

Poet's Corner.

A PICTURE.

BY M. P. SHILLABER.

There's a little low hut by the river's side,
Within the sound of its rippling tide;
Its walls are gray with the mosses of years,
And its roof all crumbly and old appears,
But fairer to me than a castle's pride
Is that little low hut by the river's side.

That little low hut was my natal nest,
Where my childhood passed—life's spring time blest
Where the hopes of ardent youth were formed,
And the sun of promise my young heart warmed,
Ere I threw myself on life's sweet tide,
And left the dear hut by the river's side.

The little old hut, in lowly guise,
Was lofty and grand to my youthful eyes,
And fairer trees were ne'er known before
Than the apple trees by the humble door,
That my father loved for their thrifty pride,
Which shadowed the hut by the river's side.

That little low hut had a glad hearth-stone,
That echoed of old with a pleasant tone,
And brothers and sisters, a merry crew,
Filled the hours with pleasure as on they flew,
But one by one have the loved ones died
That dwelt in the hut by the river's side.

The father revered and the children gay,
The grave and the world have called away,
But quietly all alone there sits
By the pleasant window, in summer, and knits,
An aged woman, long years allied
With the little low hut by the river's side.

That little old hut to the lonely old wife
Is the cherished stage of her active life;
Each scene is recalled in memory's beam,
As she sits by the window in pensive dream,
And joys and woes roll back like a tide
In that little old hut by the river's side.

My mother!—alone by the river's side
She waits for flood of the heavenly tide,
And the voice that shall thrill her heart with its call
To meet once more with the dear ones all,
And form, in a region beatified,
The band that erst met by the river's side.

That dear old hut by the river's side
With the warmest pulse of my heart is allied,
And a glory is over its dark walls thrown
That statelier piles have never known,
And I shall love, with a fonder pride,
That little old hut by the river's side.

BEAR HILL.

A STORY OF EARLY TIMES.

I have recently listened to a tradition, from the lips of an aged farmer in one of the oldest towns in Worcester County, which interested me very much, and may interest your readers.

The farmers house stands, or rather sits, at the bottom of a beautiful hill, which is covered to the very top with fine old oaks, interspersed with chestnuts and maples of the largest growth. I was charmed with the appearance of the hill, and inquired of my informant if it had any name.

"Yes," said he, "the first settlers named it Bear Hill."

"I suppose," said I, "bears were plenty there at that time."

"Yes," said I, "and a good many have been killed there since my remembrance; but that is not the reason of its being named so. It was named Bear Hill on account of something that happened there in the time of the first settlers."

I asked him what it was, and he told me the following story, which he said was handed down by tradition, and he did not think it had ever been in print.

TRADITION OF BEAR HILL.

Among the first settlers of this township there were two brothers, by the name of Alby—one was named Nathan and the other Abel. At that time the natives were very friendly to the settlers, and there is reason to believe they continued to do so till their good will was turned into hatred and suspicion, by oppression and want of good faith from the whites.

A tribe of Indians had built their wigwams near the place where the white men wished to put up their log houses. It was on the south side of a high hill, with a stream at the foot—such a place as the red men always prefer for their homes.—There were the graves of their people, and there, the altar of their Great Spirit—a large flat rock, still to be seen on the south side of the hill. The white men wished for the spot, but the Indians said, "we cannot leave the graves of our fathers—we cannot leave the big rock where we sacrifice to our Great Spirit—you may spread out to the East and West—you may cut down the trees—you may put them up for wigwams—do what you will there, but leave us our sacrifice-rock and the graves of those who look down from the spirit land."

The white men unwillingly complied, for they had no remedy; so they began to clear their land and put up their log cabins. Their Indian neigh-

bors took every opportunity to do them kindnesses, and evince their good will by little presents of wild fruit, game and fish, whenever they had an opportunity, and how was this returned?

Nathan Alby kept a small grocery or collection of articles which at that time were considered the principal necessities of life. Among these articles, one of the most important was West India rum. The sons of the forest had never before tasted this liquid, which may be well considered the essence of all the contents of Pandora's box, except the last, which remained at the bottom.—It is well known how readily the Indians acquire a love of strong waters, and what a deplorable effect it has on their unsophisticated natures. The Indians of this settlement soon became fascinated with the taste and effect of this new fluid, and Nathan Alby took advantage of their eagerness to obtain it, for his own gain. He sold them the rum at an immense profit, and in return soon stripped them of every article of value which they possessed. When they became poor, and could no longer minister to their avarice, he became harsh and unfriendly, and often drove them from his store with abusive and threatening language. These wrongs sunk deeply into the minds of the injured natives, and excited characteristic feelings and wishes for revenge, which to these poor heathens is a duty of their religion. These feelings and desires were daily accumulating, and as they had no opportunity for indulgence, they were cherished and concealed for future occasion.

