

MISCELLANEOUS.

LINES BY THE LAKE SIDE.

BY BISHOP DOANE.

This placid lake, my gentle girl,
Be emblem of thy life—
As full of peace and purity,
As free from storm and strife.

THE SHELTERED WIDOW.

In consequence of the gale which, in the autumn of 1823, wrecked so many unfortunate Smiths on the coast, their widows were obliged to supply their places in the boats to save their families from famine.

As, land the hand, I mean to push
The golden boat to shore,
For I must take thy father's place
To ply the feathered oar.

THE POST MORTEM COGITATIONS OF THE LATE POPULAR MR. SMITH.
I died on the 1st of April 1823, and if the reader will go to the parish church of Smithton, ask the sexton for the key, and having gained admission, if he will walk up the left-hand aisle, he will perceive my family vault, beneath which is my family vault, where my mortal remains are now reposing; and against the wall, over the very spot where I used to sit every Sunday, is a very handsome white marble monument; on which a female figure is represented in an attitude of despair, weeping over an urn, and on that urn is the following inscription:

Restored to the memory of ANTHONY SMITH, Esq., of Smithton Hall, who departed this life on the 1st of April, 1823. The integrity of his conduct and the amiability of his temper endeared him to a wide circle of friends; he has left an inconsolable widow, and by her this Monument erected.

The gentle reader may now pretty well understand my position when, after my popularity had always been my aim, and my wealth and situation in society enabled me to obtain what I so ardently desired. At county meetings—at the head of my own table—among the poor of the parish—I was decidedly popular, and the name of Smith was always breathed with a blessing or commendation. My wife adored me; she wondered therefore, that at my demise she erected a monument to my memory, and designated herself, in all the lasting durability of marble, the inconsolable widow. I had a presentiment that I should not be long lived; but this rather increased my thirst for popularity; and feeling the improbability of my living very long in the sight of Mrs. Smith, and my many dear friends, I was the more anxious to live in their hearts. Nothing could exceed my amiability; my life was one smile, my sayings were conciliatory, my doings benevolent, my questions endearing, my answers affirmative. I was determined that my will, unlike most wills, should be satisfactory to every body. I silently studied the wants and wishes of those around me, and endeavored to arrange my leaveings, so that each legatee should hereafter breathe my name with a blessing, and talk of that dear good-bye to Mr. Smith, always, at the same time having recourse to a pocket handkerchief. I perpetually sat for my picture, and I gave my resemblance to all the dear friends who were hereafter to receive the benefit of my dying.

which should survive my brief existence, I panted to witness that popularity; unseen to see the tears that would be shed—unheard to mingle with the mute moaners who would lament my death. Where is the advantage of being lamented if one cannot hear the lamentations? But how was this privilege to be attained? Alas! attained it was; but the means shall never be divulged to my readers. Never shall another Mr. Smith, self-satisfied and exulting in his popularity, be taught by me to see what I have seen, to feel what I have felt.

I had perused St. Leon; I therefore knew that perpetually-renovated youth had been sought and had been bought. I had read Frankenstein, and I had seen that wonders, equally astonishing and supernatural, had been attained by mortals. I wanted to watch my own weepers, nod at my own plumes, count my own mourning coaches, and read with my own eyes the laudatory paragraph that announced my own demise in the country newspaper. I gained my point—I did all this, and more than this; but I would not advise any universally-admired gentleman and fondly idolized husband to follow my example. What! evilish arts I used, what spells, what conjurations, never will I reveal; suffice it to say that I attained the object of my desires. Two peeps was I to have at those I left behind me,—one exactly a month after my demise, the second on that day ten years!

And now for the result of peep the first. In some degree my thirst for post-mortem popularity was certainly gratified; and I will begin with the pleasantest part of my own post mortem examination. My own house (or rather the house that had been mine) looked doleful enough; no mirth, no guests, no music; the servants in deep mourning, and a hatchment over the door. My own wife (or rather my relict) was a perfect picture of misery and mourning, in the extreme of the fashion. She heaved the deepest sighs, she was trimmed with the deepest crape, and wore the deepest beads that were seen. The depth of her despondency was truly gratifying. Her cap was most conscientiously ludicrous, and beneath its folds a very hair upon her head lay hid. She was a moving mass of crape and bombasin. In her right hand was a pocket handkerchief, in her left a smelling bottle, and in her eye a tear. She was clothed with a gentleman, but it was no rival—nothing to arouse one jealous pang in the bosom of a departed husband. It was, in fact, a marble masonic setting. She was giving directions about my monument, and putting herself into the attitude of lamentation in which she wished to be represented (and is represented) bending over my urn; she burst in a torrent of tears, and in scarce articulate accents called for her "sainted Anthony." When she came a little to herself, she grumbled somewhat at the extravagance of the estimate, knocking off her beads and there some little ornamental monumental decoration, bargaining about my inscription, and chattering my urn!

