



Picturesque America; or, the land we live in

a delineation by pen and pencil of the mountains, rivers, lakes, forests, water-falls, shores, cañons, valleys, cities, and other picturesque features of our country ; with illustrations on steel and wood, by eminent American artists

Bryant, William Cullen

New York, 1872

The White Mountains.

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THE WHITE MOUNTAINS.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY HARRY FENN.



The White Mountains, from the Conway Meadows.

WE suppose that all our readers know that the White Mountains are in New Hampshire, and that they are the highest elevations in New England, and, with the exception of the Black Mountains of North Carolina, the highest in the United States, east of the Mississippi.

The mountains rise from a plateau about forty-five miles in length by thirty in

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H. FENN

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S. V. HUNT

The Mount Washington Road.

[WHITE MOUNTAINS]

New York, D. Appleton & Co.

heights and about sixteen hundred feet above the sea. The plateau from which the
only fairly peaks of various elevations, and which is traversed by several deep
valleys, forms the rugged eastern or western base of the White Mountains. The
range in two groups the eastern of which is lower than the western of the
western or the Presidential Range. The latter consists of a high mountain range
and are in various ways a series.

The principal sources of the White Mountains are the
Mount Madison, Mount Washington, Mount Adams, Mount Franklin, and
Mount Washington in the eastern base of the range. The
range of some of the highest peaks of the White Mountains is
Mount Washington, Mount Adams, Mount Franklin, and Mount
Madison, and Mount Washington in the eastern base of the range.

