

Sedgwick, Catharine Maria. "The Falls of Bash-Pish: or, The Eagle's Nest." *The Southern Literary Messenger*, vol. 5, Jan. 1839, pp. 34-39.

[p. 34]

THE FALLS OF BASH-PISH:  
OR, THE EAGLE'S NEST.

*To the Editor of the Southern Literary Messenger.*

Two of our friends, who were on a pedestrian tour, called to see us last week. Their way of life is sedentary, and they wisely chose this mode of repairing the waste (I should more deferentially say expense) of mind and body, in their studies. As men of taste, they combined with a plan of exercise the purpose of turning aside from the highway, to see the natural beauties of our romantic county of Berkshire. But on inquiring by the wayside and at the inns, they could obtain no information but that there was a "sightly view" at such a point, or a "fine prospect" descending such a mountain. Of the manifold treasures hidden in our hills they could get no report, and this led them to suggest that residents in a country worth visiting should write some account of their surroundings, which should be a sort of guide-book to the explorer. It struck me this was a reasonable species of hospitality, and having just returned from a visit to some falls in our neighborhood, quite unknown to fame, I determined to send to you a copy of the notes I made at the time of the excursion. A description of the favorite haunts in our immediate neighborhood, would be a more literal compliance with the suggestion of our pedestrians, but besides, that in speaking of these domestic lions, I could scarcely divest myself of the partiality resulting from fond associations with such old and familiar friends as *Monument-Mountain*, the *Ice-glen*, the *Roaring-Brook*, the *Precipice*, &c, the journal to Bash-pish is already written, a resistless argument in its favor.

-----

September 11, 1838. A bright, warm September morning. Our party is arranged, and we are on the point of starting for Bash-pish. Every thing is propitious, save that the rain we have so earnestly desired to lay the dust, has not fallen; but what signifies it? with such a party we surely may endure without complain! dust, heat, rain, or any other of the lesser evils that may chance to "light o' our shoulders." While we have Mrs.----- and the ----- 's with us, we have moral influences that are equivalent to sunshine and showers, and all the life-invigorating and life-restoring powers of the natural world. Our party includes eighteen persons, counting by that respectable designation five school girls. As far as they are concerned, it is sure to be a *party of pleasure*; for, all the miseries ever heaped on a devoted party of pleasure, so called, could not counteract the joyful sense of escape from music lessons, French, Latin, arithmetic, and all those tasks at which they assuredly sow in tears, if they are hereafter to bear their sheaves rejoicing. But here is our omnibus, a long open wagon, and merry voices are ringing round it; and there is the appendix to this great work, a barouche, in which the more delicate members of the party are to take their turn, with the little unconscious traveller, who, having travelled but four months on this road of life, as yet neither looks backward nor forward.

We proceeded down the county road: a soft, and as the travellers among us said, Italian atmosphere, seemed like a transparent veil between us and the mountains, and made them look blue, and hazy, and distant; while every nearer object was clear and defined. The Mountain Mirror on our right, true to its name, reflected like those polished silver plates, anciently used as mirrors, and gave back clearly the image of the sylvan beauties that stood thickly around it; while Scott's pond, on our left, looked as blue as the heaven above it.

At Stockbridge a portion of our party were awaiting us, and congratulations poured in upon us on our happy prospects. The clouds that threatened yesterday have vanished—we run no risk in the open omnibus—the wind is westerly, the most trustworthy of winds, and so kissing hands to our God-speeding friends, while one of our party was muttering, as he clambered over the high wheels of the omnibus, “*Jual diavolo di Carro!*” we proceeded onwards, and next drew up at the inn, in the pretty village of Barrington, where the street is enfolded in the mighty arms of old elms. What beautiful memorials of the departed are the trees they planted, with their roots struck into the earth whence we have all sprung, and their stems mounting heavenward whither we all tend! Some one suggested that the Barrington inn furnished tolerable claret, and it was voted prudent to secure a few bottles for our lunch, to which, in the true vein of travellers, we were looking forward to as the next great event of the day. Our admirable purveyor, A-----, went to procure it. The man who happened to be serving the bar,—for the honor of our county I trust he was not an accredited official of the Barrington inn,—seeing A-----'s blonze, and observing his foreign accent, deemed it an apt occasion for a speculation; and having delivered the claret, said it was two dollars a bottle. “*Due scudi!*” (two dollars,) exclaimed our friend; “my good sir, the barkeeper asked me but half a dollar for a bottle yesterday.” The man drew in, muttered some apology, and quietly took the tendered half dollar per bottle. Such a circumstance might have been noted down by our