The chief of the tribe and his brother were still friendly to the white settlers, with the exception of Nathan Alby, from whom they had received too many injuries for an Indian memory to forget.—With Abel they always had maintained a friendly intercourse, and took great pleasure in going, accompanied with him, to hunt. They imparted to him much of their wood-land skill in tracking the bear and other wild game, which at that time abounded in the unsettled parts of the township, and taught him to form simple traps, snares and nets, to surprise the most desirable inmates of the forest and streams.

Things were in this situation when Nathan's horse strayed away from its wide enclosure, and the impatient owner after a long search, found it on the south side of a hill, near the Indian settlement. The weather was fine and the tribe were all out of doors, some making baskets, some shooting at a mark, and others pursuing the business or pleasure most attractive to the simple children of the forest. Nathan calls out to them, in a harsh, unfriendly voice, and asked them where his horse was, adding in his irritation, many low and insulting epithets. The chief answered calmly, that they did not know, they had done nothing with the fire-water man's horse. Nathan proceeded in his search, and soon found the missing animal grazing in a little hollow near the wigwams. The horse had fetters on two of his feet, and while Alby was removing them, an Indian lad, the son of the chief, came up and said "The fire-water man find his horse?"

"Yes, you c—d black Indian, and you hid him here!" exclaimed Alby, furiously, at the same time striking the lad with the feters. This blow was the last drop, and the cup of Indian vengeance immediately overflowed. The two brothers dragged Nathan Alby from his horse, and the whole family fell upon him and killed him by slow degrees, according to their national custom. After his death, they cut his body into small pieces, and with many idolatrous ceremonies, placed it on their rock of sacrifice.

The horse was turned loose and wandered home but no trace of his master could be discovered by his friends at the white settlement. Suspicion rested upon the Indians, on account of the repeated provocation which they had received, but nothing could be ascertained respecting the fate of the trader. In this state of things an expedient was adopted by Abel Alby, more worthy of a savage than of a christian. He invited Chego, the brother of the chief, whom the white settlers had named Long Tom, to come to the store, under the pretext of planning a bear hunt. Chego went, without suspicion, and thankfully accepted and drank strong potations, which were repeated until his caution and reserve were washed away. When he had reached this desired state, Abel, by artful questions, easily drew from him a full account of the murder of his brother, who had been sacrificed and offered up to the Indian's god of revenge. Abel said nothing, but let Chego depart, as well as his staggering steps would carry him. When he was out of sight, Abel took his gun and went into the forest, in a direction opposite to the Indian settlement. Here he made use of the skill which he had learned from his Indian neighbors, in tracking and killing a bear. He took the skin from his prey, and rolling it up carried it home and

concealed it in a secret place. The next morning early, Chego came prepared for the bear hunt which he had arranged with Abel the day before; but Abel sat with his head upon his hand, and his brow contracted as if from pain. When Chego called for him, he said his head ached so badly he could not see to aim a gun, and Long Tom had better go alone. As soon as the unsuspecting Indian was nearly out of sight, Abel took his gun and stole out after him. All day he followed him, near enough to keep him in sight, and yet far enough from him to be safe from detection. All day he followed him, without being able to shoot with safety; for Chego kept so near the settlement that his gun would be heard by the Indians, and with that acute power of observation peculiar to the children of the forest, they had learned the different tone of every gun in the two settlements.

The shades of twilight had begun to fall, and the revenge burning in the breast of the Christian brother had not been satisfied. Chego was about half way between the Indian and the white settlements. He had shouldered his gun and turned his face toward home, when Abel, despairing of a better opportunity, and too eager for his expected revenge to think of delay, aimed and fired. The Indian fell. Abel hastily covered the body with dead branches and dry leaves, and retreated stealthily to his log house, taking great care to leave no trail behind him. He told his Indian-like deed with great self-commendation, and hired one of the strongest settlers to go with him after dark, to bury the body.

The next day, as Abel was sitting in the miserable place which he dignified with the name of "the store," an Indian brave walked in silently, and taking a seat opposite, looked him in the face. Abel knew this man to be a relative of his victim, and his guilty conscience immediately told him the object of his visit, but he assumed a careless air and offered his visitor a piece of tobacco.—Monoco refused the tainting dainty, and said, suddenly—

"The white hunter's gun spoke loud in the pine hollow when the light was half gone."

Abel nodded his head, for he knew it would be impossible to deceive an Indian's ear, but he did not attempt to speak, lest his agitation should become apparent. After waiting a few moments, Monoco said abruptly,

"What did white hunter kill?"

"I killed a bear," replied Abel.

"Where is white hunter's bear?" said Monoco.

"It was so heavy I left it in the woods," replied Abel.

"Come show the bear, in the woods!" exclaimed the brave.

"I buried it to keep the wolves from the settlement."

"Then show the skin," cried the Indian brave, starting fiercely to his feet, "no white hunter nor red hunter bury bear skin."

This was an exigency for which Abel was prepared. He produced the fresh bear skin, which Monoco silently examined and departed; but with no friendly word or look.

