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JANUARY 1, 1873.

No. 1.

ROSEHILL.

BY. T. B. BALCH, D. D.

Years ago the reminiscient was riding to the north of Leesburg, in the direction of the Potomac, called the Great Gull River from the number of its swans. Pony, at a slow gait, had passed Exeter, the seat of Dr. Selden, who had been a surgeon in the revolutionary army. "Chinchoteague" took a notion to slake his thirst at the big spring which crosses the road from the lands of Fayette Ball. A noble affair. Had it risen in Greece instead of Loudoun county, the Greeks would have made it either their Helicon or Castalia. 'Tis surpassed only by one at Vaucluse, in the county of Frederick, once the residence of my friend Strother Jones, and not far from the small town of Strasburg. We are often reminded of a few pleasant days spent at Vaucluse.

Pony had scarce lifted his feet out of the stream, before the writer was overtaken by a stranger. He was a handsome looking man, and from his dress we took him for a follower of

George Fox, or a Wesleyan. At that time, with the exception of the broad brimmed hat, the Wesleyans were a good deal like Quakers in their external appearance. My own taste lay rather towards a simple garb. We ambled on, for "Chincho" soon quickened his pace.

"Are there any objects of interest," I asked, "on either side of this road? Grains of knowledge may give us a heap of information, and Greece was benefitted by the small letters of Cadmus."

"Don't know about your Cadmus," he replied, "but we are approaching a farm on which five sisters are domesticated. They live in the greatest harmony, and spend much of their time in reading."

"That puts me in mind," I said, "of the Five Fair Sisters of York, or of the same number who lived together at Barley Wood cottage, near Bristol, England. Four of the latter plied their needles, whilst Hannah went to Bolt Court and

(RECAP)

talked with Johnson, a patrician as to intellect, but a plebian in his manners."

We advanced.

"What domicile is that standing off the road?" I asked. "It indicates wealth."

"That is Selma, the home of General Mason, connected with Mason of Gunston, who opposed the Federal Constitution. You, *not I*, may live to see that he was right."

"Were you ever at Selma?"

"Often, and once on a solemn occasion. An insult was offered at our late election, and fearing that he might be drawn into a duel, Littlejohn and I rode to his dwelling; for we were three Democrats. The affair is sleeping at present. May it never awake."

Alas! it was subsequently revived, and in March, 1819, the occupant of Selma, fell among flakes of snow descending on both the muskets. My apology for alluding to this tragic incident is, that all who bore any part in the fatal interview are under ground.

'Tis sometimes a little awkward to fall in with a stranger along the road. If reference be made to some far off object, his curiosity is excited. He wants to know whether you be Greek or barbarian, Turk or Jew, Lawyer, Doctor, Merchant or Sheepshearer. He may even conceit you to be the Knight of La Mancha. The eyes of my comrade were glancing at me from beneath his milk-white head.

"Are you peering about," he asked, "after Conrad's Ferry, Ball's Bluff, the Sugarloaf Mountain, or Harper's Ferry?"

"After neither of those objects," I answered. "Have been on the zenith

of the Maryland mountain, rode along the sugar lands of the Monocacy, and stood on Jefferson's Rock, in sight of which the Potomac leads off the Shen like a bride, to the blue or green saloons of the ocean. But they tell me that an old seaman lives somewhere in these diggings, with whom it is my wish to talk about his voyages. True, we would not venture on the Atlantic, or cut a wave of the Pacific, for Leesburg as a gracious gift. The marvels of the sea exercise a strange influence over my half poetical imagination."

"Oh, then," he remarked, "here is the mouth of a lane which leads to my home, called 'Rosehill.' Lodge with me this night, for the sun is retiring beyond the Alleghanies. The man you seek is well known in this neighborhood. He lives at 'Sailor's Rest,' not far from my house. We call him Sinbad the Sailor. Chincho shall share my nubbins."

"Glad to hear that," I replied.

He is a product of Virginia. Don't care for an Orkney, or Canadian, or Arabian steed. Lord Monboddoo used to back his pony from Edinburgh to London. He said when shut up in a carriage he felt like being in a coffin. A little too sensitive.

