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THE WHITE HILLS IN OCTOBER

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OUR town friends who fly from the heat, and dust, and menacing diseases, and insupportable *ennui* of their city residence, during the moths of July and August, may have an escape, but they have little enjoyment. We admire the heroism with which they endure, year after year, the discomforts of a country hotel, or the packing in the narrow, half-furnished bedrooms and rather warm attics of rural lodging-houses, and the general abatement and contraction of creature-comforts, in such startling contrast to the abounding luxuries of their own city palaces. But they are right; the country, at any discount, is better, in the fearful heats of July and August, than the town with its hot, unquiet nights and polluted air. Any hillside or valley in the country, and a shelter under any roof in or upon them, with the broad cope of heaven above, (not cut into patches and fragments by intervening walls and chimney-tops,) and broad fields, and grass, and corn, and woodlands, and their flowers, and freshening dews and breezes, and all Nature’s infinite variety, is better than every appliance and contrivance for battling with the din, the suffocation, and unrest of city life.

Yes, our city friends are right in their summer flights from

“The street,
Filled with its ever-shifting train.”

But they must not flatter themselves that their mere glimpse of country life, their mere snatch at its mid-summer beauty, the one free-drawn breath of their wearied spirit, is acquaintance with it. As well might one who had seen Rosalind, the most versatile of Shakspeare’s heroines, only in her court-dress at her uncle, the duke’s ball, guess at her infinite variety of charm in the Forest of Ardennes. Nature holds her drawing-room in July and August. She wears her fullest and richest dresses then; if we may speak flippantly without offense to the simplicity of her majesty, she is then *en pleine toilette*. But any other of the twelve is more picturesque than the summer months. Blustering March, with its gushing streams tossing off their icy fetters—changeable April, with its greening fields and glancing birds—sweet, budding, blossoming May—flowery June—fruitful September—golden, glorious October—dreary, thoughtful November; and all of winter, with its potent majesty and heroic adversity.

But let our citizens come to our rural districts—the more, the better for them! Only let them not imagine they get that enough which is “as good as a feast.”

This preamble was naturally suggested by our autumnal life in the country, and by a recurrence to a late delightful passage through the White Hills of New-Hampshire.

“That resort of people that do pass
In travel to and fro,”

during the intense months of July and August, we found in October so free from visitors, that we might have fancied ourselves the discoverers of that upland region of beauty, unparalleled, so far as we know, in all the traveled parts of our country. And for the benefit of those who shall come after us, for all who have their highest enjoyment, perhaps their best instruction, in Nature’s Free School, we intended to give some brief notices of our tour, in the hope of extending the traveling season into October by imparting some faint idea of the startling beauty of this brilliant month in the mountains; but what we might have said was happily superseded.

At a little inn, in a small town, after we came down from the “high place,” we met a party of friends who had preceded us along the whole route by a day.

A rain came on, and we were detained together for twenty-four hours. We agreed to pass the evening in a reciprocal reading of the brief notes of our journey. It came last to the turn of my friend, a very charming young person, whom I shall take the liberty to call Mary Langdon. She blushed and stammered, and protested against being a party to the contribution. “My only record of the journey,” she said, “is a long letter to my cousin, which I began before we left home.”

“So much the better,” we rejoined.

“But,” she said, “it has been written capriciously, in every mood of feeling.”

“Therefore,” we urged, “the more variety.”

At last, driven to the wall, she threw a nice morocco letter-case into my lap, saying: “Take it and read it to yourself, and you will see why I positively can not read it aloud.”

So we gave up our entreaties. I read the letter-journal after I went to my room. The reading cheated me of an hour’s sleep—perhaps because I had just intensely enjoyed the country my friend described; and in the morning I begged Miss Langdon’s permission to publish it. She at first vehemently objected, saying it would be in the highest degree indelicate to publish so much of her own story as was inextricably interwoven with the journey.

“But, dear child,” I urged, “who that reads our magazines knows you? You will be on the other side of the Atlantic in another month, and before you return this record will be forgotten, for alas! we contributors to monthlies do not write for immortality!”

“But for the briefest mortality I am not fitted

to write," she pleaded. I rather smiled at the novelty of one hesitating to write for the public because not fitted for the task, and (thinking of "the fools that rushed in"—there is small aptness in the remainder of the familiar quotation) I continued to urge, till my young friend yielded, on my promising to omit passages which related to the private history of her heart—Mary Langdon not partaking that incomprehensible frankness or child-like hallucination which enables some of our very best writers, Mrs. Browning, for instance, to impart, by sonnets and in various vehicles of prose and verse, to the curious and all-devouring public those secrets from the heart's holy of holies that common mortals would hardly confess to a lover—or a priest.

It is to our purpose, writing, as we profess to do *pour l'utile*, that our young friend indulged little in sentiment, and that, being a country-bred New-England girl, she conscientiously set down the coarser realities essential to the well-being of a traveler—breakfasts, dinners, etc.

But before proceeding to her journal, I must introduce my *débutante*, if she who will probably make but a single appearance before the public may be so styled.

Mary Langdon is still on the threshold of life—at least those who have reached threescore would deem her so, as she is not more than three-and-twenty. The freshness of her youth has been preserved by a simple and rather retired country-life. A total abstinence from French novels and other like reading has left the purity and candor of her youth unscathed by their blight and weather-stain. Would that this tree of the knowledge of evil—not *good* and evil—were never transplanted into our New World! Beware, ye that eat of it; your love of what is natural and simple will surely die.

Mary Langdon's simplicity is that of truth, not of ignorance. Her father has given her what he calls "a good education"—that means, he says, that "she thoroughly knows how to read, write, and cipher, which," he rather tartly adds, "few girls brought up at French boarding-schools do." As might be suspected from the practical ideas in her narrative, our young friend has had that complete development of her faculties which arises out of the necessities of country-life in its best aspects.

Mary Langdon is called only pretty, but her prettiness is beauty in the eyes of her friends and lovers; and then she is so buoyant, so free of step and frank of speech, that while others are slowly winding their way to your affection, she springs into your heart.

With due respect to seniority, we should have presented Mr. Langdon before his daughter. On being called on for his journal, he said he "was not such a confounded fool as to keep one for any portion of his life." He "should as soon think of crystallizing soap-bubbles. He had dotted down a few memoranda as warnings to future travelers, and we were welcome to them; though he thought we were too mountain mad to profit by them, if indeed any body ever profited by any body's else experience!" The fact was, the dear old gentleman had left home in a very unquiet state of mind. He hated at all times leaving his home, abounding in comforts—he

detested travel even under what he termed “alleviating circumstances.” He was rather addicted to growling. This English instinct came over with his progenitor in the *May Flower*, and half a dozen generations had not sufficed to subdue it. But Mr. Langdon’s “bark is worse than his bite.” In truth his ‘bite’ is like that of a teething child’s, resulting from a derangement of sweet and loving elements.

We found our old friend’s memoranda so strongly resembling the grumbling of our traveling cousins from over the water, that we concluded to print it so portions of it, in order to illustrating the effects of the lights or shadows that emanate from our own minds. Providence provides the banquet; its relish or disrelish depends on the appetite of the guest. But to Mary Langdon’s letter, which, as it was begun before she left home, bears its first date there:

“LAKE-SIDE, 28th Sept., 1854.