This was the beginning of open animosity.—Whether the Indians ever discovered the body of Chego, the white settlers never knew. It is probable, their Indian sagacity soon traced it to its bloody grave. However that may be, Abel Alby never returned from his next hunting expedition, and the white and red neighbors soon came to open war, which ended in the extermination of the tribe.

When Abel shot at Chego, he stood in a small hollow in the mountain, called pine-hollow, and shot Chego as he ascended the hill; for that reason the spot has ever since been known by the name of *Bear Hill*.

A son of my aged informant, a young man of uncommon understanding and information, told me, he had often heard people say that the blood of Nathan Alby could be seen on *sacrifice-rock* to this day, and while he was a venturesome boy, his curiosity tempted him to climb the rock, to see the wonderful sight. He reached the top; but instead of blood found the rock covered with red moss, or lichen, which is often found on rocks and old stumps of trees.

This is the tradition of Bear Hill.

A SHOWER BATH.—A young convert got up in church, and was making his confession somewhat after this sort: "I have been very wicked, indeed I have; I have cheated many persons, very many; but I will restore four fold"—when he was snappishly interrupted by an old lady, who said: "Well, I should think before you confess much, you better marry Nancy Spriggins, as you agreed to."—*Id.*

ÆTNA.

A THRILLING TALE.

Among the wondrous sights on the earth, the volcano of Ætna will hold a just preeminence.—Renowned in past and present history, sublime by its elevation, its form, and the awful secrecy of unknown terrors, which lie concealed within its bosom, the Sicilian volcano will always be viewed with the deepest, the most solemn awe.

It was with such feelings and with such thoughts as these, that I began to ascend the volcano on the morning of the fifth of May, 1849. I had left Catania on the day before, in order to visit this wonderful spot. I did not wish to glance carelessly upon it—no; for to me there was always something reverend, something almost divine, in connection with this great mass of upheaved lava, which led me to look earnestly at its rugged sides. I wished to ascend, to view from its summit the fairest regions on earth; to glance down, down into the unfathomable depths where fire, fire in all its terror, for ever dwells, for ever fiercely struggles!

It was with slow steps that I ascended the cone, after the patient and hardy ponies had been dismissed. I had been an invalid, and the fatigue of climbing up the steep and rocky declivity might well have daunted me. But after many restings and haltings, I was able to attain the summit.

The summit! good heavens! can I ever forget the delirium, the transport of joy, which the boundless prospect there awakened within me? Can I ever forget the glimpse which I first caught of all the glories and all the horrors of nature mingled together in such fearful union?

Far away on one side spread the fertile plains; the green meadows, and the gentle valleys of Sicily. There were streams glancing and flashing in the sun as they wandered to the sea, with ten thousand labyrinthian turnings; lakes whose glassy surface showed not a ruffle, not a ripple, there were terraces upon the sides of a hundred hills, where vineyards were planted, and where the trellised vines passed along, all green, all blooming; there were groves of orange trees, amid the dark green foliage of which the golden oranges peeped forth like the flashes of phosphorescent light in a midnight sea; there were long avenues of cypresses, of acacias, of noble trees of many kinds, amid which kingly assemblage at times could be seen the noble summit of some stately palm, as it towered on high above all others.

And the sea—the wide, the boundless, the deep blue Mediterranean—there it spread away, on the other side, as far as eye could reach, spreading away as far as thought could run—glorious as

The dashing
Silver flashing
Surges of San-Salvador!

But turn aside—and there, beneath, lies an abyss like that of which Milton has sung in sublimest mortal strains.

I paused upon the brink, and shuddering I gazed down—down! The thick and funeral volumes of tortuously ascending smoke came seething upward as from a cauldron. It escaped from a myriad of crevices in the rocky precipitous sides; it poured forth from behind projections, and united with the vast mass which came sublimely upward from the unfathomable depths.

Here, upon the sandy, rocky edge, where sulphur, and crumbled lava, and pumice-stone, were all mingled together to form a horrid soil, here I sat and looked down. From the scene beyond, from that glimpse of earth, which made it seem like heaven; from that vision of all that was most lovely and all that was most overpowering; to turn and gaze into a volcano's awful depths—what a change!

Involved in a thousand thoughts I sat there, thinking myself alone, when a sudden grating struck my ear. I was startled exceedingly, and turned around. The place where I had been sitting was a peninsular projection of the cliff which formed part of this infernal chasm. Upon the narrow strip of land which joined it to the other cliffs—upon the isthmus—I saw a mild-looking middle aged gentleman approach me.

He was dressed in plain black clothes, and in his hand he held a light stick.

"I beg your pardon, Signor," said he, in a polite manner, and with great softness of tone: "I beg your pardon for intruding myself upon your company. But it is not often that I see any visitor so far up."

"My dear sir! I beg you will make no excuses," I replied; "I was just admiring this scene below."

"Ah! yes, 'tis a glorious sight."

"Glorious! say rather a terrible one."

"Terrible, perhaps to you; but do not be surprised if I say that to me it is lovely, absolutely lovely!"