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DESCRIPTION OF THE ENGRAVING.

A POET'S GRAVE.

ENGRAVED BY ADAMS.



On a pleasant morning in July we set out for the grave of Joseph Rodman Drake. We had passed a few days very agreeably about the village of West Farms; my friend engaged with his pencil and sketch-book amid the beauties of the Bronx, while I, accompanying, read aloud to him, and awarded my approbation to the fidelity of his delineations. We had explored every nook and dell, had "set us down upon the green bank-side skirting the smooth edge of the gentle river," and had loitered away many a happy hour around the sweet haunts the poet loved.

The little stream to whose delightful banks our saunterings had been confined, was his "own romantick Bronx;" and as we wandered hither and thither, as we plucked the smiling flowers that nodded to their image, or reclined in the shady bowers, our pleasure enhanced because they had been his. An invitation to visit the house where he had resided, and near which he lies, was politely extended to us, and we were now about to take advantage of the friendly request. It was a balmy-heated morn, a gentle breeze just played among the leaves and hardly ruffled the water, by whose margin our road lay. There was a deep calmness upon the fields; the blue sky was dappled with here and there a fleecy cloud; the smoke rose straight and slowly curled from the cottage roof; the dew-drops sparkled among the grass, and the wild-flowers beside the fences, as they opened their cups to catch the mild sunbeam, flung rich fragrance to the air. Occasionally a red-breast, perched on a twig, would pipe his morning notes; a swallow would flit along the way; the querulous cat-bird from the bushes would startle us, or the hoarse caw of a solitary crow, lazily flapping his wings far above our heads, break in upon our musings. Silently we strolled along; existence was pleasure, and words would but have interrupted the sweet flow of thought as it glided through our breasts. There are times when the gentle influences of the country more strongly impress us; there are days, and this was one, when the woods and fields possess a hallowing, tranquilizing power, which banishes every unholy thought, obliterates care, subdues the passions, and, as it throws a Sabbath over the mind, causes us to bless with gratitude the love that made the earth so fair. Our road soon turned to the right, and, as we left the river-side and ascended an elevation in our path, we traced it in many a silvery link far through the meadows, until it was hidden by a clump of trees. A walk of about a mile brought us to an eminence, in view of and near to the Sound. The prospect was charming: a field or so on each side had been the farthest limit of our vision, when suddenly we beheld the blue water almost at our feet; its surface lay motionless, and the few vessels redoubled by reflection, rested swan-like on its placid bosom. Here was Riker's Island; there the Brothers: before us Flushing Bay, the spire of the village church just visible; on our left Throg's Neck; and far beyond, the green hills of Long Island. Attractive as was the scene, we stopped but a moment; the little graveyard was close at hand, and neglecting what, at any other time, would have detained us long, we hurried on—a moment and it was reached. It is a grassy knoll, unenclosed beside the road, rising from a smooth meadow; around and upon it were a few scattered trees, and ranged across it some half-sunken, moss-covered tomb-stones, marking the resting-place of the fathers of the hamlet. On the right, as we approached, was a picket-fence surrounding two marble monuments, one white, the other of a blueish hue. We ascended the eminence; leaning upon the railing, we moved aside the rose-trees and shrubs, tributes of some friendly hand, and read—

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF
 JOSEPH R. DRAKE,
 WHO DIED SEPT. 21, 1820. AGED 25 YEARS.

Upon another side are the words—

"None knew him but to love him,
 Nor named him but to praise."

The other monument is his sister's. They are similar in structure, about eight feet in height, plain in style, the basis square, surmounted by obelisks. After reading the inscriptions, I sat down upon a gray, time-worn stone; the scenery is not very picturesque, it is a quiet spot, far from the bustling world; a place a poet would love to muse upon, and where he would choose to lie. Landward are fields, the grain waving yellow upon them; a house or two peeping from the trees; the faint tinkling of the bell from the grazing herd, reminding one of peace and happiness, far from the city's noisy strife; on the other side the sleeping Sound and islets

