



HAMLET (BLAKE).

To be, or not to be: that is the question: whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune: or to take arms against a sea of troubles, and, by opposing, end them? I do not know why yet I live to say, This thing's to do: sith I have cause and will and strength and means to do it. Rightly to be great is not to stir without great argument: but greatly, to find quarrel in a straw when honour's at the stake.

A Tilt with Fame

BY CASEY TAP

Once, not very long since, I published a book.

I believe that the making of a confession eases one's conscience, and gives him a complacency and sense of quietude that are not his when holding a secret. Therefore I record the above fact.

I had written a few sketches for the papers, and as they seemed to be snapped up and eagerly sought after, I concluded that the crying need of the 19th century was for those articles to be reproduced

in book-form, price a quarter of a dollar. Accordingly, I interviewed a publisher. He looked some of the sketches over and said he would publish 1,000 copies of the proposed concordance for "so much." He casually remarked that this terms were cash. I tried to get him to estimate for 10,000 copies. He said, perhaps 1,000 would do for a starter. Time has proven the greatness of his prophetic abilities. There was less of the profit about the book.

I tried to get the publisher to cheapen his rates somewhat, but he said no, he had too much regard for my feelings for that. "How so?" I queried. "Well," replied he, "you see, it is this way. When the returns from the great work begin to come in, you would reflect upon the fact that, out of a great regard for your sterling worth, I had made a sacrifice, and you would, I know, be just literally torn up in spirit. Ah no, it cannot be"

I gazed for a few minutes in silence at a steel engraving of a Chicago newspaper correspondent disappearing into a Florida alligator's zereba, until aroused by a peculiar sound, such as is heard when a sink pipe is partly clogged up. Turning towards the publisher I saw he was weeping. That settled the matter. When a person turns the faucet of his grief, on my account, and lets her pour, I invariably weaken.

Well, in dew time—that is the fall of the year—the library of poetry and song made its appearance to an astonished world. It was bound in pail green paper, and had my picture in the front of it. This latter fact, alone, should have assured its success. The work was dedicated to that eminent musical connoisseur, Prof. Wilhelmj Von Nye, to whom a copy was forwarded, with request for a critique upon the same. Von Nye replied in a rather non-committal epistle, saying that perhaps the best test would be to place the book on sale. If people knocked each other down, trod on each other, and killed each other to get hold of it at any price, it was a great work; but if they smothered their longing for it, and struggled along without it, it did not touch them in the right spot. The delicateness of Wilhelmj's reply I never shall forget. One day I handed a copy to a friend and asked him if he would not like to invest. He read several of the articles in an impassioned tone of voice, and then said, "No, Casey. I never did care for this heavy sort of truck that a great many are writing. Say, why don't you try your hand at something in a lighter vein—humor, for instance?" I have a friend who runs a refreshment-room and news-stand on one of the St. John River passenger steamers. He agreed to take a few copies "on sale." A few months afterwards I met him and interrogated him in regard to "Tappings." "How many books," said he, "did you give me?" "Twelve, I believe," was my answer. "Well," he rejoined, "I have just 20 copies left." "How may that be?" "Well, you see, people all along the river who had bought copies elsewhere heard that I had them for sale and so they brought them back. Two or three wanted their money back, but the majority seemed to consider it a personal favor if I would take them back, anyway."

The publisher had assured me that it would be a taking book, and he was correct. It took all the money I could scrape up to publish the book. It also took me 19 months to sell 97 copies. All these facts had a tendency to sadden me, and since then I have not attempted any writing in the humorous line, but have confined myself to something heavy—diatribes, for instance.

Oakumoph Villa, N. B.

—Moph. Lear.

Written for JURY.

SUICIDE.

A letter I write to-day, Love,

That echoes my fondest hope,

And if my wish is granted, Love,

Well—it will save me stretching a rope.

St. John, N. B., March, 1857.

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