Reached Rosehill. Had no occasion to exclaim with the bard of Olney—

"Oh for a lodge in some vast wilderness."

A night's repose. The prayer bell. Capital breakfast. Fine day, after an autumnal frost over night. The proprietor of "Rosehill" and his guest were on the propylon. The hill on which the dwelling was seated gave us

a good view of the premises. The land sloped gradually down to the road. The fencing was good, but the place was not hedged like an English grange, nor was the tenement imposing as a French chateau. There were rills creeping through the grass, at which birds could quench their thirst, that their songs might be renewed among the branches which overhung the sequestered brooks. There was no park we admit, nor troops of deer, but the tympanum of my ear was at times saluted by the noise of sheep bells. The establishment lay under the Ketochin mountain, which seemed like a frontispiece to that volume of poetry which our Creator has inscribed on the Blue Ridge, and which the sentimentalist can read *ad aper turam libri*.

"But is it not time," I asked, "to ride? You promised to make me acquainted with that old mariner. It's my wish to spend with him a day and a night."

"That night has been already spent," was his reply, "and Chincho might as well rest. The owner of 'Rosehill' is the only seaman in this vicinity who has ever gone beyond capes Henry and Charles."

"You quite surprise me," I rejoined. "Didn't you say that the old gentleman lived at 'Sailor's Rest,' not far from your house. Wasn't that a take in on your part?"

"No, for on my retiring from the sea this place went by that name, but as my daughters grew up, they wanted a rosier appellation. Children can easily manage parents. The Dutch are taught affection for their offspring by the care which their storks bestow on

their young. You can find the nests of those birds all over the Dutch Provinces. Known all over Loudoun as Captain John Rose, my young ladies fancied that 'Rosehill' would better correspond to the æsthetics of this farm. Even the Dutch, with their velvet skull caps, are not insensible to the beautiful. Their artists can paint a tulip sooner than you could pull up a violet. Would you believe it, that they used to execute criminals before glossy trees, environed by pretty landscapes, that such chaps should close their eyes on the handsome face of the world that they had done their best to make ugly. But why are you so anxious to see the old sailor? Have you read the voyages of Hudson, Frobisher, Drake, Raleigh, Cook and other navigators? Have you asked Uncle Sam for a Midshipman's warrant?"

"No indeed, it's not my purpose to trouble Uncle Sam. The request would not be *granted*. Your guest has no ambition to be caught between green waves and a patch of azure sky. We don't fancy to be borne anywhere by cetaceous dolphins as was Arion of old. But my reverence for the ocean is great. It is an aquatic wonder, wrought out from the fountains of the Infinite mind. Commerce brings us the cinnamon of Java, the spices of Borneo, the almonds of Syria, the barks of Quito, and the gold of Sheba. I never look at an orange without thinking of that tropical belt of the world from which it was pulled by the hand of the mariner.

And yet the sea, fancied by your guest must be like that visible from the Peaks of Otter, where the prospect rolls off

in waves of verdure. Standing on lofty rocks there is no danger of being submerged."

"The calls of a farmer," said the old seaman, "are many; but this talk must be prolonged at another time."

The marine farmer had gone to the extreme edge of his twelve hundred acres. Instead of amusing myself with West India parrots or the Bantam fowls of Java, it occurred to me as best to make fair weather with the fair ladies of "Rosehill." Their manner towards the stranger was reserved, and they certainly looked on their guest as cold and distant in his bearing. They little dreamed of my warm feelings for the old Captain, who finally died at the age of ninety, like Sebastian, one of the Cabots. Mariners are brave and useful men. One of them, wrecked in a ship belonging to the Invincible Armada, taught the Shetlanders how to spin; Selkirk tamed the goats of Juan Fernandez. Though in 1704 he went out with a company of buccaneers, two of this class from Iceland discovered America in the year of our Lord, a thousand and one, a more wonderful incident than any mentioned in the thousand and one nights of Arabian tales. Parry reached the eighty-third parallel of North latitude, and Sir John Franklin persevered in the same track of research to the end of his life. England at first was slow in maritime achievements, but afterwards began her march over the mountain waves in double-quick time, until the sea became her home. Whilst Holland was rifling the fruits of the East, and exulting in the aroma of trees pungent from their fragrance, England