[p. 35]

travellers abroad, or foreigners here, as characterizing a district; and yet we have passed up and down this good county, for the better part of half a century, without meeting a similar instance—so reliable are the conclusions of generalizing travellers!

The drive from Barrington to Sheffield is along a meadow road, and for the most part on the margin of the Housatonick. Green fields and a stream of water, great or small, will always constitute beautiful scenery; but when that stream has been the play-fellow of your childhood, and has smiled on you through all the chances of life, there seems to be a soul breathed into material things. Some of us needed all this spiritual communion, to endure with christian patience the clouds of dust that enveloped us, even through that

“woodland scene,  
Where wanders the stream with waters of green,  
As if the bright fringe of herbs on its brink,  
Had given their stain to the waved they drink;  
And they whose meadows it murmurs through,  
Have named the stream from its own fair hue.”

We trust that the poet from whom we quote, when he shall have cast off the burden, we are sure he unwillingly bears, of a party-paper, will come back to the more genial task of illustrating other points of his native county, as well as he has done "Monument Mountain," and "Green River."

Sheffield has far less rural beauty than most of our villages, but it has a compensation in lying in the shadow of the Jahconick, and in having their western horizon denned by the beautiful outline of that lofty mountain. At Sheffield we proved the virtue of a name; for having culled for *lunch*, a table was spread for us with stacks of eggs, bread and butter, cakes, pies, &c, besides a smoking quarter of lamb—in short, a fair country meridian dinner, for which, being called a lunch, we paid only eighteen cents each!

At Sheffield, some slight indications that we were a party of pleasure appeared; for all such seem to share the curse that fell on Seged, when he devoted nine days to happiness. There were various signs of fatigue, restlessness, and anxiety. Some were lolling on the beds—others stretched on the floor—some bewailing the dust—and others noting mares' tails and mackerels' hicks, that promised we should at least have no dust to complain of after to-day. But what are we to do with rain in our uncovered ark? "Wait till the rain comes," wisely says one of us, who never sees any evil in the future, and bears every present evil so lightly, that to her it seems to have neither form nor weight. From Sheffield, in spite of various guide-boards, inviting us to shorter and better routes, we adhered to that which follows the course of our favorite river, that now, though it has lost nothing of the grace of the infant, is dilating into a breadth that ranks it among rivers in our land of mammoth waters. It is, in this dry time, somewhat in the condition of the sixth age, its bed being a world too wide for its shrunk sides. Well may it linger, and turn, and double on its track, like a good spirit loving the smiles it makes; for, in some sort, it is the creator of this scene of abundance, beauty, and contentment. But oh, the dust! the dust! we can hardly see our fellow travellers through the clouds between us; and feel that farthest from them is best. We have now left the county of Berkshire, and entered the state of Connecticut; and in passing over a high hill to the village of Salisbury, we stopped on a summit, called, I believe, Prospect Hill; but where in this country of farstretching views, of valley and upland, is there a hill that might not be so designated? From this hill we first saw the two lovely lakes that lie cradled in the valley, separated only by a strip of *terra firma*, wide enough for a carriage road. Mrs.----- gave them the fitting name of the *Twins*; and the curious little hill on the right, whose natural inequalities present to the eye the image of terraces, battlements, and turrets, she called *Castle-Hill*. There is much use in associating names with points of a landscape; besides that, that seems hardly to have an individual existence which has no name. They serve as a sort of "open sesame" to the memory; and when afterwards we hear them, they, and their dependencies, and surroundings, pass before us almost as vividly as when the eye first rested on them. There is good sense as well as good taste, in giving a name that is obviously descriptive—it stands some chance of being generally adopted. Our people do not readily change the homely designations of "Great Pond," and "Little Pond," for the fine and foreign names bestowed by amateurs. The west was mottled with clouds which reflected the last rays of twilight, when we drove up to one of the two inns in the old village of Salisbury. Our arrival produced a change in the little dwelling, like setting the wheels of a factory in motion. All the energies of the landlady, who, her husband being absent, has double duty to perform, are put in motion. Here are twenty persons to be fed without any previous preparation for such an onslaught; twenty persons to be accommodated with lodging and all its accessories, and some among them habituated to whatever there is of