She was interrupted by the entrance of a miliner, who was ordered to prepare a black velvet cloak lined with ermine; and no expense was to be spared. Alas! though I, the widow's "inky cloak" may well be warm; my black marble covering will be cold comfort to her. Just to amuse you, ma'am, said the marchandise des modes, do look at some things that are going home for Miss Jones's wedding. The widow said nothing; and I thought it was with a vacant eye that she gazed apathetically at satin, blonde, and feathers white as the driven snow. At length she cried abruptly, "I cannot wear them;" and covering her face with her handkerchief, she went more loudly than before. Happy late husband that I was—surely for me she wept! A housemaid was blubbering on the stairs, a footman sighing in the hall; this is as it should be, thought I; and when I heard that a temporary reduction in the establishment was determined on, and that the weeping and sighing individuals had been just discharged, I felt the soothing conviction, that leaving their living mistress tore open the wounds inflicted by the loss of their late master, and made them bleed afresh. My dog howled as I passed him, my horse ran wild in the paddock, and the clock in my own sitting room maintained a sad and stubborn silence, wanting my hand to wind it up.

Things evidently did not go on in the old outline with me, and this was soothing to my spirit. My own portrait was turned with its face to the wall; my widow having no longer the original to look at, could not endure gazing at the mute resemblance! What, after all, thought I, is the use of a portrait? When the original lives, we have something better to look at, and when the original is gone, we cannot bear to look at it. Be that as it may, I did not the less appreciate my widow's sensibility. On the village green the idle boys played cricket; they mourn me, not—but what of that a boy will skip in the rear of his grandmother's funeral. The village butcher stood disconsolately at the door of his shop, and said to the village baker, who was despondingly passing by "Dull times these, neighbour. Bone-bread! dull times. Ah! we miss the good squire, and the feasting at the hall." On a dead wall I read "Smith for ever." "For ever," thought I, is a long time to talk about. "Close to it I saw,—"Mitts for ever," written in letters equally large, and much more fresh. He was my parliamentary successor, and his politics were the same as my own. This was cheering; my constituents had not deserted my principles—more than that I could not expect. The "Smith," who they said, was to be their representative "for ever," was now just as dead as the wall upon which his name was chalked. Again I retired to my resting-place under the family pew in the church of Smithton, quite satisfied that, at the expiration of ten years, I should take my second peep at equally gratifying, though rather softened evidences of my popularity.

At the same time taking snuff from a gold box which had been my gift, he did every thing for the best; but between ourselves, Smith was a bore. "It is well," said Mr. Mitts, "that talking of him has not the effect which is attributed to talking of another invisible personage." Let him rest in peace; for, if it were possible that he could be reanimated, his re-appearance here to claim his goods and chattels, and above all, his wife, would be attended with rather awkward consequences.

So much for my posthumous curiosity.—Vain mortal that I was, to suppose that after a dreamless sleep of ten long years, I could return to the land of the living, and find the place and the hearts that I once filled, still unoccupied! In the very handsome frame of my own picture, was now placed a portrait of John Mitts, Esq.; mine was thrown aside in an old lumber-room, where the sportive children of my widow had recently discovered it, and with their mimic swords had innocently poked out the eyes of what they were pleased to denominate "the dirty picture of the ugly man." My presumption has been properly rewarded; let no one who is called to his last account, wish, like me, to be permitted to revisit the earth. If such a visit were granted, and like me, he returned invisibly, all that he would see and hear would wound his spirit; but were he permitted to re-appear visibly, in propria persona, notifying indeed would be his welcome!

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LIFE OF BLACK HAWK. A letter from Rock Island to the editor of the Boston Morning Post, gives the following outline of this work which is about to be published at Cincinnati:— Among the more numerous incidents of his life, the work will embrace the relation of the various wars in which he has been engaged against the Indian tribes—the causes by which he was actuated to join the standard of the British Government in their last war with our country—his reasons for the more recent hostilities of his band against the United States—and finally, his account of his captivity, and of his tour through the Eastern States. From this hasty enumeration it should appear that the book throughout, will contain events peculiarly interesting to our citizens generally, and the conclusion more especially, to those of the East, where his appearance during the last summer created an excitement so universal. The book is embodied from notes dictated by Black Hawk himself, immediately upon his return home and at subsequent visits to this place, and translated for the author by the United States interpreter for this agency, who possesses a thorough knowledge both of the English and Indian tongues; it must therefore exhibit the feelings and sentiments of the fallen Hero almost, if not entirely, as they exist in his own breast. Black Hawk has made us frequent visits since his return to his tribe; and you may tell the fair portion of your readers, to whose generosity and affection he is so much indebted for the presents and caresses bestowed upon him while among them, that their kindness has gained so much his attachment to the "white man's life," that the transition to that of his native forests is working a change we think to his disadvantage, as his health is evidently declining—at least, he says his Indian food and mode of life is the cause, but it is rather from his proud spirit being crushed with the weight of his misfortune, a situation which an Indian seldom long survives, so that having the inclination, he yet lacks the power to obtain by new acts of aggression, a repetition of the triumphal journey with its consequent bounties and attentions which he has so lately experienced. His white hat; his gold-headed cane and black coat still mark him out among the feathered tiaras, glittering spears and raiment blankets of his brother warriors.

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