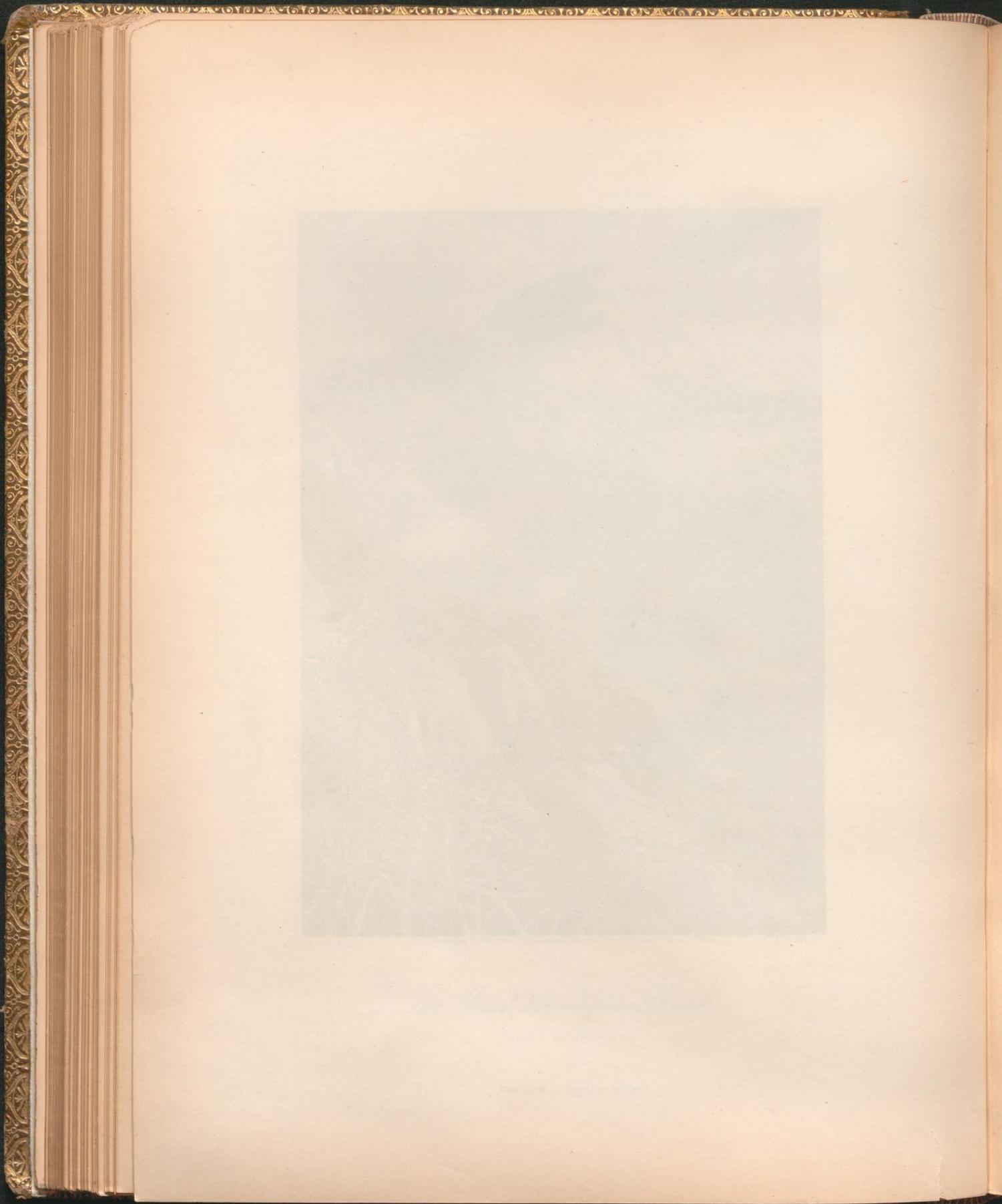
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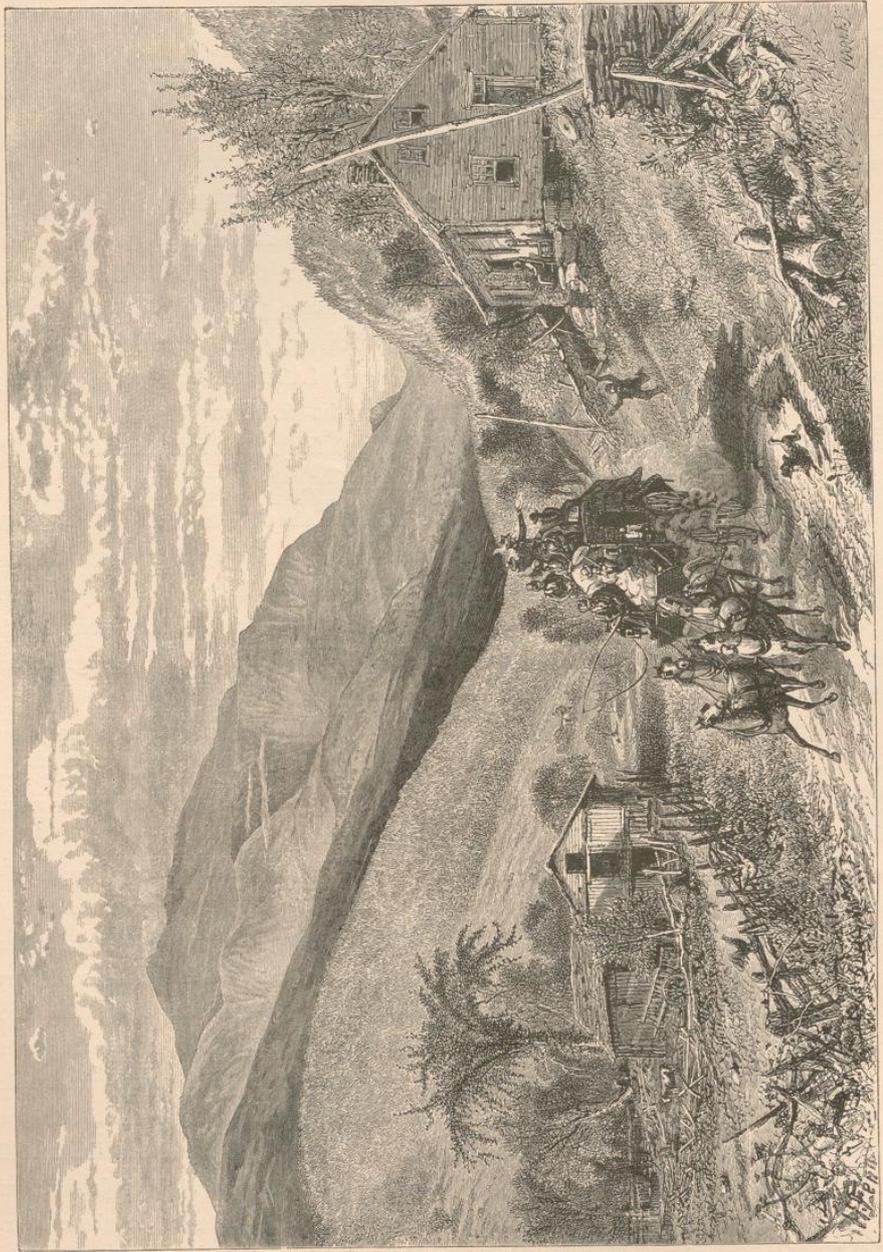
breadth, and about sixteen hundred feet above the sea. This plateau, from which rise nearly twenty peaks of various elevations, and which is traversed by several deep, narrow valleys, forms the region known to tourists as the White Mountains. The peaks cluster in two groups, the eastern of which is known locally as the White Mountains, and the western as the Franconia Group. They are separated by a table-land varying from ten to twenty miles in breadth.

The principal summits of the eastern group are Mounts Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Webster, Clinton, Pleasant, Franklin, and Clay. Of these, Mount Washington is the highest, being 6,285 feet above the level of the sea. The height of some of the other peaks is as follows: Adams, 5,759 feet; Jefferson, 5,657; Madison, 5,415; Monroe, 5,349; Franklin, 4,850; Pleasant, 4,712. The principal summits of the Franconia Group are Mounts Pleasant, Lafayette (5,500 feet), Liberty, Cherry Mountain, and Moosehillock (4,636). Near the southern border of the plateau rise Whiteface Mountain, Chocorua Peak (3,358 feet), Red Hill, and Mount Ossipee; and, in the southeast, Mount Kearsage (2,461 feet).

The rivers in the four great valleys that lead to the White Mountains—in the branches of the Connecticut Valley; in the Androscoggin Valley, that passes beyond these hills, commencing at a lake in Canada; in the Saco Valley, which begins here; and the Pemigewasset Valley, an off-shoot of the valley of the Merrimac—are fed by multitudes of little streams that force their way down steep glens from springs in the mountain-side, and flow through narrow valleys among the hills.