“MY DEAR SUE,—I have not much more to tell you than my last contained. Carl Hermann left our neighborhood last week, determined to return by the next steamer to Dusseldorf. We were both very wretched at this final parting. But as I have often seen people making great sacrifices to others, and then losing themselves, and letting others lose all the benefit of the sacrifice, by the ungracious manner of it, I summoned up courage, and appeared before my father calm and acquiescing, and (you will think me passionless, perhaps hard-hearted) I soon became so. I read over and over again your arguments, and I confess I was willing to be persuaded by them. But, after all, my point of sight is not yours, and you can not see objects in the proportions and relations that I do. You say I have exaggerated notions of filial duty—that I have come to mature age and ripe judgment, and that I should decide and act for myself—that in the nature of things the conjugal must supersede the filial relation, and that I have no right to sacrifice my life-long happiness to the remnant of my father’s days; and above all, I am foolish to give in to his prejudices, and—selfishness,’ you added, dear, and did not quite efface the word. Though I see there is much reason in what you say, I have only to reply that I can not marry with my father’s disapprobation. I can not and I will not. Our hearts have grown together. God forms the bond that ties the child to the parent, and we make the other; and it shows human work—being often fragile, sometimes *rotten*. Susy, you lost your parents when you were so young, that you can not tell what I feel for my surviving one. Since my mother’s death and the marriage of Alice, he has lived in such dependence on me, that I can’t tell what his life would be if I were to leave him: and I will not. You tell me this is unnatural, and a satisfactory proof to you that I do not love Carl. Oh, Sue!—”

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Here must be our first hiatus. We can only say that the outpouring of our young friend’s heart satisfied us that beneath her serene surface there was an unfathomable well of feeling, and that her friend must have been convinced that

“Love’s reason is *not* always without reason.”

The letter proceeds: “I very well know that my father is prejudiced, Sue, but old men’s prejudices become a part and parcel of themselves, and they can not be cured of them. My father’s do not spring from any drop of bitterness, for he has not one; nor from egotism, for he has none of it; but, as you know, his early life was in Boston, and his only society is there, and he naturally partakes the opinions of his contemporaries, who, the few surviving among them, deem all foreigners interlopers, outside barbarians, strangers intermeddling with that liberty, equality, and pursuit of happiness which is their exclusive birth-right; or rather, I suspect, that in their secret souls they regard the theories of their revolutionary fathers as a Utopian dream. A foreign artist above all is, in my father’s eye, a mere vagrant, who neither deserves nor can attain a local habitation or a name; and thus my poor Carl, with divine gifts, and habits of industry that would make the fortune of a mere mechanic, is thrust aside.”

Here Mary Langdon begins the narration of her journey, and here we give notes, a few specimens from her father’s memoranda, that our readers may have the advantage of seeing the same objects from different points of sight, premising that our old friend’s memoranda were scanty, and repeating that we give but specimens. We smile at his petulance more in love than ridicule. We are not fond of showing it off, and only do so in these brief extracts to substantiate our opinion that his traveling temper showed him near of kin to English tourists, who seem to make it a point to turn their plates bottom side upward.

The father and daughter both record the same facts. The one shows the rights and beautiful side of the tapestry, the other the wrong one. Strange that any eye should make the fatal mistake of dwelling on the last rather than the first!

“On Monday, 2d of October,” proceeds Mary Langdon in her letter to her cousin, “we came into Boston, to take the two o’clock train for Portland. We had three hours upon our hands, which we pleasantly filled up by visits to a studio and picture-shop; and finally, our mortal part, having given out while we were feasting the immortal, we repaired to a *restaurateur*’s. We groped our way into a little back room in School Street, where, if we did not find luxury or elegance, we did what met our reasonable wants-- wholesome fare and civility.*.....

* EXTRACT FROM MR. LANGDON’S JOURNAL

2nd October, Anno Domini, 1854. Left my comfortable lowland home for unknown parts, and known regions of snow and ice. The Lord willing, I am sure of one pleasure—coming home again!

“We had three mortal house on our hands this morning in Boston. I called on my dear old friends, the survivors of the _____ family. Not one of them, they told me, has yet risked life in a rail-car. Wisdom is not extinct!

“Called on respected Widow A-----. Could not see much of Sally -----, my old sweetheart, about her; but we got upon old times, and the color came to her pale, furrowed cheek. Women never forget—loving souls! She gave me a nice lunch—pickled oysters, etc. and a glass of old Madeira. Meanwhile the girls were ranging round studios (?), good lack! and picture-shops. This rage for ‘Art’ has come in with the foreign tongues since my time. Picked them up at a *restaurant*. What a misnomer! A dainty place of refreshment to be sure; a little parlor behind a shop, with herds rushing in and herds rushing out!

“The passage to Portland was dusty but brief, and we arrived there in time to see its beautiful harbor, while the water reflected the rose-tints on the twilight clouds. We, as advised, eschewed the hotel, and were kindly received at a Miss Jones’s, a single woman, who so blends dignity with graciousness, that she made us feel like invited guests. One might well mistake the reception of the hostess for the welcome of a friend. Her table has an American variety and abundance with the nicety of English appointments. Her house is a model. Its quiet and completeness reminds one of that classic type of comfort, an English inn. The house, with its high repute, was the inheritance of two sisters from their mother, of whom we were told an anecdote which may be apocryphal, but which would harmonize with the *bonhomie* of Sir Roger de Coverley. The old lady closed her patriarchal length of days serenely; and when she was dying, she requested that the order of her household should be in no wise disturbed by the event of her decease, but that ‘the gentlemen should play their evening game of whist as usual!’*.....

*EXTRACT FROM MR. LANGDON’S JOURNAL

“Came by rail to Portland, in peril of life and limb. Stirred up with fifty plebeians treading on your toes and jostling your elbows. This modern improvement of cattle-pens over a gentleman’s carriage with select and elect friends, and time to enjoy a beautiful country, is the ‘advance of civilization!’ Travelers now are prisoners under sentence of death- their keeper being called a *conductor*. Oh! I cry with my old friend Touchstone, ‘when I was at home, I was in a better place!’ Heaven grant me his philosophy to add, “Travelers must be content.’

“*Portland*. Rather a nice house is this Miss Jones’s. Old-fashioned neatness and quiet. But what would our English traveler say to the lady bestowing her own company, unasked, and that of her guest, upon us! Bad butter spoiled my tea and breakfast. The girls did not notice it. Young folks have no senses.”

“*Tuesday*. Miss Jones’s morning face was as benign as her evening countenance. No lady could have administered hospitality with more refinement. Just as the door of the carriage that was to convey us to the station was closing, it was reopened, and a rough-hewn, but decent country body was shoved in by the driver, who muttered something about there being no other conveyance for her. My father looked a little awry, not with any thought of remonstrating -

- no native American would do that -- but he was just lighting his after-breakfast cigar, and he shrunk from the impropriety of smoking in such close quarters with a stranger who bore a semblance of the sex to which he always pays deference.
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blance of the sex to which he always pays deference.

“‘I hope, Madam,’ he said, ‘a cigar does not offend you?’

“‘La! no, sir,’ replied our rustic friend good-naturedly, ‘I *like* it.’

“‘My father’s geniality is always called forth by the touch of a cigar.

“‘Perhaps, Madame,’ he said, with a smile at the corners of his mouth, ‘you would try one yourself?’

“‘I *would*,’ she answered, eagerly, and grasped the cigar my father selected, saying, ‘thank ye kindly. I s’pose I can light it at the end of yours?’