refinement and elegance in the country; but luckily there are half a dozen girls, in their teens, easy material for stowing, who will sleep soundly on feathers, straw, or a bare floor, and be sure of a merry waking after; and all of us have learned Touchstone's true philosophy, "When we were at home we were in a better place, but travellers must be content." *A party of pleasure* must be poorly fitted for their vocation, if they cannot convert the incommodities of a narrow inn into materials for laughter. After a due investigation, it was settled that Mrs.-----, and her tail of girls, should take possession of the *ball-room*; that Mrs.-----, her nurse, and child, should have a little nest of rooms, some ten feet square—a strange penning up for one what last year at this time was fêted in lordly palaces, the cynosure of all eyes. To M., and F., and F., was assigned the only carpetted apartment as compensation for their French couches, psyches, mirrors, dressing-rooms, bathing-rooms, &c at home; and I sent two of my young handmaidens to secure apartments for the rest of us at the inn over the way. They returned, charmed with their success. They had engaged for the gentlemen the refinement of separate apartments, and for the four of us that remained, "such a delightful room—so *Saxon*." I had some misgivings as to the quality termed Saxon; but what was my dismay, on retiring to my quarters, to find a townhall, (called by courtesy, ball-room,) built by the good citizens of Salisbury for their civil assemblings. By the feeble glimmerings of our lamp, I perceived at the upper

[p. 36]

extremity of the apartment, some fifty feet long, an orchestra, which the fervid imaginations of my young purveyors had, I presumed, converted into a *dais*. The room was illuminated by eight windows with not even a paper curtain—nothing but the dark scarlet bombazet demi-curtain, which seems the favorite ensign of our country inns. Beside the windows, there is a door opening on to a piazza, large enough to have afforded egress and ingress to all the gods of our Saxon fathers, and quite in character for their impartial hospitalities: it had no fastenings to exclude volunteer guests. And further, this "delightful Saxon" apartment had a sanded floor, which, as my young companions chose to course up and down its fifty of length, was rather unfriendly to the sweet offices of sleep. But in spite of this—in spite of the windows rattling in their casements—in spite of a rising northeaster—of the blowing open of the door, and the pelting in of the rain, a king might have envied our sound sleep on the teamsters' beds of this "delightful Saxon" apartment! Such wonderful transmuters are exercise and fatigue, of straw-beds and coarse coverings into down and fine linen.