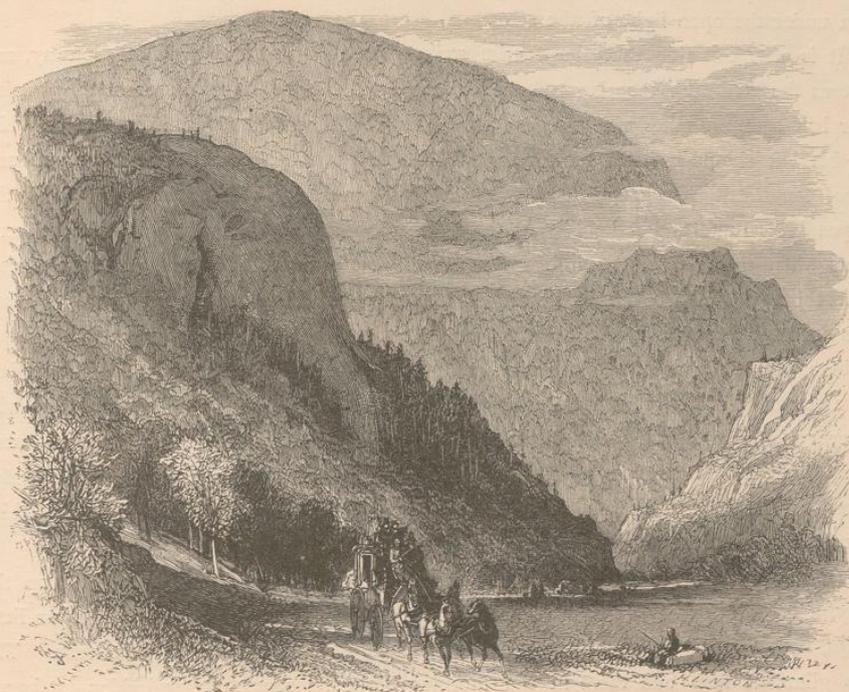
The course of these little rivulets, that break in water-falls, or whose amber flood runs over mossy beds among the forests, furnishes irregular but certain pathways for the rough roads that have been cut beside them, and by which the traveller gains access to these wild mountain-retreats.

Choosing among the valleys the one whose picturesque beauty soonest begins, the valley of the Saco, the tourist to the mountains finds himself at the northern end of Lake Winnipiseogee, surrounded by the Sandwich and Ossipee Hills, of which Whiteface and Chocorua are the loftiest peaks. Starting from Centre Harbor, a summer resort of considerable celebrity at the head of the lake, the regular stage-coach for Conway and the mountains is soon among high hills, the ruggedness of which begins at once to develop itself. Winding in and out among them, the stage passes now under the dark, frowning brow of a cliff, and afterward by some deep ravine, and then comes upon a lofty plateau which overlooks the amphitheatre of hills, till at Eaton the summit of Mount Washington is often distinctly seen, its base being concealed by objects nearer. The most interesting feature of the ride, however, is Chocorua, and, to those unacquainted with mountain-scenery, the first impression of this peak is very striking. Driving over the mountain-road in a hot summer afternoon, one watches the great hill-tops come up, like billows, one after another, from the sea of mountains round about, as the



MOUNT WASHINGTON, FROM THE CONWAY ROAD.

coach winds and twists among them. The soft afternoon light and atmosphere rest over the land, which, as the sun sinks lower, becomes streaked with pale bars of light when the sides and shoulders of the hills are developed by the failing day. All at once, over their sides, bands of a still softer blue appear, which, after interlacing the mountains for a while, are succeeded by a cool purple that steals up these hill-sides, and chases in its path the sunny haze; and this in its turn gives place to a pinkish gray of almost rosy hue, each tint changing from minute to minute, till they are all



Elephant's Head, Gate of Crawford Notch.

finally merged in a dark-purple tone, over which rests a tint as soft as the bloom on a plum, enwrapping each mountain-peak clear cut against the evening sky.

No one who has been much in a forest-region can have failed to perceive and enjoy the delicious fragrance that emanates from the resinous woods when the cool air of evening develops the exhalations from their still and warm foliage. Descending into the damp, fresh valley, and making your way through the woods, the aromatic odor of a hundred different growing things greets your nostrils. A turn in the road, and a bit of open meadow, and a gust of air as warm as mid-day envelops you. So the ride goes on till the great stars quiver in the dark vault of the heavens, that seem the deeper and

more mysterious from their framework of mountain-peaks. The hill-sides, fringed with trees that border the road, rise black and ghostly in the gloom, and only the tramp of the horses' hoofs on the hard ground, and the occasional remark of your fellow-passengers when they rouse up a little from their abstracted silence, break the intense stillness of the hour. One may not know the names of many of the mountains, but the peak of Chocorua, sharp and proud, crowns the view whenever the stage comes upon a bluff of height sufficient to overlook the landscape; and, after passing through a wood, it is always that lonely summit that rises first to the view when the stage emerges again under the open light of the stars.