“‘My dear, fastidious father heroically breasted this juxtaposition, and the old lady, unconscious of any thing but her keen enjoyment of the unlooked-for been, smoked away vigorously. Dear Alice, who never loses sight of her duty to wrest a possible mischance from any human being, rather verdantly suggested, ‘that the cigar might make her sick.’

“‘Mercy, child! I am used to pipes.’

“‘That I had already inferred from her manner of holding the cigar. She was soon pressed by the usual necessity engendered by smoking, and half rising from her seat, it was too evident that she mistook the pure plate-glass for empty space. My father let down the glass as if he had been shot; but she, nowise discomposed, even by our laughing, merely said, coolly

“‘Why, I did not calculate right, did I?’”

“‘There are idiosyncrasies in Yankeedom—there is no doubt of it! Arrived at the cars, our close companionship, and our acquaintance too, ended, except that the woman’s husband, for she had a husband, some Touchstone whose ‘humor’ it was to ‘take that no other man would,’ asked me to put my window down, for his ‘wife was *sick*!’ But as I had just observed the good woman munching a bit of mince pie, I thought that coming so close upon the cigar might possibly offend her stomach more than the fresh untainted air, so I declined, as courteously as possible, with the answer I have always ready for similar requests, ‘that I keep my window open to preserve the lives of the people in the car.’ ‘That’s peculiar!’ I heard her murmur; but her serenity was nowise discomposed, either by my refusal or her ‘sickness.’ Surely the imperturbable good nature of our people is national and ‘peculiar!’*

*EXTRACT FROM MR. LANGDON’S JOURNAL

“Happy illustration, from a smoking old woman this morning, of the refinements of railroad travel!”

“By the way, there were notices posted up in these cars, which reminded us that we were near the English Provinces, and under their influence. The notices ran thus: ‘Gentlemen are requested not to put their feet on the cushions, and not to spit on the floor, and to maintain a respectable cleanliness, the conductors are required to enforce these requests.’ Must we wait for the millennium to see a like request and like enforcement pervade our tobacco-chewing country? We found ourselves surrounded by intelligent people of the country *habitués*, who gave us all the local information we asked, told us when we came to Bryant’s Pond, and that the poor little shrunken stream, that still brawled and fretted in its narrowed channel, was the Androscoggin.

“At Gorham, but seven miles from the ‘Glen-House,’ we left the cars and found a wagon awaiting passengers. ‘The houses are all closed,’ was the pleasant technical announcement of our driver; and he added, cheerfully,

“‘The weather has been so tedious that it was burst the bubble on Mount Washington.’

“‘The “bubble!” what the deuce does the man mean?’ exclaimed my father. I perceived that it was a bit of slang wit upon ‘out-of-season’ people, to terrify them with the ‘bulb’ having burst, and so I told my father. He solemnly replied that he did not in the least doubt the fact! And as we went on slowly making the ascent, he looked ‘sagely sad;’ dear Alice, as her happy temper is, was ‘bright without the sun.’*.....

“My father made a few and faint responses to our exclamations of delight at the light wreath of mist that floated far down the mountains, and the massive clouds that dropped over their summits, so that our imaginations were not kept in abeyance by definite outlines. The air was soft, and our steeds, as if considerate of our enjoyment, prolonged it by crawling up the long ascent. We came into the ‘Glen House’ with keen appetites—a needful blessing we thought—when Mr. Thompson, the host, with solemn mien informed us he ‘was not prepared for company in October—we must expect port and beans.’†.....

*EXTRACT FROM MR. LANGDON’S JOURNAL

“We were pitched into an open wagon at Gorham—Scottish mist—rain impending—chilled to my very vitals. The driver tells us the bulb’s already burst on Mount Washington. Continuous ascent. Not a meadow, an orchard, or a garden, but dreary mountains shrouded in fog.

† “Found the Glen House ‘closed,’ which means that all the comfortable rooms are dismantled and shut up, that you must take such fare as mine host pleases (‘pork and beans’ he promises), thank him for ‘accommodating’ you, and pay summer prices. Oh, ‘what fools we mortals are!’”

“Oh, my poor father’s blank face! Yet blanker when we were ushered into a parlor where, instead of the crackling wood fire we had fancied indigenous in these mountains, we found one of those black ‘demons’ that have taken out of our life all the poetry of the ‘hearthstone.’ But courage! We can open the stove door and get a sparkle of light and life!

“10 p.m. Before finishing my day’s journal I must tell you, *pour encourager les autres*’ who may risk the ‘closed houses’ of October, that our host did better than he promised. Our dinner was served in a cozy little room, as neatly as a home dinner; it was hot, which a hotel dinner, in the season, never is; and that the threatened ‘pork and beans’ turned into tender fowls, fresh eggs, and plentiful accessories of vegetables and pies. William, our wagon-driv-

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er, was metamorphosed into a waiter, and performed his part as if he were ‘native to the manner.’*.....

*EXTRACT FROM MR. LANGDON’S JOURNAL

“Dinner turned out better than I expected; but where but in a Yankee tavern would one suffer the infliction of a mince pie in October?”

“The cloudy evening has closed in upon us early. We have eluded its tediousness by reading aloud ‘The Heir of Redcliffe,’ a charming book, which teaches more irresistibly than the ordained preacher the virtues of forgiveness and self-sacrifice. These Christian graces are vitalized in the lives of Guy and Amy. Amy does right with so much simplicity and so little effort, that one feels as if it were easy to do it; and as my task is much easier than hers as the lover is less dear than the husband, I will try. You think me cool; I do not feel so. I start and tremble at this howling wind—it reminds me that Carl is on the ocean.

“I was here startled by seeing that my father was observing me.

“ ‘My child,’ he said, ‘you are shaking with cold,’ (not ‘with cold,’ I could have answered). ‘These confounded stoves,’ he added, ‘keep one in an alternate ague and fever. Come, waltz round the room with your sister, and get into a glow.’

“So, singing our own music, we waltzed till we were out of breath, and Alice has seated herself at picquet with my father, who has a run of luck, ‘point! sezième! and capote!’ which puts him into high good humor—and I may write unmarked. Carl was to write me once more before his embarkation, but I can not get the letter till my return, and I have not the poor consolation of looking over the list of the steamer’s passengers and seeing the strange names of

those who would seem to me happy enough to be in the same ship with him; and yet, what care they for that! Poor fellow! he will be but sorry company. I find support in the faith that I am doing my duty. He could not see it in that light, and had neither comfort for himself nor sympathy for me. I almost wish now, when I think of him in his desolation, that I could receive the worldly philosophy my old nurse offered me when, as Carl drove away, she came into my room and found me crying bitterly. She hushed me tenderly as she was used to do when I was a child; and when I said,

“Hannah, it is for him, not for myself, I feel!”

“Oh! that’s nothing but a nonsense, child,” she said. “Men ain’t that way; they go about among folks and get rid of feelings; it’s women that stay at home and keep ‘em alive, brooding on ‘em!”

“Why should I thus shrink from a consequence I ought to desire? But perhaps it will be easier as I go on, if it be true that

‘Each goodly thing is hardest to begin;

But entered in a spacious court they see

Both plain, and pleasant to be walked in.’

“*Wednesday Morning*. My father happened to cast his eyes across the table as I finished my last page, and he saw a tear fall on it. Throwing down his cards he said,

“ ‘Come, come, children! it’s time to go to bed;’ and stooping over me, he kissed me fondly and murmured: ‘Dear, good child! I can not stand it if I see you unhappy.’”