*Wednesday morning*.—The winds are howling, and the rain driving, and our strolling company must be housed for the day. Picturesque travellers, we must make our own pictures. Shadows are always ready, and it will be strange, if with the bright spirits around us, we cannot put in our own lights. Half a dozen propositions are already afloat for the amusements of the day. "Shall we get Mrs.----- to read Shakespeare to us?" or "shall we prepare for waltzes and tableaux?" It is agreed that the blonzes of our Milan friends will make charming costumes for the girls, and the scarlet curtains will work up admirably into bandit gear—it will be the first real service the detestable things ever rendered. In the meantime, I have set my merry girls and our Italian *cavalieri* to sweeping the sand off the floor. A----- is decorating it with a series of family portraits he has discovered, evidently painted by some unlucky tinto, who had no other mode of furnishing the *quid pro quo*; for the landlord has sat for three portraits—once with folded hands, then reading, and then meditating; and the landlady is presented in the vanities of a most

versatile wardrobe. Our Italian friends seem to produce strange perplexity in the minds of our entertainers. The woman who waited on our little party at breakfast, came to me after it was over, saying, in a most apologetic tone, "I am afraid you can't understand me any better than I can you;" and my assurance that I was her countrywoman, brightened her countenance with the first perception that we were not all outlandish folk.

The floor is swept. A----- has crossed the brooms as trophies over the door—some are tossing B----- in a blanket—others galloping, and the rest waltzing with the family portraits! We shall have no lack of amusement.

At eleven, the whole party assembled at the upper inn, where a centre-table having been tastefully arranged by the young ladies, so as to give a most civilized aspect to the apartment, we gathered round it. Our amateur artists busied themselves with finishing up the sketches of the previous day. The girls cajoled the landlady out of her knitting work, and sat most demurely at it. Our Italian scholars translated English into Italian poetry; and one of our foreign friends improvised verses in his own language, till, by common consent, each individual occupation was abandoned, and every eye and ear was devoted to Mrs.-----, while she read to us the first scenes in the Merchant of Venice. I doubt if a theatrical representation of Shakespeare, with all the aid of scenic effect, and dramatic illusion, can equal such a reading of the play as Mrs.-----'s. The acted play is necessarily cut down and garbled, and nine-tenths of what remains is travestied by bad actors; but, read by Mrs.-----, Shakespeare is truly interpreted, and every word delivered in a voice that is the most effective, as well as the most delicious organ of the soul. That voice, with her electrifying eye, and her miraculous variety of expression, breathe a living spirit into the written words, and each character appears before you in its individuality and completeness; not only the intellectual Portia, the cool, subtle and avenging Shylock, but the grave and generous Antonio, the sagacious Gratiano, &c. &c.—such characters as on the stage, are either automatons or buffoons. But Mrs.-----, who seems in the versatility of her talents as well as in her genius, to be "near of kin" to her great master, had no sooner closed her book than she sprang up stairs into the ball-room, to teach L----- a gavot, and finding in a corner of the room an old crimson banner, belonging to the citizen-soldiers of Salisbury, and a sort of helmet-cap that had probably graced their commander, she donned the one and flourished the other, impersonating an heroic chieftainess, who might have appropriated the words of Clorinda—

"Son pronta ad ogni impresa;  
L'alte non temo, e l' umili non sdegno."

Here is the summons to dinner. How has the rainy morning been charmed away!

It is a pity that metaphysicians instead of scoffing at the theories of philosophers older than themselves, and striking out new systems to be scoffed at in their turn, do not observe the minds around them, and the laws that govern them. Here is our kind little landlady who has been perfectly happy all the morning in the satisfaction she was preparing for her guests. How cheerfully she has performed the multifarious labors of housewife, cook, and maid of all work, crying "anon, anon!" to every one's bidding, and casting her smiles like sunbeams beyond the clouds that were scudding before her. The odor of a turkey roasting for dinner, (a rare dainty at this season in these country parts,) acted as a charm against fatigue and disquietude of every sort.

The dinner hour came—the turkey was served—the hungry guests sat down to dinner. It was a moment of honest triumph to the good woman—a, moment when the little vanities of the housewife were dignified by the benevolence of the woman. But, alas! night is next to day; and not more dismal is the change from light to darkness, than the vanishing of the poor hostess' smiles, when she saw the strongest, skilfullest hand among us laboring in vain to separate the joints of the ancient gobbler, who, though the father of generations, she had undoubtedly brought to a most untimely end. The poor woman, for the first time that day, sat down. All the toils of the day—all the runnings to and fro, were accumulated at this moment. Hope had cheated her into unconsciousness of her burdens, and at

[p. 37]

the touch of disappointment she sunk under them. Now our metaphysical result is, that there are certain powers of the mind, which, brought into action, abridge labor even more than spinning-jennies.