It is after this ride that the tourist strikes the valley of the Saco at Conway, and awakens the following morning to take the stage for North Conway and the mountains. After half a dozen miles' ride, leaving the peaks of Chocorua and Whiteface behind him over his left shoulder, Mote Mountain, with its long sweep, and the more broken outline of the Rattlesnake range, take the principal positions in the panorama, while the Ossipee Hills retire and retire toward the southern horizon. It is nine o'clock or thereabouts when the stage turns into the road on the edge of the level bank that rises about thirty feet above the intervalles of the Saco, and, extending some three or four miles in length to the foot of Bartlett Mountain, reaches back two or three miles to the base of the Rattlesnake range and to Mount Kearsarge, and forms the little plain where the township of North Conway nestles against the mountain-side. No one who has ever visited this valley can fail to remember the exquisite view from this road when it first opened before them, and, varied slightly along the whole length of the ridge till arriving at the farther end of the village, the low hills at Bartlett shut off the chief features of the scene.

At the foot of the bank, and bathed in the morning sunshine, extends, far up the valley, a flat, velvety meadow of the freshest green, and dotted over it, in lines or little groups, rises the very ideal of elm-trees, as pure in form as a fountain or a vase. The Saco glimmers here and there in the morning light, its course nearly hidden by bands of dark-hued maples. Above these bands of trees are the purple slopes of Mote Mountain, which descends abruptly to the plain, when the steep face of the Conway ledges makes a sheer descent of from six to eight hundred feet to the valley of the Saco.

At the northern end of the valley, Mote Mountain bends down till it becomes a low ridge in what is called the "Devil's Arm-chair," and Bartlett slopes gently away to give place to a broad opening, across which, extending its entire length, lies Mount Washington and the other peaks of the White-Mountain range, each one being well separated from the other, and the outline of Mount Washington itself one of the best afforded from any position. The lower flanks of these mountains reach to the plain of the Saco, and, if one has watched this scene when the purple shades of evening gather on the mountain-sides long after the valley and the lower hills are wrapped in gloom, he

may have seen the pink hues of the evening sky still lingering on those mountain-peaks till they melt from the dome-shaped summit of Washington, and, with a little quiver of the light, its huge side joins the purple mass of the valley and the hills that lie beneath it.

Every view of the mountains has its own peculiar type of expression; and each aspect on the north side is more or less bold and abrupt, and the lines of the hills, though they are fine, grand, and impressive, are not graceful. But the character of the



The Willey Slide.

scenery at Conway is peculiar for its loveliness. Ruskin speaks of the curves of a snow-drift and the curl of a sea-wave being as beautiful lines as are to be found in Nature; and every one of these mountains, whatever the geological cause, certainly has its soft and hard side. In Conway you see the curves of the hills on their long swell, rising slowly from valley to summit; and, on the northern slope, the mountain-wave appears to have broken and rushed abruptly to the plain. Such is the general aspect of the landscape, and one can easily picture to himself a beauty of the scenery that is almost feminine, as it appears at Conway. Not only the hills, but the village itself, and the gentle meadows of the Saco, add to the soft charm of this very Arcadia of the White Hills.



GATE OF THE CRAWFORD NOTCH.

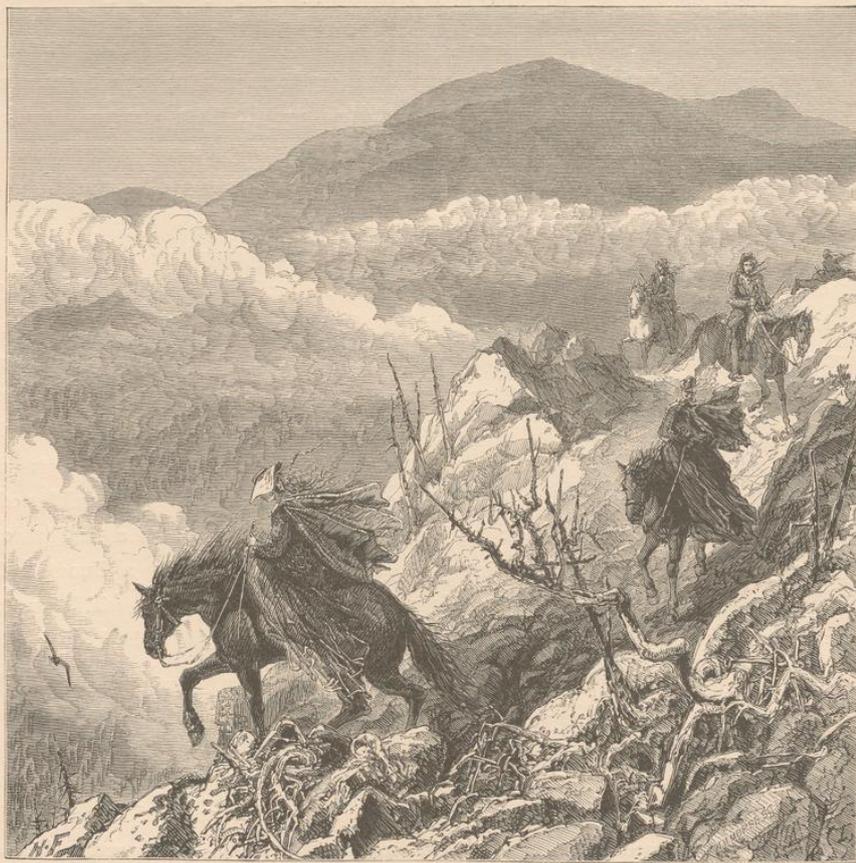
Here Nature seems for once to have thrown aside her harsh and severe character in this granite heart of New England, and to have abandoned herself to a genial and happy repose.