“He shall not see me so. I have risen to-day with this resolution. The rain has been pouring down all night, but at this glorious point of sight, directly under Mount Washington, we are equal to either fate—going on or staying. Mr. Thompson has again surprised us with a delicious breakfast of tender chicken, light biscuit, excellent bread, fresh eggs, and that rarest of comforts at a hotel—delicious coffee, with a brimming pitcher of cream. We wondered at all these things, usually the result of a feminine genius, for we have not heard the flutter of a petticoat in the house till we saw our respectable landlady gliding through the room. We learned from her that she was the only womankind on the diggings. Every thing is neatly done, so we bless our October star for exempting us from the careless and hurried service of the Celtic race. While it rains, we walk on the piazza, enjoying the beautiful and ever-varying effects of the clouds as they roll down the mountains, and roll off; like the shadows on our human life, dear Susan, that God’s love does both send and withdraw.

“The Glen House is on the lowest ridge of the hill that rises opposite to Mount Washington, which, as its name indicates, stands head and shoulders above the other summits—

having no peer. Madison and Monroe come next, on the left, and then Jefferson, who appears (characteristically?) higher than he is. In a line with Mount Washington, on the other side, are Adams, Clay, etc. These names (excepting always Washington) do not, with their recent political associations, seem quite to suit these subline, eternal mounts, but as time rolls on, the names will grow to signs of greatness, and harmonize with physical stability and grandeur. Jefferson's head seems modeled after a European pattern. It runs up to a sharp point, and wants but accumulated masses of ice to be broken into Alpine angles. My father says there are other passes in the mountains more beautiful than this; none can be grander.....

“My father has been most sweet and tender to me to-day. Whenever he lays his hand upon my head, it seems like a benediction. And Alice is so kind, projecting future pleasures and sweet solaces for me. You know how I love her little girl. To-day, while we were walking, she heard me sigh, and putting her arm around me, she said: ‘Will you let Sarah come and pass the winter with you and father?’ I trust my look fully answered her. I can not yet talk even with her as I do on paper to you—a confidential implement is a pen.....

“We have all been walking, in the lowering

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twilight on the turnpike, which is making by a joint stock company, up Mount Washington. The road, by contract, is to be finished in three years; the cost is estimated at \$63,000. The workmen, of course, are nearly all Irishmen, with Anglo-Saxon heads to direct them. The road is, as far as possible, to be secured by frequent culverts, and by Macadamizing it, from the force of winter torrents. But that nothing is impossible to modern science, it would seem impossible to vanquish the obstacles to the enterprise—the inevitable steepness of the ascent, the rocky precipices, etc. We amused ourselves with graduating the intellectual development of the Celtic workmen by their answers to our questions.

“ ‘When is the road to be finished?’

“ ‘And, faith, Sir, it must be done before winter comes down below.’

“ ‘The next replied, ‘When the year comes round.’ And another: ‘Some time between now and never.’

“ ‘Friend,’ said I to one of them, ‘have you such high mountains in Ireland?’

“ ‘That we have, and higher—five miles high!’ Paddy is never over-crowded.

“ ‘Straight up?’ I asked.

“ ‘By my faith and troth, straight up, it is.’

“ ‘In what part of Ireland is that mountain?’

“ ‘In county Cork.’

“ ‘Of course, in county Cork!’ said my father, and we passed on through the *debris* of blasted rocks, stumps of uprooted trees, and heaps of stone, till we got far enough into the mountain to feel the sublimity of its stern, silent solitude, with the night gathering its shroud of clouds about it, and we were glad to pick our way back to our cheerful tea-table at Mr. Thompson’s. We had a long evening before us, but we diversified it (my father hates monotony, and was glad of ‘something different,’ as he called it) by bowling—my father pitting Alice against me. She beat me, according to her general better luck in life.”*

*EXTRACT FROM MR. LANGDON’S JOURNAL

“Walked out this afternoon amidst precipices and uprooted trees, where Paddies, the plague of our Egypt, are making a road to the summit of Mount Washington, that men, women, and much cattle may be dragged up there, and there befogged.”

“ *Thursday Morning, 6th October.* – The weather still uncertain, but more beautiful in its effects on these grand mountains in their October glory, than I can describe to you. They are grand—Mount Washington being higher than Rhigi and Rhigi and Pilatus are majestic, even in the presence of Mont Blanc and the Jungfrau. The rich coloring of our autumnal foliage is unknown in Europe, and how it lights up with brilliant smiles the stern face of the mountains! Even when the sun is clouded, the beeches that skirt the evergreens look like a golden fringe, and wherever they are they ‘make sunshine in a shady place.’ The maples are flame-colored, and, when in masses, so bright that you can scarcely look steadily on them; and where they are small, and stand singly, they resemble (to compare the greater to the less) flamingos lighted on the mountain side. There is an infinite diversity of coloring—soft brown, shading off into the pale yellow, and delicate May-green. None but a White of Selborne, with his delicately defining pen, could describe them. While we stood on the piazza admiring and exclaiming, the obliging Mr. Thompson brought out a very good telescope, and adjusted it so that our eyes could explore the mountains. He pointed out the bridle-path to the summit of Mount Washington. Various obstacles have prevented our attempting the ascent. If my father would have trusted us to guides, there are none in October, nor trained horses, for as the feed is brought from below, they are sent down to the lowlands as soon as *the season* is over. Besides, the summits are now powdered with snow, and the paths near the summits slippery with ice; and though I like the scramble and the achievement of attaining a difficult eminence, I much prefer the nearer, better defined, and less savage views below it.*

*EXTRACT FROM MR. LANGDON'S JOURNAL

Thursday. Sitting by a window where I see nothing but these useless mountains. Slept little, and when I slept, haunted by slides, torrents, and all dire mischances. Waked by a gong! Rain and sunshine alternately, so that no mortal can tell whether to go or stay," etc.

“ Guided by our good landlord, my eye had followed the path past two huge outstanding rocks, which look like Druidical monuments, to the summit of Mount Washington, where I had the pleasure of descrying and announcing the figure of a man. My father and Alice both looked, but could not make it out. I referred to Mr. Thompson, and his accustomed eye confirmed the accuracy of mine. Mr. Thompson was much exercised with conjectures as to where the traveler came from. He had seen none for the last few days in the mountains except our party, and he naturally concluded the man had made his ascent from the Crawford House. My eye seemed spell-bound to the glass. I mentally speculated upon the character and destiny of the pilgrim who, at this season, and alone, had climbed these steeps. My imagination invested him with a strange interest. He had wandered far away from the world, and above it. There was something in his mind—perhaps in his destiny—akin to the severity of this barren solitude. The spell was broken by a call from my father: ‘Come, Mary! are you glued to that glass?’ he exclaimed. ‘The rain is over, and we are off in half an hour.’ And so we were, with Thompson, Junior, for our driver—one of our young countrymen who always makes me proud, dear Susan, performing well the task of your inferior, with the capacity and self-respect of your equal. Long live the true republicanism of New-England!

