

AUTOBIOGRAPHIC REMINISCENCES

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1 This venerable grandmother had thirteen children,
the youngest of whom was my father, Mark Baker,
3 who inherited the homestead, and with his brother, James
Baker, he inherited my grandfather's farm of about five
hundred acres, lying in the adjoining towns of Concord
6 and Bow, in the State of New Hampshire.

One hundred acres of the old farm are still cultivated
and owned by Uncle James Baker's grandson, brother of
9 the Hon. Henry Moore Baker of Washington, D. C.

The farm-house, situated on the summit of a hill, com-
manded a broad picturesque view of the Merrimac River
12 and the undulating lands of three townships. But change
has been busy. Where once stretched broad fields of
bending grain waving gracefully in the sunlight, and
15 orchards of apples, peaches, pears, and cherries shone
richly in the mellow hues of autumn, — now the lone night-
bird cries, the crow caws cautiously, and wandering winds
18 sigh low requiems through dark pine groves. Where
green pastures bright with berries, singing brooklets,
beautiful wild flowers, and flecked with large flocks and
21 herds, covered areas of rich acres, — now the scrub-oak,
poplar, and fern flourish.

The wife of Mark Baker was Abigail Barnard Ambrose,
24 daughter of Deacon Nathaniel Ambrose of Pembroke, a

Retrospection and Introspection --- Autobiographic Reminiscences

1 small town situated near Concord, just across the bridge,
on the left bank of the Merrimac River.

3 Grandfather Ambrose was a very religious man, and
gave the money for erecting the first Congregational
Church in Pembroke.

6 In the Baker homestead at Bow I was born, the young-
est of my parents' six children and the object of their
tender solicitude.

9 During my childhood my parents removed to Tilton,
eighteen miles from Concord, and there the family re-
mained until the names of both father and mother were
12 inscribed on the stone memorials in the Park Cemetery
of that beautiful village.

My father possessed a strong intellect and an iron will.
15 Of my mother I cannot speak as I would, for memory
recalls qualities to which the pen can never do justice.
The following is a brief extract from the eulogy of the Rev.
18 Richard S. Rust, D.D., who for many years had re-
sided in Tilton and knew my sainted mother in all the
walks of life.

21 The character of Mrs. Abigail Ambrose Baker was distin-
guished for numerous excellences. She possessed a strong
intellect, a sympathizing heart, and a placid spirit. Her
24 presence, like the gentle dew and cheerful light, was felt by
all around her. She gave an elevated character to the tone of
conversation in the circles in which she moved, and directed
27 attention to themes at once pleasing and profitable.

As a mother, she was untiring in her efforts to secure the
happiness of her family. She ever entertained a lively sense
30 of the parental obligation, especially in regard to the educa-

Retrospection and Introspection --- Autobiographic Reminiscences

1 tion of her children. The oft-repeated impressions of that
sainted spirit, on the hearts of those especially entrusted to her
3 watch-care, can never be effaced, and can hardly fail to induce
them to follow her to the brighter world. Her life was a
living illustration of Christian faith.

6 My childhood's home I remember as one with the open
hand. The needy were ever welcome, and to the clergy
were accorded special household privileges.

9 Among the treasured reminiscences of my much re-
spected parents, brothers, and sisters, is the memory of
my second brother, Albert Baker, who was, next to my
12 mother, the very dearest of my kindred. To speak of his
beautiful character as I cherish it, would require more
space than this little book can afford.

15 My brother Albert was graduated at Dartmouth Col-
lege in 1834, and was reputed one of the most talented,
close, and thorough scholars ever connected with that
18 institution. For two or three years he read law at Hills-
borough, in the office of Franklin Pierce, afterwards Presi-
dent of the United States; but later Albert spent a year
21 in the office of the Hon. Richard Fletcher of Boston.
He was consequently admitted to the bar in two States,
Massachusetts and New Hampshire. In 1837 he suc-
24 ceeded to the law-office which Mr. Pierce had occupied,
and was soon elected to the Legislature of his native State,
where he served the public interests faithfully for two
27 consecutive years. Among other important bills which
were carried through the Legislature by his persistent en-
ergy was one for the abolition of imprisonment for debt.
30 In 1841 he received further political preferment, by

Retrospection and Introspection --- Autobiographic Reminiscences

1 nomination to Congress on a majority vote of seven
thousand, — it was the largest vote of the State; but he
3 passed away at the age of thirty-one, after a short illness,
before his election. His noble political antagonist, the
Hon. Isaac Hill, of Concord, wrote of my brother as
6 follows: —

Albert Baker was a young man of uncommon promise.
Gifted with the highest order of intellectual powers, he trained
9 and schooled them by intense and almost incessant study
throughout his short life. He was fond of investigating ab-
struse and metaphysical principles, and he never forsook
12 them until he had explored their every nook and corner,
however hidden and remote. Had life and health been spared
to him, he would have made himself one of the most distin-
15 guished men in the country. As a lawyer he was able and
learned, and in the successful practice of a very large business.
He was noted for his boldness and firmness, and for his power-
18 ful advocacy of the side he deemed right. His death will be
deplored, with the most poignant grief, by a large number of
friends, who expected no more than they realized from his
21 talents and acquirements. This sad event will not be soon
forgotten. It blights too many hopes; it carries with it too
much of sorrow and loss. It is a public calamity.