Mount Kearsarge, at the northern end of the Rattlesnake range, is the highest peak this side of the White Mountains, and rises in an almost perfect cone from the ridge on which Conway stands. The mountain is so near the town that the trees on its sides are distinctly seen, and partake of the greenish-purple hue of all near mountains. An excursion to the summit of Mount Kearsarge is the most important one in this neighborhood, and is easily accomplished on horseback, though for a strong and energetic person a climb is not very formidable, and is most pleasantly made in the afternoon, when, if there is moonlight, the beauty of a night on the summit and a return to the village in time for breakfast afford a delightful series of pictures for the mind to dwell upon in after-times.

A very pleasant day may be spent at the Conway ledges, which are perhaps the finest cliffs in the whole White-Mountain region. A broken rock, six hundred feet high, is colored with the most delicate shades of buff, purple, and gray, with small birches growing out from the clefts in the fractured surface of the stone here and there, where a little earth and moisture have collected. To the rear of the lower ledge, Thompson's Falls break over a spur of Mote Mountain, where the broken rock is thrown about in the wildest confusion. The highest of the ledges rises more than nine hundred feet above the bed of the Saco. A little scramble of a hundred feet or so through herbage and over rocks brings you into a shallow cave below the cliff, whence the rocks have been split away for nearly a hundred feet high, and the wide front of the recess is almost choked with trees. This spot, a favorite resort for picnickers, is named the Cathedral, and shares with Diana's Bath the interest of the visitor as a place of rest. Diana's Bath, a little farther up the valley, is formed from a succession of water-falls that, striking upon several tiers of rock, have worn wells into its substance, with perfectly smooth walls. The largest of these wells is about ten feet across, and as many deep. Looking into the clear depths of the water, one sees at the bottom small, round rocks, the cause of the excavation, which the water has used as pestles with which to scrape, and grind, and polish out these natural basins. Echo Lake, directly at the foot of Mote Mountain, has the character of numberless of these still mountain-ponds, hidden among the forests, deep and quiet.

Recrossing the river, on the slope toward the Rattlesnakes, one of the most charming spots from which to view Chocorua and Mote Mountain is Artists' Falls. This is one of those sylvan scenes of mossy rocks, babbling water, and beautifully-grouped trees, which artists delight to study in "bits," or to portray in its entirety, either looking up toward the brook, or off down the declivity to the mountains, across the valley.

Starting in the morning from North Conway on the mountain-road, you wind along the ridge of land that forms the town, till the valley becomes narrow and broken, and the hills abrupt. Brooks cross the road at several points, and the way winds round the lone flank of Bartlett Mountain, wooded from base to summit; the stage passes the beautiful falls at Jackson, and Goodrich's Falls, near where the Ellis River joins the



The Descent from Mount Washington.

Saco, and by that time is fairly among the high mountains, whose walls close down nearer and nearer upon the road which winds along the channel cut by the Saco. In the middle of the afternoon the abrupt sides of Mount Crawford bound the road on one side, and, by the time the stage has reached the little house that stands under Willey Mountain, the sunbeams have already stolen far up the mountain. A bugle blown at this spot starts the echoes, repeating them back and forth heavier

and louder than the first blast; one almost fancies it the music of a band of giants hidden among the trees on the mountain-slope. From the Willey House to the gate of the Notch the path becomes constantly narrower and sterner, though the common idea of the awfulness and almost horror of the passage of this portion of the journey is a somewhat erroneous one. The slope of the mountain-sides, here two thousand feet high, is very abrupt, and the narrow ravine is nearly unbroken for three or four miles, till one has passed the gate of the Notch; but, comparing this point with many others, its picturesque and romantic charm is the predominant impression. The river boils and plunges over broken rocks, and the narrow passage for the stage twists and winds, crossing the torrent at intervals over slender bridges, till, at the gate of the Notch, an opening, hardly wide enough to allow the passage of a team of horses, and the raging river, is bounded on each side by a sheer wall of rock, on the projections of which harebells and maiden's-hair are waving, and down whose steep sides leap the tiny waters of the silver cascade, whose course can be detected several hundred feet up the side of Mount Webster, sparkling in the sunlight.

Passing the gate of the Notch, you come out upon a little plateau of a few hundred acres, surrounded by hills, except at its upper and lower ends, which form the pass of the mountains, in the midst of which stands the Notch House.

The ascent of Mount Washington—the great point of interest, of course—is in many respects more satisfactory from this plateau than by any other route, as it gives a person really fond of mountain-scenery and romantic adventure as much experience of the kind as is agreeable, without becoming wearisome. To one unacquainted with mountain-scenery, the ascent by the bridle-path from the Crawford Notch affords more new sensations than can, perhaps, be gained anywhere else in this region in so few hours.