“My father had been rather nettled in the morning by what he thought an attempt, on the part of Mr. Thompson to take advantage of our dependence, and charge us exorbitantly for con-

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veying us thirty-three miles, to the Mountain-Notch;’ but, on talking the matter over with our host, he found that his outlay, with tolls, and other expenses, was such that he only made what every Yankee considers his birthright—‘ a good business’—out of us. So my father, being relieved from the dread of imposition, was in happy condition all day, and permitted us, without a murmur of impatience, to detain him, while we went off the road to see one of the two celebrated cascades of the neighborhood. It was the ‘Glen-Ellis Fall.’ We compromised, and gave up seeing the ‘Crystal Fall,’ a half a mile off the road on the other side; and enjoyed the usual consolation of travelers on like occasions of being told that the one we did not see was far best worth seeing. However, I hold all these wild leaps of mountain streams to be worth seeing, each having an individual beauty; and advise all who may follow in our traces, to go to the top and bottom of ‘Glen Ellis.’

“I have often tried to analyze the ever-fresh delight of seeing a water-fall, and have come to the conclusion that it partly springs from the scramble to get at the best and all the points of view, setting the blood in the most sluggish veins to dancing; for as you know, *‘Tout depend de la manière que le sang circule.’* I can not describe to you the enjoyment of this day’s ride. As heart to heart, my father’s serenity answered to my cheerfulness and rewarded it. Our cup was brimming and sparkling. There was a glowing vitality in the western breeze that blew all the clouds from our spirits, and shaped those on the mountain sides into ever-changing beauty, or drove them off the radiant summits. We laughed, as the vapor condensing into the smallest of hail-stones, came pelting in our faces as if the elements had turned boys, and threw them in sport! What may not Nature be to us – play-fellow, consoler, teacher, religious minister! Strange that any one wretch should be found to live without God in the world, when the world is permeated with its Creator!

“Our level road wound through the Pinkham woods in the defiles of the mountains, and at every turn gave them to us in a new aspect. It seemed to me that the sun had never shone so brightly as it now glanced into the forest upon the stems of the white birches—Wordsworth’s ‘Ladies of the Wood’—and shone on the Mosaic carpet made by the brilliant fallen leaves. We missed the summer-birds, but the young partridges abounded, and, hardly startled by our wheels, often crossed our path. We saw a fox, who turned and very quietly surveyed us, as if to ask who the barbarians were that so out of season invaded his homestead. One of us—I will not tell you which, lest you discredit the story—fancying, while the wagon was slowly ascending, to make a cross-cut on foot through some woodland, saw a bear—yes, a bear! face to face! and made, you may be sure, a forced march to the highway. The mountaineers were not at all surprised when we recounted what we fancied a hair-breadth ‘scape; but quietly told us that ‘three bears had been seen in that neighborhood lately, but bears did no harm unless provoked, or desperately hungry.’ It was not a very pleasant thought that our lives depended on the chances of Bruin’s appetite.

“This meeting with the fox—the Mercury of the woods—and with the bear—the hero of many a dramatic fable – would, in the forests of the Old World, and in prolific Old World fancies, have been wrought into pretty traditions for after-ages. I might have figured as the

‘Forsaken, woeful, solitary maid,

In wilderness and wasteful deserts strayed,’

set on by the ramping beast! And for the knight, why, it would be easy to convert the wanderer I descried on the summit of Mount Washington, into a lover and a deliverer, whose ‘allegiance and fast fealty’ had bound him to our trail. But, alas! there is no leisure in this material age for fancy-weaving; and all our way was as bare of tradition or fable as if no human footstep had impressed it, till we came to a brawling stream near ‘Davis’s Crossing,’ which we were told was called ‘Nancy’s Brook.’ We heard various renderings of the origin of the name, but all ended in one source—man’s perjury and woman’s trust. A poor girl, some said, had come with a

woodsman, a collier, or tree-feller, and lived with him in the mountains, toiling for him, and singing to him, no doubt,

‘When she his evening food did dress,’

till he grew tired, and one day went forth and did not come back—and day after day she waited, but her Theseus did not return, and she was starved to death on the brink of the little brook that henceforward was to murmur her tragic tale. The sun was set behind the ridge of Mount Willard, when we reached the ‘Willey Slide,’ and Alice and I walked the last two miles to the Mountain Notch. Just after we alighted from the wagon, and while we were yet close to it, at a turn in the road I perceived a pedestrian traveler before us, who, seeming startled by the sound of our wheels, sprang lightly over the fence. I involuntarily withdrew my arm from Alice’s, and stood still, gazing after him for the half-instant that passed before he disappeared in the forest.

“‘Are you frightened?’ said Alice; ‘this is a lonely road. Shall I hail the wagon?’

“‘Oh! no,’ I replied.

“‘But,’ she urged, ‘this may be some fugitive from justice.’

“‘Nonsense, Alice; don’t you see by his air that he is a gentleman?’

“‘No,’ she saw nothing but that ‘he was light of foot, and anxious to escape observation.’

“I had seen more; I had seen his form who henceforward is to me as if he had passed the bourne whence no traveler returns; or, what is more probable, my imagination had lent to the figure the image that possesses it. Alice—she is a cautious little woman—was continually looking back, from fear, I from hope; but we saw

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nothing more of the traveler. The apparition had spoiled our walk. The brief twilight of October was shortened by the mountain-walls on either side of the road. We had no time to look for the cascades, and fantastic resemblances animals and human profiles that we had been forewarned to observe on the hillsides. The stars were coming out, and the full moon—indicated by the floods of light behind Mount Webster when we passed the ‘Notch’ and came upon the level area where the ‘Crawford House’ stands. Here we found my father, already seated in a rocking-chair, by a broad hearth-stone and a roaring, crackling fire. And beside these cheering types of home-contentments, he had found a gentleman from the low country, with whom he was already in animated discourse. The stranger was a fine, intelligent, genial-looking person, who proved to be a clergyman whom Alice had once before met at the Flume House. He is a true lover of Nature, and explorer of Nature’s secrets—a geologist, botanist, etc.; and he most wisely comes up to the high places, at all seasons, whenever he feels the need of refreshment to his bodily and mind’s

eye. Perhaps he finds here an arcana for his theology, and I am sure that, after a study here, he may go home better able, by his high communing, to inform and elevate the minds of others. No teachers better understood the sources and means of mental power and preparation than Moses and Mohammed; and their studies were not in theological libraries, but in the deepest of nature's solitudes.

“Perhaps our friend has no direct purpose beyond his own edification in his rambles in the mountains. He is familiar with every known resort among them, and most kindly disposed to give us thoroughfare travelers information. He made for us from memory a pencil-sketch of the peaks to be seen from Mount Willard, with their names. We verified them to-day, and found the outline as true as if it had been daguerreotyped. An observation so keen, and a memory so accurate are to be envied.

