

N. M. M. Of the rejected addresses.
(Dead)

10 Austin Lane,
Sunday 19 March
Dear Sir

Several numbers
on my mind added
to 100 sent in my hand
under its receipt that
you should again pass
the over.

I enclosed more
of the same
Yours truly
James Smith

10 Antonian
Wednesday 24 Feb.

Dear Madam

I shall have
great pleasure in
seeing you at home
at your table
at dinner tomorrow

Remain

Dear Madam

Yours very truly

J. M. Smith

AY! there's the end of it! We all know what Dr. Radcliffe said to Queen Anne, when she asked him what brought on the gout. There sits James Smith, with his foot pressing a soft cushion, his elbows propped by the arms of an easy chair, his hand resting on a crutch, his hair departed from his head, his nose tinged with the colours of the dawn, and his whole man in a state of that repose which indicates that he has had much work in his way while sojourning in this world, and that, like Falstaff, he is taking his ease in his own inn, the Garrick—a club of gentlemen which in a great measure would answer the description given by that worthy knight of his companions in arms, as being principally composed of “gentlemen of companies, slaves as ragged as Lazarus—discarded unjust serving-men, younger sons of younger brothers, revolted tapsters, and ostlers trade-fallen.” Among them sits James Smith, regaling them with jokes, which, if they are not quite as good as those of Falstaff, have at least the merit of being at least as old.

The name which he bears has excited some rather elaborate wit in *Don Juan*—

“ ’Mongst these were several Englishmen of pith—
Sixteen called Thomson, and nineteen named Smith ;”

and so forth. It is, in spite of this and many other jokes of the same kind, one of the most honourable names in the world. It is derived directly from Tubal Cain. As old Verstegan sings, after some far older authority—

“ From whence comes Smith, all be he knight or squire,
But from the smith who workéd in the fire ?”

And what descent can be more noble? The Smith has, however, not been especially famous in our literature; and in the present case is distinguished only by some cleverly hammered out jokes. Whether James or Horace were the principal hammerman, is a question in doubt among the critics who employ themselves in discussing matters of such moment. We incline to those who think that any thing of value in the *Rejected Addresses* is to be attributed to the pen of James. But as Horace (Flaccus, not Smith) remarks, “*grammatici certent*”—we shall not dogmatise on the subject. It is certain that James lays no claim to the novel-writing honours of his brother. With respect to the *Addresses*, he is content to “partake the triumph;” but he has no notion that he is called upon to “pursue the *Gale*”—no, nor the *Reuben*, nor the *Brambletye*, nor any thing that is his—viz. Horace’s.

James Smith was an attorney, and is a pleasant, twaddling, pun-making, epigram-manufacturing, extempore-grinding, and painstaking elderly joker. He made one hit, and that was a good one; on the strength of which he has lived ever since, as indeed he deserved to live. We cannot recollect that he wrote any thing in the book line except his contributions to the *Rejected Addresses*, unless he had a hand in such stuff as *Jokeyby*, or *Horace in London*. His magazine papers in the *New Monthly* were rather monotonous; and his continually quoting of them for years afterwards has contributed in a great measure towards getting him, so generally as he is, considered to be a bore. But let him have his praise. His single talent was a good talent, and there is no reason why he should wrap it up in a napkin. We have already alluded to the universal diffusion of his name among us English folk, and its trite and ordinary sound in our ears. It is perhaps more congruous on that account with the station which he has chosen to hold in our literature. His place there is of the Smiths, Smithish. In his own magazine essays, it was a favourite pastime to represent Mr. Deputy Higgs of Norton Falgate aping the great, and very much disparaged for the parody. To Scott, to Southey, to Wordsworth, to Byron, Smith is what this Norton-Falgatian is to the gentlemen of White’s. He is, therefore, well named; and let him not repine at his “compellation,” as in former days, when, walking in Oxford Street with Wilson Croker, he observed over a shop door “Mortimer Percy, tailor,”—“Is it not too hard,” said James, then fresh from all the honours of the *Rejected Addresses* about him, “that two such grand and aristocratic names should be the lot of a tailor, while two wits and gentlemen are moving about the streets afflicted with the names of Croker and Smith?”

No—the name is right—

And may the Garrick hail with loud acclaims,
For many a year, the gouty jokes of James.

From Fraser.