After breakfast on a sunny morning, fresh with an exhilaration one can scarcely conceive of who has not experienced the renovating effect of mountain-air, the tourist—equipped, if he be a prudent person, with a thick corduroy jacket, procured from the hotel; a large, coarse hat tied firmly under the chin by a strong cord; long, thick gloves, covering hands and wrists, and heavy underclothing—finds upon the piazza of the hotel a party accoutred like himself, mingled with girls in fresh morning-dresses, young men sauntering about with cigars, and elderly people sitting on benches and rustic seats, watching the party set off for the mountain. Interested glances are cast up the hill-sides, and the guides and old stagers are interrogated as to what may be the chances of the weather. Some persons tell stories of their adventures on the mountain the previous day, of mists that have caught them, winds that have nearly blown them from their horses, and they show their sunburnt wrists, and freely give advice about the way to manage or let one's horse manage himself, while the party is getting ready to depart. A couple of dozen horses and three or four guides are waiting below, among

whom anxious papas and nervous ladies are wandering, engaging a particular horse that is small or large, and a guide who seems particularly good-natured and knowing, to have an especial eye to them. Some of the tourists are already on horseback, walking around and trying their saddles; and, when every thing is in readiness, the cavalcade sets off up through the trees with which Mount Clinton is covered from its base at the foot of the Crawford House—looking, in their motley costumes of red, white, and blue, like a party of gypsies winding along the shady wood-path, which ascends two thousand feet during the first two or three miles, through a boggy, corduroy path so steep that often



Tuckerman's Ravine, from Hermit's Lake.

those members of the party who have got a little in advance of the others, appear to be almost overhead when they are seen emerging upon some open rock which breaks the forest. Here and there are springs of most delicious cool mountain-water, where the heated horses and riders stop for a moment to drink.

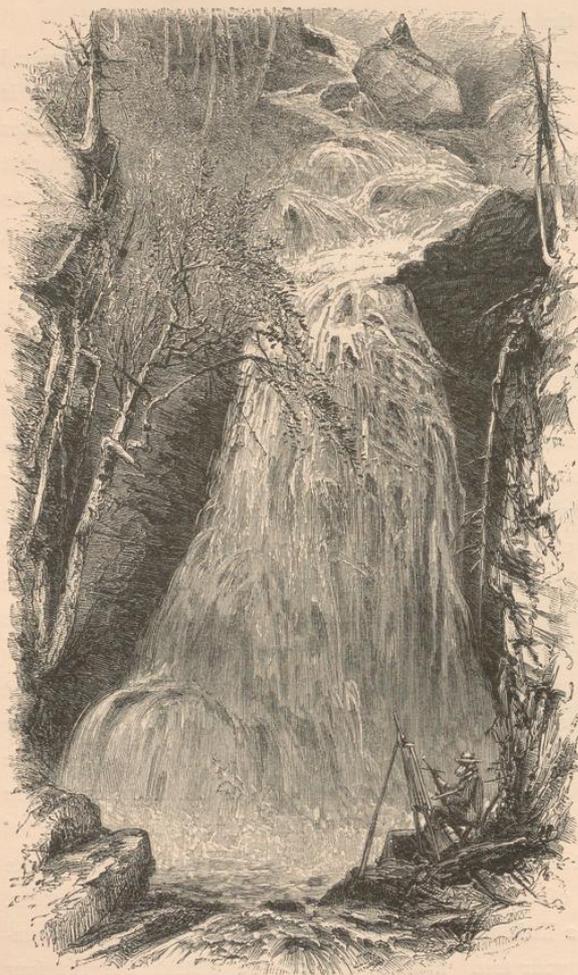
In the ascent the kind of trees changes constantly, turning from the yellow-birches, the beeches, with mossy trunks, and sugar-maples, in the valley, where are also mountain-ash trees, aspen-poplars, and striped maples, to white-pine and hemlock, white-birch and spruce, and balsam-fir, hung with a fine gray moss, much like that which drapes

the trees of the Southern forests, till you reach the upland with an arctic vegetation and a sort of dwarf-fir, so intertangled with moss that you can often walk over the tops of these trees as if over thick moss. On the ground is an undergrowth of ferns, brakes, and mountain-vines, and near the summit of Mount Clinton you come upon a region of dead trees, their branches and trunks bleached and white as ghosts, until you emerge on the barren summit of the mountain.

The path is rather to the north of the top of Mount Clinton, and we wind around it over bare rocks, when the first noble mountain-prospect opens before us. In front is the conical peak of Kearsarge, and seemingly quite near it are some small, shining lakes amid their hazy setting of mountains; behind rises Mount Willard and the group that surrounds the Notch, the clouds chasing wild shadows over their deep-blue sides. As we begin to descend to the narrow ridge which unites this mountain to the one next it, we catch a glimpse of a valley two thousand feet below, through which flows the Mount-Washington River at the base of a vast forest. On the left, at an equal depth, runs the Ammonoosuc, and you gain your first experience of mountain peril when the horses, planting their four feet close together on some rock in the narrow pathway, jump from this rough elevation three or four feet to the rocks beneath, where a slip or false leap would precipitate horse and rider down many hundreds of feet over the side of the mountain to sure destruction. The mountain on its almost perpendicular eastern slope is deeply seamed by a slide which happened during a severe storm in 1857. Passing around the side of Mount Monroe, which is little inferior to Mount Washington, one gazes into a frightful abyss, known as Bates's Gulf. Clouds and masses of vapor hang against its precipitous sides, and gigantic rocks strew the bottom of the gorge.