After dinner we fell into an argument on the tendencies of the Catholic religion, to prolong the dominion of absolute governments. F----- earnestly contending against it in spite of his sixteen years in the dungeons of Spielberg, which we might have expected would have prejudiced him in favor of our argument.

*Thursday morning.*—We sent through a pelting rain, a mile and a half, for a fiddler, ensconced him in the orchestra, lighted up our tin chandelier and began dancing, though we had but one cavalier who did not declare himself *hors de combat*. Fortunately two wandering stars suddenly rose above the dreary horizon of our young damsels. The one was a young man who introduced himself as Hermann Hinklinker, a German student, and his companion, a Count Catchimetchikoff, a Pole. They both spoke English well. The German student was a sort of admirable Crichton. He seemed an universal genius, and whatever he was called upon to do he did marvellously well. His eye was that of an inspired poet, and his countenance, conversation and manners, had the witching charm that belongs to the knight of bower and hall. As if by instinct he selected the lady of our fair company, who has been presented at foreign courts, and might grace an epic poem, and having called in vain on our rustic fiddler for various dances foreign, he gracefully joined a quadrille, a country dance, and Virginia reel, and danced with as much glee as if they were the dances of his own land and fondest associations. His companion, the Polish Count with the unpronounceable and almost unwritable name, was boyish and unpractised, but he had the freedom of a seemingly happy nature, and a certain air of the wellborn and well-nurtured, that was pleasing. At half past nine our dancers had exhausted their superfluous activity, and we adjourned to the little parlor where our wondrous student sang German, Italian, French, and English with equal facility, and with an expression that waked all the soul within us; and that, perhaps, is the prosaic interpretation of what the poet means by "creating a soul under the ribs of death." The young Polish prince sang an accompaniment, that at least showed long practice, with his more accomplished friend. Our hostess sent us in a refectation of cakes and peaches, and we separated at twelve, bidding our strange visitants "good night," as if they were of us. Who were they? Whence came they? Is it possible that their advent

was connected with the disappearance of two of our party, Mrs.----- and Miss -----, who left us after tea, and did not appear again till this morning?

It is still raining, and has rained all night, as it did upon the drowning unbelievers of Noah's time. The wind is still east, and our pictorial party will probably go home again without either seeing Canaan falls, the lakes, or Bash-Pish.

*Ten o'clock.*—Good, as well as evil, comes unlooked for. The wind has changed—the clouds are breaking away—the carriages are ready—Ho! for Canaan falls! Our friend, R. A-----, has joined us. This is his home, and he has undertaken hospitably to show us the beauties to which he is native, and which he rightly appreciates, and unostentatiously enjoys. The rain has done us nothing but good—it has laid our enemy, the dust, quietly at our feet—washed the trees—greened the fields—and brimmed every little brook, so that this seems the land of fresh and gushing streams.

