

Poet's Corner.

REBUS.

BY JUNIPER

My first soars gladly from the earth,
On drawing's dewey wings,
Viewing the morning's beamy birth,
The star's last glimmerings.
One of the few who sing for joy,
And are not taught by pain,
My first permits no sad alloy,
To mingle with his strain.

A horseman dashes o'er the plain,
With mad and headlong speed;
With nostrils spread, and flying mane,
Sweeps on the noble steed;
As flies the tempest in its might,
As meteors cleave the sky;
My second prompts his foaming flight,
And fires his flashing eye.

My whole lay trembling on my breast,
When summer's morn was bright,
But ere the sunset charmed the west,
The blue eyes lost their light.
I yielded it with fond regret,
Ere I had loved it long—
But oh, its spirit lingers yet,
In poet's sweetest song!

NANNIE NEALL.

AN OLD MAN'S STORY.

BY THE ASSOCIATE EDITOR.

I am a bachelor! Don't smile or pass judgment rashly upon me—I must tell why I am what I am.

I can scarcely remember when my father removed to the new village of Brookville. It seems too, that there is a dim remembrance of an old home by the lake. It is all vague, dim and uncertain, however. Yet I sometimes find lingering with me a vision of an old brown building with elms in front and a sleepy lake down in the vale, and such, I have heard my father say, was our old home. These impressions seem to me as much like dreams as realities, and no wonder either, for the footsteps of long years have marched over them. But I do remember distinctly a broad river that we crossed on our way to our new home, that is the most distinct of all—its silvery waves flashing around the flat we crossed over on are not to be forgotten.

The streets of Brookville were not cleared of stumps when we entered a little cottage on the main street. There was a newness and a freshness about everything there. It was not long before it began to assume a busy character as new settlers came in, and new stores and shops went up. My father was a bricklayer, and I carried some of the brick and mortar that went in, what is now called the 'Court House at Brookville.' The Court House at Brookville is old and I helped rear its brown walls! Time flies!

Among others who came to Brookville was a man named Neall. He had been a merchant in one of the seaport cities, but failing by injudicious speculations he had retired with the little wreck of his fortune to the new village, either to recruit, or to spend the evening of his life in quiet. I never knew which. He had been a hard drinker during the last few years—the demon in the wine glass had been the main rock on which he wrecked his all; and his wife he left in the city, in the graveyard behind the steeple church—sent there by his abuse and cruelty. So said an old shoe maker who came with Neall from the city.

NANNIE NEALL was like a bright star gleaming in the stormy night above the clouds. She was the only child of the corner and a lovely being she was! She was just my age, or nearly, not quite—from April to June was the difference, I believe.

Neall managed to get a house within a few rods of ours; and he, with his daughter, a sour old dame of a housekeeper, and the old shoe maker, both of whom came with him, constituted his family.

Nannie and I were not long in becoming fast friends; we met one sunny afternoon down in the clearing on the brookside, after which the village was named, and there for a full hour we played captive's base among the broad walnut and poplar stumps that stood like watching sentinels in the vale.

The very next day we went out together on the hills with our baskets and gathered whortleberries and talked and played among the rocks; and when we grew tired she sat and told me of her mother—how she used to weep while she sat at her feet and then died in the cold night with consumption of broken heart, and that the Priest said she went heaven to live with the Virgin and Angels. I've since thought by that her mother was perhaps Catholic, but of this I am not certain.

Neall put up a tavern in Brookville, and the new ones gathered there and drank. I remember the night there was a great noise and laughing,

and fiddling, and dancing, and singing there, and I thought it must be something very nice, but my mother told me it was a wicked place and that I must never go there. I wished my mother had not told me that, for Nannie was there and she was my best friend.

Years passed as others had, and Nannie and I grew up; she was one of the loveliest creatures of female beauty I had ever seen. All said she was. She was as gentle as the whisperings, of the white winged zephyrs among the April flowers, and as pure as the lilly that bent beneath the summer breeze to the kiss of the rippling waves of the meadow rill; and yet she was reared among the wrecks of a father's fortunes, and had heard, time after time, the jest and ribaldry of drunken men around the bar her father kept.

Nannie was happily in possession of the virtues which ennoble and beautify woman's character.—She was kind and cheerful; neither wild or melancholy, yet the lovely calm of her countenance was tinged with a shade of sadness—motion, look, tone and deed, were gentle as the spring-time sunbeams skimming among the garden flowers.—Nannie Neall was the loved one in Brookville.

I loved her when we were children playing on copse and heath—on rock and dell; and now, that we were grown, I loved her with all the passionate idolatry of my young manhood. Not a whisper of love had ever passed our lips and yet the secret was written in and fondly cherished by each hidden heart. Ah! we were happy in this secret heart worship. We were often together, in the wild nook where we had gathered berries when children; along the brook where the waves danced o'er the pebbly path that led to the river; in the old woods where oak and pine pointed their taper spires up to heaven, we rambled, and dreamed, and loved in silence, with none but nature with us.—For hours we have sat on the brook brink watching the frisking fish gliding like golden creatures among the crystal waves, and the clear wavelets hastening away and the mellow sunlight trembling on the tree tops and fading away behind the hills and all the time we felt that our hearts held sweet converse in breathless whispers, and thus a holy tie was weaving woof and web into our life and hopes, and destinies.