was searching out those hidden paths of the ocean which led to the magnificent bays, the secluded rivers, the trickling rills, and boundless forests of the West. Raleigh fed his small flock of mariners on the uphill and green lawns of our Southern waters. But as he was a Knight we must not forget the ladies. Found the four daughters less inclined to be taciturn. One of them bore the name of Helen, a circumstance which brought to mind the siege of Troy. The consort of the Captain made a handsome appearance, though time had done its work.

"Do you ever indulge in a pipe?" she inquired.

"Can it be possible," I said, "that you smoke?"

"Yes; but blame Dr. Claget, for 'tis one of his nostrums."

"If so let me join you, being somewhat subject to the *blues*."

"Bring this young gentleman a fresh pipe," said the old lady to a woman of color, "and a coal of fire. A lonely farm disposes me to this kind of puffing, and having some one to help me, only increases the agreeable feeling. The Captain has often told me how the Dutch smoke as their track boats glide along their canals and how the spiral cloud curls in the air."

"Bless you, yes;" I rejoined, "and the father of Frederick the Great made up a company of smokers who puffed away till the lids fell over the pupils of their eyes."

"Did he indeed? Never heard so before. That was thoughtful in him, to make 'em drowsy, for this is a world of trouble. But perhaps the King added mugs of lager beer to the fragranc-

which put 'em to sleep, and my husband belongs to the Temperance Society. He won't allow even a drop of Oporto, Burgundy or Rhenish wine to be brought into the house, for fear our heads may swim."

"In that he's right," I replied. "But Mrs. Rose, did you never go a voyage with the Captain?"

"Never; but at one time he thought of a trip to the Bermudas. The climate of that batch of islands might have improved my health. As to their feathered songsters, the Virginia Mocking Bird can outsing them all. He went to Bremen instead of Hamilton, and when Snowden's paper announced the safe arrival of his ship at Alexandria, perhaps my feelings were happier than to have seen foreign dykes, wind-mills, canals and storks."

"It would have been pleasant," I remarked, "to see Amsterdam, built as it is in a queer way, but you might have paid dear for the sight. You might have seen the waves foaming among the white clouds, and you would have been nothing more than a Katydid in the lashings of the tempest."

"Well," my interlocutrix answered, "He who made the dry land of which Virginia is composed, giving height and curves to our mountains, and applied His roller to our vales, and filled our woods with melody, can so reduce the sea as to make it the mirror of suns by day and stars by night. He often lends brightness to the ocean 'till every marine bird can double itself by reflection, and poising itself above the waves, can admire the rings of its neck or the freckles of its wings. But lay aside your pipe, for Miriam Osborne is com-

ing down stairs, and she dislikes this fumigation. It gives her the influenza."

'Tis not my purpose to write any one thing bordering on romance, but Miriam was exceedingly handsome, with an unconsciousness of her being cast in any better mould than the rest of mankind. She would have adorned any Court in Europe. This fair lady, though English in her descent, was on a visit at "Rosehill," from Hartford county, Maryland, near Belair. She married in the United States but, a few years since, died in London, after reaching the ripe age of octogenarianism. The destiny of her daughter was linked in with that of a gentleman whose name was Dana, and when he sent the engagement ring she could not say *timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*.

But my visit was particularly meant to the aged mariner, who rejoined his household about twilight.

"This farming," he remarked, "is a trying business, but my age will not allow of my re-appearance at Amsterdam. Hope, the tobacco merchant, wouldn't know me in my gray locks. He first saw me when my hair was black, and the prince merchant invited me to a sumptuous dinner.

"What first incited you to marine life?" I inquired.