The elements had ceased their hostility, and air, earth and water, were ministering to our enjoyment, when, lo! on descending a hill, we came upon a stream that had overflowed its banks and flooded the road for a long distance. We stopped to take counsel of an old resident, who assured us there was no danger, and those among us who were as brave as the Duke of Marlborough—that is, who feared nothing where there was nothing to fear—proceeded, in spite of the outcries of sundry of our juveniles, who were suddenly pervaded with a sense of Falstaff's alacrity in sinking. After all it was but one of Andrew Marvel's dangers, and only served to add one to the pictures laid up in our memories; for it was a pretty sight to see the omnibus' horses dashing into the water, and to watch their passage, as they were now nearly hidden by the light foliage, that almost embowered the narrow road and now emerged from it. At Canaan falls we rejoined, by appointment, some dear friends who had come from home with us, and who, during the rainy day, had enjoyed a welcome that might have been envied by him, who boasted that his kindest welcome was at an inn. Canaan falls have long been known as furnishing valuable water privileges, and as being the location of profitable furnaces, but being far from the grand routes, they have been little visited by amateurs, and few of this dainty body probably know that there is a fall of sixty feet in the Housatonic. Human beauties have their “handsome days,” and so have the beauties of inanimate nature, if that can be called inanimate that breathes harmony, and speaks to the soul. Never, I am sure, were these falls seen in a more becoming light. The river was filled by the rains of the previous night, and literally verified what was said in another sense, by our good woman of the inn, when she told me “the falls were well worth seeing—there had been a great addition to them.” “What, more water?” “Oh no, more furnaces!” And, in truth, furnaces are not very bad “additions.” They certainly are far less offensive accessories to falls than factories, which are so upright, so freshly painted, and so full of windows. Whether it is that Ketch's marvellous pencil has redeemed a furnace from all utilitarian and anti-picturesque associations, so that you cannot see one without thinking of the young page Fridolin, and his beautiful mistress; or that there is something that harmonizes with trees, rocks, and water, in these buildings, that always look old, brown, dingy, and ominous, with their glowing fires gleaming through their port-holes. Some of our party who had seen Schaffhausen, were struck by a resemblance of these to those celebrated falls, and had the courage to pronounce them little less beautiful. I shall not attempt to describe them. Painting even is an ineffective presentment of a water-fall; and words, without the spell of genius, cannot conjure up to the imagination the

motion and force of the river, as it rushes over the precipice—the rocks above, that seem in vain to have tried to repel and obstruct its passage—the pretty islands—the steep banks, with their dark cedars—the rustic bridge below—the long stretch of the river, and the far distant hills that bound the horizon, and all touched

[p. 38]

with a light that would have set an artist or a poet off into ecstasy.

But the majority of our caravan were neither artists nor poets; so after running up and down the bank, to the bottom and the top of the fall, wondering, admiring, and exclaiming as much as could be reasonably expected, we returned to enjoy a very nice lunch, in a degree that could not have been exceeded by poets or artists. *En passant*, we commend, as in duty bound, the nice inn at Canaan falls to the wayfarer, where he will be sure of finding that rarity, fresh eggs *fresh*, and cakes and pastry most skilfully compounded.

We had yet a drive of five miles in extent round Furnace lake to Salisbury, and then a tour round *Salisbury lakes*, so called—*par excellence*. The views returning, of upland and lowland, were most beautiful. We were driven to the summit of a hill whence we saw all the Salisbury world and the glory thereof. We passed a rill that our rainy day had swollen into what appeared a mountain torrent, and finally passing round the lower margin of Furnace lake, reached our inn at three o'clock. The day was still unclouded, and as the shadows were lengthening, every hour added to the beauty of the scenery, so that the eye, not satisfied, as it is never satisfied with such seeing, our party, excepting Mrs.----- and myself, set off for the lakes.

Opposite the inn there is a very green field, and this field is traversed by a little stream, that is, I believe, the outlet of the lake on Mount Rhiga; at any rate its birthplace is on that high mountain, and as it flows through this fresh bit of meadow land, it retains its free and joyous mountain character. There is always in the sound of running water a voice of invitation; and Mrs.----- and myself, having no heart to resist such a bidding, passed through an open barn, which afforded us the readiest access to the meadow, and then strolled along the margin of the brook to a clump of sycamores, from whose roots the earth had been so washed away as to afford a good seat, and their clean white stems a far better support than our perpendicular country chairs. The trees along this brook are not the willows and light shrubbery that usually affect our water courses, but groups of noble oaks, elms, maples, and sycamores, (the original growth I believe,) disposed as if they were planted by the most skilful artist—and were they not?