Old Neall became aware of our growing intimacy and became enraged. One evening when I had gone to spend a few hours with Nannie at her home—(tavern as it was I could no longer stay away)—the old man came to the little sitting room where we were, and sternly ordered me away. I arose and a tear drop hung on Nannie's eyelid. I took my hat, and as I went out the old man sang out after me—'hod carrier!'

The old house-keeper flattened her ugly face against the glass door between the two rooms and echoed the chorus—'hod carrier!'

The old shoemaker stopped hammering his leather as I went out, and spoke low and said he would see me that evening.

The rabble in the dramshop, through which I had to pass, caught the notes of the derisive taunt and shouted it after me: 'Hod Carrier!' The infernal taunt rings in my ears yet.

That evening the old shoemaker saw me, and told me that Nannie loved me and we should see each other clandestinely. I thanked him, and through his interference Nannie and I met almost every day and talked and loved.

And in this way we spent some of our happiest hours, dreaming of the bliss that was to be ours in a few short months, for when the summer passed we were to be married. Love with us was now a reality, and in the solitudes about Brookville we dreamed of its bliss, as, together, we watched the drifting of the white clouds riding on the blue ocean of the sky.

Our dreams were like the clouds! A cloud was in our sky with its storm in its bosom too, but we saw it not!

Christmas day we were to be married. None knew it, however, except the old shoemaker and Bob Lincoln. Bob was to convey her to a neighboring house in his new sleigh and I was to meet him there with the village Parson. Such was the arrangement.

The day before Christmas the hills and houses were white with snow. Brookville was all life for the enjoyments of the season. That morning two strangers appeared in our midst. None knew from whence they came. I met them on the streets early in the day. I disliked their looks and turned aside. There was a lurking look of sin lingering about the face of the eldest—a heartless, brutal looking wretch. The younger appeared but little better.

All day long the revel increased in and about Neall's house. Once or twice there came near being a fight. Just after sundown, I met Bob Lin-

coln running towards my father's house at full speed. I had not time to ask him a single question. There was the wildest terror flashing from the brave young man's eye. 'Run with me to Neall's—run, dreadful times there,' and he grasped my arm and started to drag me. I tore myself from his grasp and bounded away with him.

Hist! the wind blows now just as it shrieked by my ears as I ran up the snow-covered street of Brookville on that fatal evening. Draw your chair closer; I wish to speak in whispers now. Within Neall's house, when we reached it this was the scene:

The old housekeeper stood with her chapped hands folded in her yellow apron with her face flattened against a dirty pane of the glass door looking into the tavern. A few of the village sots were staggering around the room, or half dozing on the pine benches at the fire; the old shoemaker seemed pleading with Neall, who was nearly drunk, to revoke some decree of his; and my own Nannie was struggling in the arms of the oldest of the two strangers, while the other stood a little way off grinning with grim satisfaction! My blood boiled in every knotted vein! When I sprang into the arena, old Neall stammered out in drunken slang:

'So, ho! Mister Hod Carrier, I've sold Nan to a city gentleman! and he held up a rouleau of gold coin. A low laugh gurgled up from the throat of the infernal purchaser.

Nannie said!

I grew dizzy—the room, with its tragedy, seemed to whirl around with me. I heard the familiar voice of the old shoemaker cry out, 'Mr. Neall, how can you barter your own pure child away to a libertine, whose heart is to-day as black as any in purgatory, after promising your poor dead wife to be both father and mother to the dear child?'

A drunken curse came up from the hot lungs of the father against the shoemaker and his own child: 'better that than the wife of an infamous hod carrier!'

I saw the old woman's pitted face grinning through the glass. And then I saw the mild blue eyes of my poor, half distracted Nannie almost starting from their sockets, and her right hand, that was free from the monster's grasp, held out imploringly to me for help. She screamed my name I rushed to her rescue. Bob Lincoln was before me.

Draw your chair closer.

Old Neall was enraged that we should dare to rescue his child from the infamy to which he had sold her, and grasping the old shoemaker's hammer from the bench, he hurled it at us. The weapon flew close by Bob's ear and struck the head of my poor Nannie! With a low murmur of 'mother, mother!' she sank in my arms to the floor. The two strangers fled forever from Brookville. I called again and again to Nannie to tell me she had not fled from earth to heaven, but she kept her blue eyes fixed upon me and a changeless smile rested upon her damp face. And all this time the old housekeeper kept her hideous face pressed against the glass grinning through at the scene. And old Neall stood with his arms folded, clutching in one hand the rouleau of gold. I called again and again to Nannie, and like a child whispered in her ear that I loved her still, but the changeless smile was the only answer. I held her head in my arms and wept. The old shoemaker ran and brought the village surgeon. He came and kneeled down by her on the tavern floor, and took her pale hand in his. I loved him more than ever for holding it so softly and tenderly, examining the livid spot half hid by her auburn hair, where the hammer had struck. I could bear it no longer. I whispered, 'Doctor, is Nannie gone?' I could not say dead, but worse!