From Monroe is the first near view of Mount Washington, which rises in a vast cone, and shines with bare, gray stones fifteen hundred feet above, and across a wide plateau strewed with great numbers of bowlders. This elevated plain is about a mile above the sea. Patches of grass and hardy wild-flowers appear in the crevices of the rocks, and one comes upon small "tarns," or mountain-ponds, here and there, formed from springs or by the frequent storms that pass over these high regions. The "Lake of the Clouds," the head-waters of the Ammonoosuc, is the most beautiful of them. If you turn aside from the path a little way, the most wonderful gorge on the mountains, Tuckerman's Ravine, lies at your feet. Having crossed the plateau, the last four or five hundred feet are best climbed on foot, for the stones are so loose, and the ascent so steep, that it is best not to trust to horse-flesh. The rocks are clean cut and glistening, as if fresh from the quarry, among which scarcely a living thing can be discovered; but, by-and-by, as one emerges upon the summit, the delicate Alpine plant and little white flowers appear among the rocks. On the top of the mountain one can easily guard against the violence of the blast by crouching beneath the immense rocks which are

grouped upon its surface. Sitting on the leeward side of these protections, you can have a view more extended and exciting than any this side of the Rocky Mountains. A sea of mountains stretches on every hand; the near peaks, bald and scarred, are clothed with forests black and purple, and sloping to valleys so remote as to be very insignificant.



Crystal Cascade.

Beyond the near peaks, grand and solemn, the more distant mountains fall away rapidly into every tint of blue and purple, glittering with lakes, till the eye reaches the sea-line ninety miles away.

The summit of Mount Washington, from the plateau at the Notch House, is five thousand feet high, and this plateau in its turn is fourteen or fifteen hundred feet above the sea. The traveller, to fully enjoy the view, should have a clear day, without too much wind; but, as no weather is so uncertain as the weather on Mount Washington, one may be pretty sure, in the course of a twelve-hours' stay, to have fog and sunshine, rain and storm.

Tuckerman's Ravine lies a few hundred feet down the side of the mountain, and the ridges in its rough, craggy wall form the faint, pink-gray lines that scar the summit of Mount Washington as seen at North Conway. If there is

time, one can visit this ravine from the top of Mount Washington, and by a steep climb reach the summit again before night from the Snow Arch.

The ravine is an immense gully in the side of Mount Washington, the steep sides of which storms and frost are constantly changing, so that no vegetation has a chance

to take root, except the little yearly plant whose seeds may be scattered here, for the next winter's storms are sure to wash away the scanty growth. Against the head of the ravine, where it abuts against the summit of Mount Washington, the lofty wall sparkles with a thousand streams that filter through its crevices or run over its summit. The Snow Arch is formed at first from the immense snow-drifts blown over the top of the mountain, which settle against this wall of the ravine in piles sometimes a hundred feet deep, and in the short summer of this great altitude scarcely have time to melt from year to year.

The tourist to the summit of Mount Washington may descend, if he chooses, by the carriage-road to the glen, which is approached from Conway through the Pinkham Notch, that runs nearly parallel with the Willey Notch, north and south, and is separated from it on the west by two ranges of mountains, Mount Crawford being one of the peaks; and, on the other side, it is bounded by Carter Mountain and the range of Mount Moriah. The stage follows the course of the Ellis River, which connects this narrow valley with the broad intervals where the Ellis joins the Saco, till a little plateau is reached, from which rise the whole group of the White Mountains, without any intervening peak to conceal any portion of them, from their base to the summit—a sheer ascent from the valley of more than five thousand feet.

Here, by the road-side, not very remotely set in the forest, is the Crystal Cascade, whose waters fall in an unbroken sheet from the summit to the base of the rock.

It is a wonderful view which opens before the tourist when he enters the glen, either from Gorham, by the course of the Peabody River, or, coming from Conway and the Saco Valley, through the wild Pinkham Notch, by the rushing Ellis, with its Glen-Ellis Falls, one of the famous cascades of the mountains. The five highest mountains of New England lie before him, dense forest clothing their lower flanks, the ravines, landslides, and windfalls, clearly defined, and above all tower their desolate peaks. These little plateaus, scattered here and there—at the Notch House, at Franconia, and at the glen—seem to be darker than ordinary places, for the sky is cut off many angles above the horizon on every hand, and the sun has a shorter transit across the diminished heavens, leaving a long period of twilight both at morning and evening, even during fair weather; but, when the heavy fog-banks collect on these lonely mountain-sides, and the storm-clouds muster over every peak, the impression of solitary gloom is most impressive.

There is no spot in the mountains where one feels more keenly than here the changes in the moods of Nature. Watching the bright streams on the heights so far removed from man on the silent peaks, with

“Narrowing curves that end in air,”

the imagination wanders, till one scarcely knows what part of the impression is due to

its excited picturings, and what is derived from the visible world. In this valley lies the Emerald Pool, a sunny basin, bright and still.