“If this were in England,” said Mrs.-----, reverting to her English associations, “it would make the fortune of our innkeeper. There we have a large class who haunt such places. That barn would be removed, or rather it would never have been placed there, and the little aid that nature needs to give it all the attraction it is capable of, would not have been spared; but in your country the supplies that nature yields to physical wants is all you get from her. There are a few individual exceptions; but for the most part those of your people who can afford the luxury of travelling, through the watering places; they go in herds, and must eat, drink and live, in crowds. To love and enjoy nature, requires a certain degree and kind of cultivation, which your people have not.”



In spite of the *amour-propre*, which one instinctively extends so far as to embrace one's own people, I could not but admit that there was much justice in my friend's strictures. The denizens of our cities, who, for the most part, make up that class that can indulge in the luxury of travelling, and summer excursions, do not spend their short holiday in exploring their country and making acquaintance with its lonely solitudes—and why should they? We must be content to let people be happy in their own way. There are no daily papers at Bash-pish or Canaan falls—no prices-current—no reports from the stock market—and the most irresistible French dresses, or (as one of my fashionable friends styles them) even the most *romantic* French dresses, and the most perfect "loves of capes," would be worse than wasted there. But, as I urged to Mrs.-----, is there not a much larger class in our country, than the privileged aristocracy of any land can furnish, sufficiently educated to relish the beauties of nature? A love of nature, amounting to a passion, is innate with a few—but a very *few*. With the greater part it needs to be awakened and cultivated. In the eager pursuit of the first necessities of existence, this love or taste has been neglected among us; but it is precisely one of those pleasures that suits the mass of our people, for it is rational, most moral, and *unexpensive*. Nature exhibits her pictures without money and without price. Her show-rooms are every where open without respect to persons, seasons, or hours. And are there not at this moment, scattered in our secluded places and retired villages, numbers who quietly and unostentatiously enjoy the festival nature has spread, and who are getting that 'wisdom' which

“Is a pearl with most success  
Sought in still water, and beneath clear skies?”

And are there not prisoners pent in our cities, who hunger and thirst after the green meadows and misty mountain tops?

With the shadows, we again all gathered at our head quarters, and passed the evening in representing a secret meeting of the Carbonari. One of our Italian friends, who, for the project cherished in these meetings, had suffered sixteen years in the dungeons of Spielberg, showed us the mode of inaugurating a new member of the society; and different members of our party, being instructed in their official duty, regularly initiated a young black-eyed girl into the secrets of membership.

We went early to bed, to prepare for the fatigues of the next day. Little did we know what preparation was necessary. Pity that one cannot take in an extra quantity of rest, as Dalgetty did of provant!

*Friday morning*—after being joined by Miss----- and her brother, our Salisbury friend, well fitted to be our guide and companion, and indeed furnished to every good work, we began the ascent of Mount Rhiga, on our way to Bash-pish, which was to be the crowning point of our excursion. The road begins alongside the little brook aforesaid, and continues its delightful companionship for four miles to the summit. There is but just space enough between the brook and the close set trees for a road. The branches of the trees often stretch over and interweave above your head. The flowers of the season, the gentians, asters, and golden rod, were thick set and blooming among the turf, and the long ferns hung over like green plumes. “This,” said

Mrs.----- , as she marked the laurels planted all along the roadside, “must be paradise in June; it is just such a drive as our noblemen obtain in their parks

[p. 39]

at almost unlimited expense and trouble." As we wound upward, we had glorious glimpses into the open world we were leaving behind us, of hill-side and valley; but there was one point at which we stopped and remained for some moments in breathless admiration. Here there was a wide, deep and wooded chasm between us and another eminence, that presented a semicircular front like the wall of an amphitheatre—but an amphitheatre built by an Almighty architect. The trees grew over the side of this mountain so close that they looked absolutely packed with a surface resembling a rich turf, and giving the appearance, I have remarked, of a green wall.