'And he laid his slender finger significantly on his noble brow.

Bob Lincoln, the Doctor and the old shoemaker carried Nannie from the tavern to the Doctor's home and I followed.

And the blood of the victim fell drop by drop on the pure white snow.

The next day old Neall went to eternity. The Angel of Retribution had watched his steps and had marked his last going out. The shafts of the Pale Archer had struck him to vex and then destroy. In the battle strife with the demons of delirium tremens he was overcome, and his spirit, shrieking with fears, went to be judged by Him who weighs immortality in the eternal balances of Truth.

He was buried beneath the snow-web that lay on the yard behind the village church and no one in Brookville wept.

Day after day I watched at the bedside of poor Nannie and whispered to her and wet her dry lips with water. She mostly lay with her languid eyes closed, but when she did open them they stared

out at me with such terror that I shrank from them. And she would point her finger at me, and call me a monster, and command me to carry her back to Brookville.

Thus days and nights passed, and the faithful surgeon all the time endeavoring to call back her wandering mind.

It was all in vain!

The cloud that had drifted in our summer sky had burst upon us in a winter's storm that knew no spring time in life!

My poor loved and lost Nannie Neall! She sits in the broad flock of sunbeams that fall through her window in one of the little rooms at the D—Asylum, a harmless, dreaming LUNATIC!

And there she will sit and chatter to her bird and her straws until the good Angels beckon her away!

I have sat by her side in that neat little cell, looking into her dreamy eyes, many a lonely hour, but she has never known me!

She sometimes calls to her kind hearted matron and bids her 'take the stranger away!'

And I have sometimes seen tears in that kind hearted woman's eyes as I have departed, at the same time urging her to treat poor Nelly kindly.

And now, fair readers, do you wonder that I am a bachelor?

Believe this: for me there never was but one Nannie Neall, and she yet lives, but a MANIAC!

Rum did all this!

And for this I hate it—help me hate it!

And when the old man and poor dreaming Nannie go down to the grave, as they soon must, teach your children to hate it!

ROMANCE OF REAL LIFE.

Mr C—, assuming the name of Jones, some years since, purchased a small piece of land, and built on it a neat house, on the edge of a common in Wiltshire. Here he long resided, unknowing and almost unknown, by the neighborhood. Various conjectures were formed respecting this solitary and singular stranger; at length a clergyman took some notice of him: and occasionally inviting him to his house, he found him possessed of intelligence and manners, which evidently indicated his origin to have been in the higher stations of life. Returning one day from a visit to this clergyman, he passed the house of a farmer, at the door of which was the daughter, employed at the washing-tub. He looked at the girl and thus accosted her:

'My girl, would you like to be married?'

'Sir!' exclaimed the girl.

'I asked you, young woman, if you wish to be married, because if you would, I will marry you.'

'Lord, sir! these are strange questions from a man I never saw in my life before.'

'Very likely,' replied Mr. Jones; 'but, however, I am serious, and I will leave you until ten o'clock to-morrow to consider of it; I will then call again, and if I have your father's consent, we will be married the following day.'

He kept his appointment; and meeting with the father, thus accosted him:

'Sir, I have seen your daughter; I should like her for a wife; and I have come this morning to ask your consent.'

'This proposal,' answered the old man, 'is extraordinary from a stranger. Pray, sir, who are you, and what are you?'

'Sir,' replied Mr. J., 'you have a right to ask these questions. My name is Jones; the new house on the edge of the common is mine, and if it be necessary, I can purchase your house and farm and half the neighborhood.'

They were married. Three or four years they lived in this retirement, and had two children. Mr. J. employed his time in improving his wife's mind, but never disclosed his origin. At length, on taking a journey of pleasure with her, on coming to a magnificent country seat, 'This my dear,' said, 'is B—House, the seat of the Earl of E—, and we will go in and ask leave to look at it. It will probably amuse you.'

The nobleman who possessed this mission was lately dead. His heir, a nephew, whom debts had driven into retirement, had not been heard from for several years. This missing nephew was the identical Mr. Jones, who is the present Earl of E.—English paper.

DIALOGUE OF FIFTY YEARS AGO.—A. Do you know Mr. William Grimes?

B. I have that honor. He is a good writer, an excellent companion, and a very worthy man; if you make his acquaintance you never will regret it.

DIALOGUE OF TO-DAY.—Say, do you know Bill Grimes?

B. I don't know anybody else. He gets off A No. 1 Articles for the papers, is a first rate companion, and a perfect brick. If you and he hitch horses you will find him all right.