"For the sake of employment," he replied. "Man was never born to be idle. We must have an object in view. A ship needs a prow and must be watched from the helm. Brought up on a poor farm in Fairfax, a book of navigation fell in my way, which led me to study, notwithstanding my imperfect

education. By hook or crook mastered some of the difficulties."

"And from what port did you set sail?"

"From Alexandria, where, at the time, the tobacco trade was rife. Fortunes were made out of the noxious weed at Dumfries, on Quantico creek."

"And was your voyage prosperous?"

"Very; passed the Potomac Narrows, entered Chesapeake Bay, skimmed the sea under fine winds, passed the island nigh to which Blake and Van Tromp fought their great battle in 1653, reached Amsterdam, saw the Stadthouse and the tomb of De Ruyter, boated on the Amstel, sold my cargo and came back to Bell Haven."

"And did you make any other voyages?"

"Oh yes, and from ventures allowed me made some money into the bargain, and began to feel above the goose that's fed on a stubble field. And here's a chart of the Dutch Provinces. Let me show you the several harbors in which my vessel was moored. Here is Antwerp, where the remains of Rubens are buried; Rotterdam, where the houses are five stories high, the canals bordered with trees, and its people talked about one Erasmus; Hamburg, in one of whose awkward streets Klopstock wrote the Messiah; Leyden, the city of islands, and the Hague where Saurin preached. It is elegant, but made no demand for the ashes of cigars."

"But you must have found time for reading."

"No," he replied, "these are things which a sailor picks up, for sometimes the statues of great men would be set

up in town houses and exchanges.—This farm had like to have lulled me into a Van Winkle sleep, but my eyes were open long enough to wade through Rollins' Ancient History, and the History of England by Deist Hume."

"Was there anything in Hume that excited your merriment?"

"In one place," he replied; "where Henry VIII. sent off Anne of Cleves and the readiness with which she left the hideous monster. Catharine of Arragon struggled long with the tiger. Not so with Anne, she received her divorce as the parchment of her freedom."

"May I ask, Captain, whether your gallant ship was ever wrecked?"

"Never; the commander of a vessel sometimes affects to be fierce as an eagle. My men were told that if any one of them ever shot an Albatross he should be ducked in salt water."

"A wise regulation," I rejoined. "Except for the killing of that bird of good omen the Ancient Mariner of Coleridge would have escaped all the calamities by which his vessel was overwhelmed. The reading of Falconer's shipwreck made me sleepless for a whole night. Poor boy, he afterwards went down, off the Cape of Colonna. And there was the loss of the 'Rose In Bloom,' which occurred in 1806 off the capes of North Carolina. It drew down tears on my boyish cheek. To have been preserved in so many voyages, we can only exclaim, *fortunate senex*; or in English, fortunate old man."

"But," he rejoined, "though not overtaken by any fatal storm, it was

not my lot to avoid misfortune. On one occasion when homeward bound, my ship was captured by a British cruiser. 'You Kuklux rebels,' said the British Captain, 'you are nothing but a band of conspirators against His Majesty George the Third. You shall trudge over the black and blue clay of Devon on your way to the jug called Dartmoor prison.' And he was as good as his word. Never can forget the fetters of that doleful prison; but was released at the peace of 1783, between Britain and her former colonies. 'Till the time of my becoming a Christian my hatred of England was most intense. Would that Napoleon, like William the Conqueror, had crossed the channel.'

"There you and your guest must disagree. Had you fallen into the hands of Bonaparte, he might have served you as he did Captain Wright, that is, he might have strangled you in a French prison more dismal than the one at Dartmoor. In that event this agreeable visit to 'Rosehill' could not have taken place. Your mind then, I suppose, was turned to farming after the peace of eighty-three?"

"Not immediately, but in a gradual way. Bought this land; used the plaster of Paris, which was highly eulogized in a pamphlet by Tom Binns. Each crop of wheat amounts to three thousand bushels. Set up my carriage, which is drawn by a pair of splendid horses; became a Wesleyan in my religion, and hope to spend the remnant of my life on this tranquil farm, away from the surges of human passion."

"The particulars you have stated," I replied, "are far from being devoid

of interest. They will at least suffice *pro hac vice*."