“This house, at the Mountain Notch is called the Crawford House. The Old Crawford House, familiar to the pioneer travelers in this region, stands a few rods from it, or rather did, till the past winter, when it was burned, and its site is now marked by charred timbers. Old Crawford's memory will live, as one of these eternal hills bears his name. He actually lived to a good old age, and for many years in rather awful solitude here, and at the last with some of the best blessings that wait on old age—‘respect, and troops of friends.’ His son, whose stature, broad shoulders, and stolid aspect bring to mind the Saxon peasant of the Middle Ages, is driver in the season and sportsman out of it. He stood at the door this morning as we were driving off to the Falls of the Ammonoosuck, with his fowling-piece in hand, and asked leave to occupy a vacant seat in the wagon. My father was a sportsman in his youth—some forty years ago; his heart warms at the sight of a gun, and besides, I fancy he had some slight hope of mending our cheer by a brace of partridges, so he very cheerfully acquiesced in Crawford's request. Alice and I plied him with questions, hoping to get something out of an old denizen of the woods. But he knew nothing, or would tell nothing. The ‘tongues in trees’ were far more fluent than his. But even so stony a medium had power afterward to make my heart beat. I was standing near him at the end of the Falls, and away from the rest, and I asked him (Sue, I confess I have been either thinking or dreaming of that ‘fugitive’ all night!) if he had seen a foot-traveler pass along the road the last evening or this morning? ‘No; there was few travelers any way in October.’ He vouchsafed a few more words, adding: ‘It's a pity folks don't know the mountains are never so pretty as in October, and sport never so smart.’ Was there ever a sportsman the dullest, most impassive, but he had some perception of woodland beauty? While we were talking, and I was seemingly measuring, with my eye, the depth of the water, as transparent as the air, my father and sister had changed their position, and come close to me. ‘Oh!’ said the man, ‘I recollect—I did see a *stranger* on Mount Willard this morning, when I went out with my gun; he was drawing the mountains: a great many of the young folks try to do it, but they don't make much likeness.’ Perhaps this timely generalization of friend Crawford, prevented my father and Alice's thoughts following the direction of mine. I *know* this myth is not Carl Hermann—it is not even possible it should be—and yet, the resemblance that, in my one glance, I had fancied to

perceive to him and the coincidence of the sketching, had invested friend Crawford with a power to make my cheeks burn and my hands cold as ice. I stole off and looked at the deep, smooth cavities the water had welled in the rocks; but I did not escape my sister's woman's eye. 'Mary dear,' she whispered, when she joined me, 'you are not so strong as you think yourself.' Dear Susan, if I am not strong, I will be patient. Patience, you will say, implies a waiting for something to come. Well, let it be so. Can a spark of hope live under the ashes I have heaped upon it?.....

"The rocks are very beautiful at these Falls of the Ammonoosuck. The stream, which never here can be a river, is now, by the unusual droughts of the summer, shrunk to mere rill; but even now, and at all seasons, it must be worth the drive to see it. Worth the drive! A drive anywhere in these hills 'pays'—to borrow the slang of this bank-note world—for itself. It is a pure enjoyment. On our return we repeatedly saw young partridges in our path, nearly as tame as the chickens of the *basse-cour*. The whir-r-ing of their wings struck a spark from our sportsman's eye, and—a far easier achievement—startled the blood in my father's veins. The instinct to kill game is, I

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believe, universal with man, else how should it still live in my father, who, though he blusters like Monkbarns, is very much of an Uncle Toby in disposition? He sprang from the wagon, borrowed Crawford's gun, and reminding Alice and me so much of Mr. Pickwick that we laughed in spite of our terror lest he should kill—not the partridge, but himself; but luckily, he escaped unharmed—and so did the bird! Crawford secured two or three brace of them in the course of the morning's drive. I fear we shall relish them at breakfast to-morrow, in spite of our lamentations over their untimely loss of their pleasant mountain-life. I asked our driver how they survived the winter (if haply they escaped the fowler) in these high latitudes? 'Oh!' he said, 'they had the neatest way of folding their legs under their wings and lying down in the snow.' They subsist on berries and birchen-buds—dainty fare, is it not?

"We found a very comfortable dinner awaiting us, which rather surprised us, as our landlord, Mr. Lindsay—a very civil, obliging person, and a new proprietor here, I believe, had promised us but Lenten entertainment; but 'deeds, not words,' seems the motto of these mountaineers. In the afternoon we drove up Mount Willard —

'Straight up Ben-Lomond did we press'—

but our horses seemed to find no difficulty for themselves, and we no danger in the ascent. I shall not attempt to describe the view. I have never seen any mountain prospect resembling that of the deep ravine (abyss), with its convex mountainsides; the turnpike-road looking like a ribbon carelessly unwound, the only bit of level to be seen, and prolonged for miles. The distant mountains that bound the prospect you may see elsewhere, but this ravine, with the traces of the 'Willey Slide' on one side of it, has no parallel. Don't laugh at me for the homeliness of the

simile—it suggested a gigantic cradle. Here, as elsewhere, we were dazzled by the brilliancy of the October foliage, and having found a seat quite as convenient as a sofa—though, being of rock, not quite as easy—we loitered till the last golden hue faded from the highest summit; and we should have staid to see the effect of the rising moon on the summits contrasting with the black shadows of night in the abyss, but my father had observed that our driver had neglected the precaution of blanketing his horses, and as a mother is not more watchful of a sucking child than he is of the well-being of animals, it matters not whether they are his own or another's, he begged us to sacrifice our romance to their safety. Alice and I walked down the mountain; it was but a half-hour's easy walk.....

“I have forborne talking with Alice on the subject that haunts me. I know I have her sympathy; and that should satisfy me. But this evening, as we were returning, she said: ‘Did you feel any electric influence as we sat looking at the view Crawford's ‘*stranger*’ sketched this morning?’ ‘I thought of Carl,’ I honestly answered, and turned the subject. Alas! Sue, when do I not think of him!

“*Profile House: Saturday Evening.* We have again, to-day, experienced the advantage of these open mountain vehicles, so preferable to the traveling-jails called stage-coaches, which always remind me of Jonah's traveling accommodations. Again, to-day, we have been enchanted with the brilliancy of the foliage. It is just at the culminating point of beauty, and I think it does not remain at this point more than three or four days when you perceive it is a thought less bright. Why is it that no painting of our autumnal foliage has succeeded? It has been as faithfully imitated as the colors on the pallet can copy these living, glowing colors; but those who have best succeeded—even Cole, with his accurate eye and beautiful art—has but failed. The pictures, if toned down, are dull; if up to Nature, are garish to repulsiveness. Is it not that Nature's toning is inimitable, and that the broad o'erhanging firmament, with its cold, serene blue, and the soft green of the herbage, and brown of the reaped harvest-field, temper, to the eye the intervening brilliancy, and that, within the limits of a picture, there is not sufficient expanse to reproduce these harmonies?”.....

“*Saturday Evening.* We have driven some 23 miles—from the Mountain Notch to the Franconian hotel to-day. The weather has been delicious. The drive has been more prosaic, or approaching to it, than we have before traveled in this hill-country. This October coloring would make far tamer scenery beautiful; but I can fancy it very bleak and dismal when

‘Blow, blow November's winds:’

whereas here, at the ‘Franconian Notch,’ you feel, as it were, housed and secured by Nature's vast fortresses and defenses. The ‘Eagle's Cliff’ is on one side of you, and Mount Cannon (called so from a resemblance of a rock on the summit to a cannon) on the other; and they so closely fold and wall you in that you need but a poetic stretch of the arms to touch them with either hand; and when the sun glides over the arch in the zenith above—but a four hours' visible course

in mid-winter—you might fancy yourself sheltered from the sin and sorrow that great eye witnesseth. You will accuse me, I know, dear, rational friend, of being ‘*exalte*,’ (vernacular, *cracked*,) but remember, we are alone in these inspiring solitudes, free from the disenchantment of the eternal buzzing of the summer swarms that the North gives up, and the South keeps not back.

