many, perhaps the majority of graves in this yard. Almost every spot in the yard is occupied by a grave and one can hardly step without treading on one. Yet there are very many of these which are marked by no stone, and hence it is impossible to tell who sleeps beneath. It would be impossible to tell how many people lie buried in the yard; but as it was the only burial place in town for over a hundred years, during which time the population of town averaged about six hundred, there are probably not less than fifteen hundred graves in the yard. When we think of it we see that those who are living in town now are but few compared with the number of those who have been before them, and whose bodies now rest in this and the other cemeteries in town. The first grave-stones, where there were any, were often common, rude stone, with the letters cut into the smooth side. A few are of slate or schist, and some of sandstone. It is not until the beginning of the present century that marble seems to have been used.