

BLOOD MOUNTAIN.

Conspicuous among the lofty hills of the old "Granite State" may be seen the one which gives the title to this article.

Even when many miles distant it invites the admiring gaze of the tourist by its steep and jagged sides, and its bare summit, glistening in the sunlight, bare, except where covered by the cool and fleecy drapery which a New England winter furnishes.

Once—long ago—it was covered with trees and other forms of vegetable life; but a hunter who had spent the night at the foot of the hill, carelessly left the camp-fire burning. It was an unusually dry season; the thick undergrowth had become, in the intense heat of a July sun, one mass of kindling wood—it caught, and soon the mountain was one sheet of flame. With incredible haste and fury it climbed up—where nothing else could climb—the steep mountain slopes, and for days and weeks the work of destruction went on; all vegetable growth, green as well as dry, disappeared; and the flames were stayed only when there was nothing but the bare rock left.

In the far-off days, when this part of New England was first peopled, there occurred here an event of deep and tragic interest, unlike, in its details, anything else I ever heard.

It was told to me when a boy, by an old man who had listened to the story in the days of his boyhood, as he played in the shadow of the "big rock," and asked—"What for they called it 'Blood Mountain?'"

It will surprise no one to be told that at that remote period of which I write, the beasts of the forest were both numerous and bold; especially was this true of the bears, who, as well as the Indians, disputed the occupancy of the forest with the early settlers. One of the largest and boldest ever known had made his domicile in the fastnesses of this mountain, and at his convenience committed any amount of minor

depredations, such as ruining cornfields, and carrying off sheep and other domestic animals.

At last he was seen—and a dreadful sight it was—carrying off a little child to his rocky den. Repeated and desperate efforts were made by the frenzied father and his pitying neighbors to reach the monster's retreat; but the only route that could be discovered was one inaccessible to human feet. The brute, as cunning as he was ferocious, seemed to know that now a stronger feeling than dislike or hatred—vengeance—was awakened, and was unusually wary, so that for a long time he foiled the constant efforts of the bereaved father and others to ensnare him—the only practicable mode of destroying him, as he ceased to make his appearance in the daytime. Great, therefore, was the excitement one morning, as the news spread far and wide—"Old Satan's caught at last!"

The name had long since been given him, and he certainly had done his best to deserve it. The father of the lost child, Mr. Blood by name (the mountain was to receive from him a double baptism that day) was among the first to hear the stirring news. A grim smile—the first that had been seen there since poor Willie had been torn from him—lit up his haggard features, and catching up the old firelock, with too little thought as to its fitness for the work in hand, he pushed with eager, vengeful strides for the mountain. Others were coming; but he would not, could not, wait. He was sure Old Satan would reach his usual hiding-place if he could, and he felt that it must not be. The massive trap and chain, with its heavy wooden clog, sufficient to hold fast ordinary bears, or at least seriously retard their progress through the trees, would not, it was feared, prove any serious obstacle to him; so for a time it proved, for no sooner had the clog caught between two trees than he turned to see what was the matter, discovered the diffi-