“We were received at the Profile House with a most smiling welcome by Mr. Weeks, the *pro tem*. host, who promises to make us ‘as comfortable as is in his power,’ and is substantiating his promise by transferring his dinner-table from the long, uncarpeted dinner-saloon, with its fearful rows of bare chairs and tables, to a well-furnished home-looking apartment, where a fire-place worthy of the Middle Ages, is already brightened with a hospitable fire. The

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great rambling hotel is vacant, and its silence unbroken, save by the hastening to and fro of our willing host, who unites all offices of service in his own person, and the pattering of his pretty little boy’s feet—the little fellow following him like his shadow, and, perchance, running away from other shadows in this great empty house. The little fellow makes music to my ear. There is no pleasanter sound than the footsteps of a child

“I left Alice dressing for dinner. I think Alice would perform the ceremonial of a lady if she were shipwrecked in a desert island, and my father awaiting dinner. Dear father is never the pleasantest company at these seasons, when ‘time stands still withal,’ or rather, to him keeps a snail’s fretting pace. Well, I left them both and went down to the Lake—a short walk—to greet the ‘Old Man of the Mountain,’ as they prosaically call the wonderful head at the very summit of the headland cliff, upreared on high over the beautiful bit of water named ‘The Old Man’s Punch-bowl.’ The nomenclature of our country certainly does not indicate one particle of poetry or taste in its people. There are, to be sure, namesakes of the Old World, which intimate the exile’s loving memories, and there are scattered, here and there, euphonious and significant Indian names, not yet superseded by ‘Brownvilles’ or ‘Smithdales,’ but for the most part, one would infer that pedagogues, sophomores, and boors had presided at the baptismal font of the land. To call that severe Dantescan head, which it would seem impossible that accident should have formed, so defined and expressive is its outline, like the Sphinx, a mystery in the desert—to call it the ‘Old Man of the Mountain,’ is irreverence, desecration; and this exquisite little lake, lapped amidst the foldings and windings of the mountains, whose million unseen spirits may do the bidding of the heroic old Prospero who presides over it; to call this gem of the forest a ‘punch-bowl’ is a sorry travesty! I paid my homage to him while his profile cut the glowing twilight, and then sat down at the brim of the lake. Dear Susan,

‘The leaning

of the close trees o’er the brim,

had a sound beneath their leaves;’

and I will borrow two lines more to help out my meaning;

‘Driftings of my dream do light

All the skies by day and night.’

But truly, it is mere drift-wood, not fit even to build a ‘castle in the air.’ I was startled from my musing by a rustling of the branches behind me, and I turned, expecting – not to see a bear or a fox, but my fancies incorporate. The leaves were still quivering, but I saw no apparent cause for so much disturbance—I probably had startled a brace of partridges from their roost. They brought me back to the actual world, and I came home to an excellent dinner, which I found my father practically commending.

“*Sunday.* My father has brought us up to so scrupulous an observance of the Puritan Sabbath, that I was rather surprised, this morning, by his proposition to drive over to the Flume. His equanimity had been disturbed by finding one of the horses that had brought us here, seemingly in a dying condition. He was one of the ‘team’ that had taken us on to Mount Willard, and my father had then prophesied that he would suffer from the driver’s neglect to blanket him. He was in nowise comforted by the verification of his ‘I told you so!’ but walked to and fro from the stable, watching the remedies administered, and vituperating all youth as negligent, reckless, and hard-hearted! I think it was half to get rid of this present annoyance that he proposed the drive to the Flume, saying, as he did so: “These mountains are a great temple, my children; it matters not much where we stand to worship.’ We stopped for a half-hour at a little fall just by the roadside, called by the mountain-folk ‘The Basin,’ and by fine people, ‘The Emerald Bowl’—a name suggested by the exquisite hue of the water, which truly is of as soft and bright a green as an emerald. The stream has curiously cut its way through a rock white and smooth, and almost polished by its friction, which overhangs the deep, circular bowl like a canopy, or rather, like a half-uplifted lid, its inner side being mottled and colored like a beautiful shell. The stream glides over the brim of its sylvan bowl and goes on its way rejoicing. We loitered here for a half-hour watching the golden and crimson leaves that had dropped in, and laid in rich mosaics in the eddies of the stream.

“The morning was misty, and the clouds were driven low athwart the mountains, forming, as Alice well said, pedestals on which their lofty heads were upreared. No wonder that people in mountains and misty regions become imaginative, even superstitious. These forms, falling, rising, floating over the eternal hills, susceptible of dazzling brightness, and deepening into the gloomiest of earth’s shadows, are most suggestive to a superstitious dreamer.

“I shall not attempt, my friend, to describe this loveliest of all five-mile drives, from the ‘Profile House’ to the Flume under the Eagle’s Cliff, and old Prospero, and beside his lake, and the ‘Emerald Bowl,’ and then finished by the most curious, perhaps the most beautiful

passage we have yet seen in the mountains, 'The Flume'—thus called probably from a homely association with the race-way of a mill.

“The ravine is scarcely more than a fissure, probably made by the gradual wearing of the stream. I am told the place resembles the Bath of Pfeffers, in Switzerland; that world’s wonder can scarcely be more romantically beautiful than our *Flume*. The small stream, which is now reduced to a mere rill by the prolonged droughts, forces its way between walls of rock, upheaved in huge blocks like regular mason-work. Where you enter the passage, it may be some hundred yards wide, but it gradually contracts till you may almost touch either side with

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your outstretched arms. I only measured the height of the rock walls with my eye, and a woman’s measure is not very accurate—it may be one hundred or one hundred and fifty feet. Tall trees, at the summits, interlace, and where they have fallen, bridge the passage from one side to the other. Rich velvety mosses cover the rocks like a royal garment, and vines, glittering in their autumnal brightness, laid on them like rich embroidery, so that we might say, as truly as was said of the magnificence of Oriental nature, that ‘Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.’ But how, dear Susan, am I to show the picture to you? The sun glancing on the brilliant forest above us, and the indescribable beauty of the shrubs, golden and crimson, and fine purple, that shot out of the crevices of the rocks! It is idle to write or talk about it; but only let me impress on you that this enchanting coloring is limited to the *first days of October*. I am afraid it may be said of scenery as has been said of lover’s *tête-a-tête* talks, that it resembles those delicate fruits which are exquisite where they are plucked, but incapable of transmission. As my father can never enjoy any thing selfishly, he was particularly pleased with the nice little foot-path won from the mountain-side, and the frequent foot-bridges, that indicate the numbers that have taken this wild walk before us. My father fancies he enjoys our security from the summer swarms, but his social nature masters his theories.

“Alice and I were amused this morning, just at the highest access of our enthusiasm, while we stood under a huge rock wedged in between the two walls, on looking back to see my father sitting on a bench, arranged as a point of sight, not gazing, but listening profoundly—his graceful person and beautiful old head inclined in an attitude of the deepest attention—to a loafer who had unceremoniously joined us, and who, as my father afterwards rather reluctantly confessed, was recounting to him the particulars of his recent wooing of a third Mrs. Smith or Mrs. Brown. And when we returned to our quarters at the Profile House and came down to dinner, we met our landlord at the door, his face even more than usually effulgent with smiles.

“‘There has a lady and gentleman come in,’ he said, ‘and your father has no objection to their dining at table with you.’

“His voice was slightly deprecatory. I think he did not quite give us credit for our father’s affability, Of course, we acquiesced, and were afterwards edified by our brief acquaintance with the strangers—a mother and son, who had come up from the petty cares of city life for a quiet ramble among the hills—to find here

‘A peace no other season knows.’

