



A Simple Moravian Burial Service

## *Moravian Funeral Ceremony*

The following account of the Moravian Funeral Ceremonies, of which sect there is an establishment near Bremhill, is also extracted from the Rev Mr Bowles's History of Bremhill.

“The garden green before the chapel is surrounded by those invited – the neighbours of their own fraternity, old and young, and the young ladies of the school, all similarly dressed in white, with a simple black riband. As soon as the coffin is brought from the house, the officiating minister reads the opening verses of our funeral service; after which he gives out the first stanza of a hymn – Our aged friend is gone to rest.

This is sung in unison by the young women, and the effect is very impressive. The coffin is then borne into the chapel; the clergy of the established church invited, go the next in order, then the Moravian ministers, and afterwards the congregation. A sermon is preached and, in the same order as before, the coffin is borne to the burial ground. The whole of this area is surrounded on one side by the women of the establishment and the young females; on the other by the minister, friends and fraternity. The whole join in an affecting hymn, after which the coffin is deposited in the earth, and a few prayers are read. At the afternoon service in the chapel there are prayers and an appropriate anthem. The minister then gives a narrative of the life of the departed brother, and the whole is concluded by the congregation, rich and poor, taking bread together, and, what is difficult to mention with appropriate seriousness, drinking tea!

The place devoted to receive the last remains of those who die among the congregation is a square enclosure, to which a walk leads from the sister's house and the minister's: it is surrounded by a few firs and shrubs. The sisters are buried by themselves, and another portion of the consecrated ground is allotted to the brethren. A small square stone is laid on the ground, the top somewhat elevated; no inscription appears except H.H.S.S. for a single sister; or M.H.M.S. married sister 'departed'; or, on the brothers side, W.G.M.B. or S.B. - married or single brother 'departed'. No distinction is made between rich or poor, minister or brother”.

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