The greater portion of our company, the hale and the merciful ones, had alighted from our vehicles to walk up the mountain. A----- , who either perceived that I was lagging, or wishing to provide a picturesque variety, struck a bargain with a butcher's boy, who was wending his way up the mountain with supplies for Rhiga, and having huddled the meal into the back part of the little wagon, he placed me, with my pilgrim's staff, on a board that served for a seat in front, where I figured as a vender of beef and tallow. The Doctor soon overtook us, another type of civilization, with his symbols, a sulkey, and a leathern sack, containing the torments of social existence for those that enjoyed few its benefits. After passing the furnaces of Mount Rhiga, (called Mount *Raggy* by the natives,) we came upon a lake, four miles in extent, with the Katskills for a background. Oh how beautiful that lake and those blue summits were, when we returned at twilight—mountain, lake, and skies, all glowing with the “last steps of day!”

From Rhiga we drove over a very comfortable mountain road seven miles to Mount Washington, and were again in our own county of Berkshire. By the way I had a little chat with the Doctor, and was congratulating him on his *ride*, embracing these far stretching and sublime views, when, in reply, directing my observation to a point in the Katskills, he said, "My father was killed there felling a tree, and left me, with several other children, orphans, in a log-hut hard by. I always see the place when I pass this way, and it is a dreary ride to me." There was much food for thought in this; but turning from the proof that the mind gives its own hue to the outward world, I remembered to have heard that this gentleman and his brother were eminent in their profession, and I thanked Heaven that the stream of life, in our land, runs to prosperity, even though its beginning be in a log-hut on the Katskills.

We stopped at a farm house in the village of Mount Washington, where we deposited our youngest traveller, with her nurse, and three of our little girls, who we thought incompetent to the labor before us—and having secured three riding horses for the least strong among us, the rest proceeded, under the guidance of an old mountaineer, through woodland and ploughed land towards Bash-pish. The distance was not more than two miles and a half; no frightful achievement for the poorest walker among us—but the ground was broken and rugged, and when two miles were accomplished we had to descend a precipitous hill, where there had been a road, now only to be marked by the heaps of stones from which the earth had been swept during the late furious rains. After much fatigue we did get down without breaking our necks or dislocating our bones; but if “*faciis descensus averni*,” what the *ascent* would be we hardly dared to think—

and think of any future evil we could not, while we were lured on by the music of the water-fall, which came up from the depths like the song of a siren.

-----

Here ended my journal. We were perfectly exhausted with fatigue when we arrived at our Salisbury inn, at eight in the evening—and the next morning, before starting for home, I had only time to bring up my notes to where I have ended. But what signifies it? I could not have described that most graceful of all the waterfalls I have ever seen—that treasure which Nature seems to have hidden with a mother's love, deep in the bosom of her hills.

We were afterwards told that we did not, after all, see what was grandest—that we should have approached on the other side, where the access was easy, and gone to the rocky breast-work,\* at the summit of the hill, whence we should have looked off a sheer precipice of three hundred feet into the ravine through which the water passes away. I believe it, for the fall as we saw it was no more sublime than a child in its wildest frolics, or a fawn gamboling through the glades of its woodland home.

If any of my readers have been good-natured enough to follow me thus far, finding my story without an end, they may deem me guilty of an impertinence in publishing the journal of a home excursion, which has neither a striking point nor a startling incident. But if I should lead any to seek the healthy pleasures within their reach, which will cost them no great expense of time or money, I shall be content.

In spite of the old ballad which gravely tells us that “to travel is great charges,” as you know, in every place, we spent five days, and saw and enjoyed all that I have, perhaps too tediously, detailed, for less than the amount of a week's board at a watering place.

\*It is from this rock, where eagles' eggs have been found, that the place obtained the name of Eagle's Nest. Bash-pish is the corruption of a name given by some Swiss settler.