“The mother wears widow’s weeds, and has evidently arrived at the ‘melancholy days.’ As we just now sat enjoying our evening fire, ‘My hearthstone,’ she said, ‘was never cold for seventeen years; but there is no light there now. My children are dispersed, and he who was dearest and best lies under the clods! My youngest and I hold together—I can not let him go.’ The loving companionship of a mother and a son who returns to her tenderness the support of his manly arm, never shrinking from the shadows that fall from her darkened and stricken heart, or melting those shadows in his own sunny youth—is one of the consoling pictures of life. This poor lady seems to have the love of nature, which never dies out. It is pleasant to see with what patience her son cared for the rural wealth she is amassing in her progress through the hills, the late flowers, and bright leaves, and mosses, though I have detected a boyish, mischievous smile as he stowed them away.....

“We had something approaching to an adventure this evening on Echo Lake, the loveliest of all these mountain lakes, and not more than half a mile from our present inn, the Profile House. Our dear father consented to go out with us, and let Alice and me, who have been well trained at that exercise in our home lake, take our turns with him in rowing. This lake is embosomed in the forest, and lies close nestled under the mountains, which here have varied shape and beautiful outline. It takes its name from its clear echoes. We called, we sang, and my father whistled, and from the deep recesses of the hills our voices came back as if spirit called to spirit, musical and distinct. You know the fascination there is in such a scene. The day had continued misty to the last; the twilights at this season are at best short, and while my father was whistling, one after another, the favorite songs of his youth, we were surprised by nightfall. My father startled us with

“ ‘Bless me, girls, what are you about?’

“It was he who was most entranced.

“ ‘I can not see our landing-place!’”

“Neither, with all possible straining, could our younger eyes descry it. We approached as near the shore as we dared, but could go no nearer without the danger of swamping our boat, when suddenly we perceived a blessed apparition—a white signal—made quite obvious in the dim light by a background of evergreens. We rowed toward it with all our might, wondering what kind friend was waving it so eagerly. As we approached near the shore it suddenly dropped and hung motionless, and when we landed we saw no person and heard no

footstep. I untied the signal, and finding it a man's large, fine linen handkerchief, I eagerly explored the corner for the name, but the name had evidently just been torn off. Strange! We puzzled ourselves with conjectures. My father cut us short with:

“ ‘Tis that young man at the hotel. Young folks like this sort of thing.’

“But it was not he; we found him reading to his mother, who said she was just about sending him to look after us.”

Thus abruptly ended Mary Langdon's journal-

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letter. The reason of its sudden discontinuance will be found in our own brief relation of the experience of the following morning, (Monday,) which we had from all the parties that partook in it.

Our friends were to leave the Profile House on Monday, on their return to the lowlands, to go from there to the Flume House, visit “the Pool,” and then down to the pretty village of Plymouth, in New Hampshire.

Mary and her sister were early, and having a spare half-hour before breakfast, went down to take a last look at Prospero and his “bowl.” There they found a crazy, old, leaky boat, with a broken oar, and Mary, spying some dry bits of board on the shore, deftly threw them in and arranged them so that she and her sister could get in dry-shod. Alice looked doubtfully at the crazy little craft and hung back—the thought of husband and children at home is always a sedative—but her eager sister overcame her scruples, and they were soon fairly out from shore in deep water. They went on, half-floating, half-rowing, unconscious of the flying minutes. Not so their father, who after waiting breakfast “an eternity,” (as he said, possibly some five minutes!) came to the lake to recall them. Just as he came within fair sight of them, for they were not two hundred yards from him, the boat suddenly began whirling round—a veering wind rushed upon them. The poor father saw their dilemma, and could not help them. He could not swim. He screamed for help, but what likelihood that any one should hear or could aid him! Alice prudently, sat perfectly still. The oar was in Mary's hand—she involuntarily sprang to her feet—her head became giddy, not so much, she afterward averred, with the whirling of the boat, as with the sight of her poor old father, and the sense that she had involved Alice in this peril. She plunged the oar into the water in the vain hope by firmly holding it of steadying the boat; but she dropped it from her trembling hand, and in reaching after it, she too dropped over into the water, and in her struggle she pushed the boat from her, and thus became herself beyond the possibility of her sister's reach. Her danger was imminent—she was sinking. Her father and sister shrieked for help, and help came! A splash in the water, and a strong man, with wonderful preternatural strength and speed, was making his way toward Mary. In one moment more he had grasped her with one hand. She had still enough presence of mind not to embarrass him by any struggles, and

shouting a word of comfort to Alice, he swam to the shore and laid Mary in her father's arms. He then returned to the boat, and soon brought it to shore. There are moments of this strange life of ours not to be described—feelings for which language in no organ. While such a moment sped with father and daughters, their deliverer stood apart. The father gazed upon his darling child, satisfying himself that “not a hair had perished,” but she was only “fresher than before;” and, as he afterward said, “fully recovering his wits,” he turned to thank the preserver of his children. He was standing half concealed behind a cluster of evergreens.

“Come forward, my dear fellow,” he said; “for God's sake, let me grasp your hand!”

He did not move.

“Oh! come,” urged Mr. Langdon. “Never mind your shirt-sleeves; it's no time to be particular about trifles.”

Still he did not move.

“Oh, come! dear—Carl,” said Mary, and her lover sprang to her feet.

What immediately followed was not told me, but there was no after coldness or reluctance on the part of the good father. His heart was melted and fused in gratitude and affection for his daughter's lover. His prejudices were vanquished, and he was just as well satisfied as if they had been overcome by the slower processes of reason and conviction.

The truth was, the old gentleman was not to be outdone in magnanimity. Mary's filial devotion had prepared him to yield his opposition, and he confessed that he had, in his own secret counsel with himself, determined to recall Hermann at the end of another year, if he proved constant and half as deserving as his foolish girl thought him. “But Prospero,” he said, “had seen fit to take the business into his own hands, and setting his magic to work, had stirred up a tempest in his punch-bowl to bring these young romancers together.”

But by what spell had he conjured up the lover at the critical moment?

Hermann confessed that not being able to get off in the steamer of the 29th, he had delayed his embarkation for ten days, and the magic of love—the only magic left to our disenchanted world—had drawn him to the White Mountains, where he might have the consolation—a lover only could appreciate it—of breathing the same atmosphere with Mary, and possibly of seeing her, unseen. Thus he had stood on the summit of Mount Washington, when, by some mysterious magnetism, Mr. Thompson's telescope had been pointed to it. He was the “fugitive from justice” at Willy's Slide, the ambitious artist on Fort Willard, and the friend whose signal had brought them safely to port on Echo Lake!

Hermann's arrangements for pursuing his studies in Europe were not disturbed. The good father was in the most complying temper. He consented to have the wedding within this blessed month of October, and graciously granted the prayer of the young people that he would accompany them in their year's visit to Europe.

"Mary and I are already wedded," said he to me, with a smile of complete satisfaction; 'we only take this young fellow into the partnership.'

It was a bright day in the outer and inner world when we parted. And thus ended our October visit to the White Hills of New Hampshire, but not our gratitude to Him who held us

"In his large love and boundless thought."

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If our friend Mary has imperfectly sketched the beauty of the Mountains, she has exaggerated nothing.

We hope our readers, though perchance o'er-wearied now, may make the complete tour of these lovely places, including, as it should, the enchanting sail over Lake Winepescago, the beautiful drive by North Conway, and the ascents of Kiersarge, Chiconea, Mount Moriah, and the Red Mountain.