The writer felt somewhat inclined to a stroll over the extensive farm, that its serenity might be compared with that irritability to which the sea is subjected. Canute tried a marine experiment, but the waves paid no homage to his regal feet. The flocks were tranquil and there was no voice on high except from wild geese that, under the conduct of their file-leader, were on their way to the magnolias of Florida or the orange groves of Louisiana. We found it pleasant during our stroll to ruminate on the wonders of the sea, and to think of Appolonius who sung of Jason, when he went after the wool of Colchis, or of Montgomery and his Pelican Island, or Campbell and his loud Corbrektan, and especially of Camoens and Vasco de Gama. In my windings to and fro, fell in with Joseph Cartwright.

"Joseph," said I, "you bear the same name as the Prime Minister of Pharaoh."

"I *has* read of that in the Bible," he replied, "and *I* *se* second to old Master in the managing of 'Rosehill.'"

"You deserve that distinction," I answered, "for you are no doubt a practical man like Cartwright, who in 1784 invented the Power Loom."

"But, young *Marser*, the people at the great house *doesn't* know about you, and they asked me to *git* your name."

"Well, Uncle Joe, Codrus, the last King of Athens, once disguised himself as a *railmauler*. He then hurried off to the Dorians, provoked a broil and was killed. But there will

be no danger of any killing if you will just hint to Mrs. Rose that the stranger is her nephew."

"That's like Jacob at the well of Haran," said my interlocutor.

Continuing my walk, we saw from a distance Uncle Joseph on his way to the dwelling, probably to tell the news. On my return, uncle, aunt, four cousins, and Miriam Osborne gave me a cordial welcome. Sat up late that night, occasionally whiffing with my aunt.

"How could you have served us so?" said the old lady. "But you must tarry with us a few days, and after that as long as you please."

"Thank you, my good aunt, but pony must travel to-morrow. Want to see a little more of the antique Residences and Inns of Virginy. Old Mortality went to the cairns of the dead. My office is to find out the abodes of the living. Shall take with me nothing but one of your pipes and a few papers of Anderson's Solace."

Miriam Osborne very thoughtful.

"When you were a child," said the beautiful creature, "you were sent to our home in Maryland, for a year, and after a tedious illness in which Dr. Archer despaired of your life, we sent you every day in a hand-carriage, to look at a blue ball on the sign of an inn."

Great leave taking of the old mariner and all concerned; but during the visit my muse had allowed me sea-room enough in which to write the following lines. Poets seem fond of the ocean. That vast body of hydro-

gen and oxygen has been addressed by Young, Montgomery, Byron, and Pollock and others, the mention of whom would be superfluous :

Great sea, a world, a world of waves ;
Waves of alternate green and blue ;
From all thy dark, mysterious caves,
To God alone is glory due.
Art thou not full of altar isles,
Array'd in flowers and winning smiles ?

What is thine age, thou hoary deep ?
For many ages have gone by,
Since first thy waves began to leap
And toss themselves, like mountains high.
Long, long ago, Jehovah will'd,
That thy deep cisterns should be fill'd.

A period dot in Nature's book,
To mark one thought of God supreme,
In whose bright eye the rippling brook,
Doth like a mighty ocean seem,
Because the power to create
Extends alike to small and great.

At times the sea to slumber falls,
And to its centre calmly tends ;
Its waves are smooth as silken shawls,
And on its way most gently wends,
All harmless as the April shower
That slightly wets the newborn flower.

But when the chains the winds that bind,
Are loosed from off surrounding shores,
And waves are roaming unconfined,
And higher still the tempest roars,
Who then can quell the angry storm,
And give the sea its mirror form ?

The ship becomes an angling skiff
Or boat, that skips both to and fro,
And Death rides up, like Hippogriff,
From ocean stalls that lie below,
And then all knees with fear are weak ;
Pilots are dumb, and damsels shriek.

May all mariners who have escaped wrecks by storm or fire, by day or night, be thankful. And may Dartmoor prison never be re-opened to any other citizen of the Old Dominion.