green. The sun smiled pleasantly, and the grass, I thought, was as fresh as ever: the woods as green as when he who lay beneath the sod last looked upon them. The little eminence on which we were was the same, the trees waved over it then as now, and the rank weeds grew close around the decaying stones. The earth is ever the same: man dies, yet the buds expand; the spring-flowers smile, nature again and again puts on her liveried green; summer comes, with fruit and harvest; autumn, with her gorgeous drapery and solemn winter. I had given way to such reflections, when my companion rose and moved toward the road; we followed its devious course about three-quarters of a mile and reached the house, which we had seen from the graveyard. It is situated at the extremity of the point, and fronts upon the Sound. It is one of those ancient, comfortable mansions, the remnants of a former day, when convenience was more studied than elegance, and solidity than grace. It is two stories high in front, while in the rear the roof almost reaches the ground; its sides are shingled, and an ample piazza reaches across its front. My friend, whose acquaintance with the family was of longer standing than mine, raised the latch of the gate, leading into the garden before the door: we entered, and stepping upon the stoop, found a party of ladies seated there, engaged with their needles. After partaking of some refreshments, which our long walk rendered very acceptable, we were invited to examine the interior of the edifice. The front door first engaged my attention; it is of the old style, divided in the middle; upon the upper part is a huge knocker, by its size more fitted to awaken the inmates of a castle, than necessary to arouse those of so peaceful a domicile. On the right of the hall door, as we advanced, was the parlour, its huge fireplace, now filled with garden-flowers and the delicate asparagus, evidenced an expanded sense of the comfortable in the architect; the wainscotted and panelled wall, with several doors, hardly to be distinguished, reminded us of the days of romance, when mysterious beings glided through secret avenues, to the great terror of all well-disposed people. Two windows, reaching almost to the floor, look out upon the river, their frames and appurtenances in keeping with the rest of the apartment. Leaving this room we ascended, by a wide staircase, with heavy banisters, to the upper story; the finish of the rooms resembled that below.

After having explored the curiosities of the building we returned to the piazza, where we found the ladies, some of whom were from New-York, with their bonnets on, and prepared for a stroll upon the beach. On our way we passed two old locusts, whose decayed tops showed the effects of many a storm; beneath the shade of these the author of the "Culprit Fay" spent his summer afternoons. The view from the point is very extensive, up and down the Sound as far as the eye could reach; the islands were near, and Flushing bay and Long Island seemed almost within hail. Seated upon some large stones, we eat a few cakes which the workbags of some of the party contained, and many an anecdote and legend of the place, which had been for years in the family, enlivened us; the merry laugh went round, and not without regret did we hear the rude blast of the dinner-horn, though the morning's exercise had sharpened our appetites. In the latter part of the afternoon we took our leave, our arrangements not permitting us to remain until the next day, in compliance with the cordial invitations of our friends. The sun was far down the west, and the evening south breeze was playfully ruffling the Sound as we retraced our path. We had almost reached the burial-place when we met an old man with silvered locks driving some cattle to the house; my companion recognized him as an old acquaintance, he having a year or so before spent several days in the vicinity. After some commonplace observations, my friend said, "Well, Patrick, you will soon want a place with the folks yonder." "Yes, yes, I am getting old now, my time is almost come; I can't do much about the place now."

"Did you ever see Drake?" said I
 "What, Joe you mean! oh ay, well; he was a nice fellow."
 "He lived here!"

The old man drew out a horn snuff-box, the prelude to a conversation, and giving us each a pinch, proceeded: "I knew him when he was so high; a pretty little boy he was; then he grew up to be a man, and came here often; he was so fond of the woods and fields, he'd be gone whole days, wandering round; and then he read so much; I never read much myself, I hadn't much opinion of so much reading; he was about your size, a curly-headed, pretty fellow, and so funny and lively, and clever as the day's long. Joe never was well after he came back from New-Orleans; he did get no better, but worse and worse, and was so pale, and then he died." The old man had been gradually yielding to the melancholy feelings which the subject awakened, and as he said the last words, he stopped, a tear moistened his aged eye, it quivered in the corner, and as he dashed it away with his hard hand, I thought it was a noble eulogy. I asked him whether Drake ever wrote poetry? "He did not know, he believed he wrote a song once—he was very clever, and they all liked him so." A few words more, the old man's occupation requiring his attention, and we left him. My companion sketched the spot, and after studying out the almost obliterated characters on some of the head-stones, and taking a last long look at the place, we walked on, and a short time after sunset reached West Farms.