Leaving Gorham, and following the stage-road to the west, you soon emerge on a hill-side, leaving the Androscoggin Valley behind; and, when about a mile up this



Mount Washington, from top of Thompson's Falls, Pinkham Pass.

little valley, at a turn in the road, you suddenly find yourself gazing up at the steep side of Mount Madison, which rises with a clear sweep from its base, washed by the rocky Moose River, and its flanks clothed with huge forest-trees to its gray and rocky summit. Now we see one slope of the mountain, and now another, as the road winds along, till at length the twin peak of Mount Adams, very like in form to Madison,

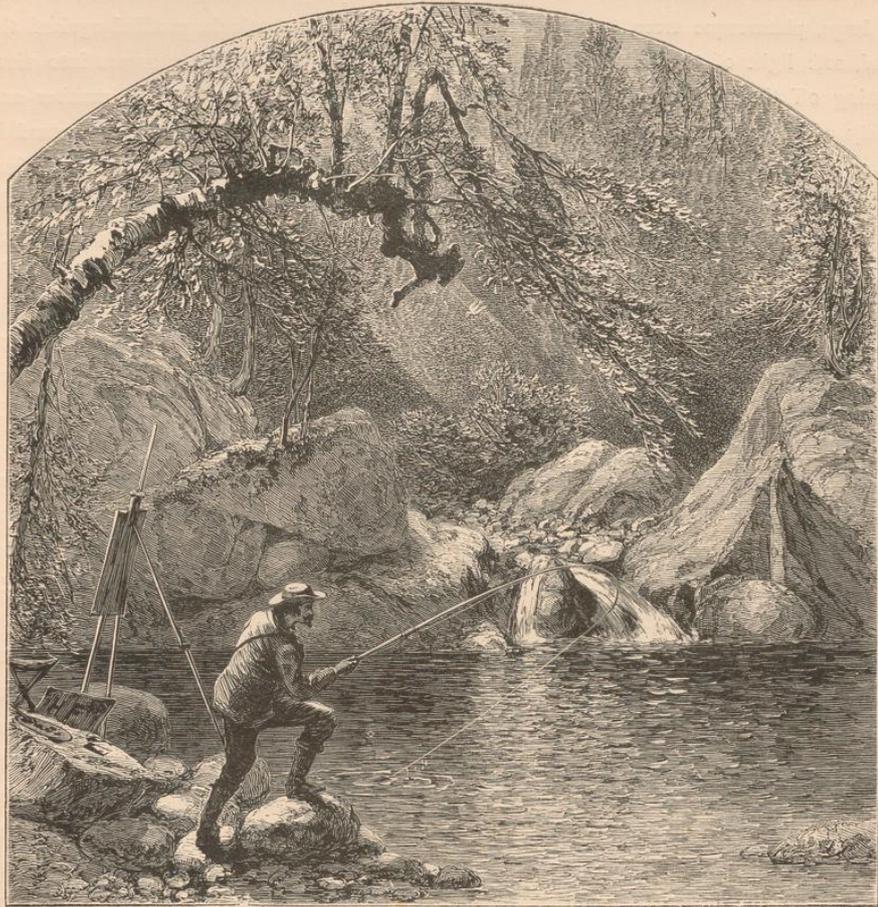
peeps over one of the immense shoulders of Adams, and soon its sides rise to view. Mount Jefferson, in its turn, comes in sight, and the deep gullies in its sides and its rocky flanks present the same unbroken and satisfactory slopes which had made Madison at first seem quite the ideal mountain of one's imagination. From the moment this journey is commenced at the hill-top in Gorham, it is interesting, but, to be fully enjoyed, it should be taken with the afternoon light purpling the mountain-sides, and when the large, picturesque trees, twisted and bent, stand, like sentinels, profiled against the broad, soft light of the hills. Driving along, one flank after another comes into view, shutting off the previous one, filling one with an ever-new surprise at the number and variety of these mountains, which yet are always immense in their sweep and grand in curve. The mountains from this side are much more abrupt than when seen on their western declivity, and the rocky structure of their formation is more conspicuous. At the Glen, flanks and ravines cut up the sweep of the hills, but here they rise in an unbroken view to a height greater than the walls of the mountains at the Willey Notch, and far more impressive. Emerging upon the road at Martin's, where now stands the Mount-Adams House, you see the whole great chain of the chief peaks, their forests speckled with light, and apparently so near that one almost feels like putting his hand upon their flickering sides across the densely-wooded ravine which winds up and up till it is lost in the gray distance of the heights of Mount Washington.

Following the borders of the Moose River, and striking across the Cherry-Mountain road to the White-Mountain House, a distance of thirty-two miles from Gorham, and leaving Jefferson behind, with the Israel River that conducts to the Connecticut Valley and to Lancaster, the traveller finds himself about seven miles beyond the Willey Notch, on the road to Franconia.

From the Crawford House, on its little plateau, turning northward, the road, passing through dense woods, after a short space enters the little valley, through which the infant stream of the Ammonoosuc issues from near the base of Mount Monroe. Nothing can be more charming than the trickle of waters by the side of these mountain-roads—"noises as if hidden brooks in the leafy month of June"—when the stage toils and creaks slowly over the rocky hills. We do not know the origin of the valleys, though they are probably volcanic, and the roads are apparently much more important than the little streams that rush along beside them, seeming like mere ornaments to the landscape; but, whatever their apparent uselessness, these mountain-torrents have carved out the natural roads through the hills, and it is by the ridges that bound them that nearly every person is made familiar with the glories and beauties of this region.

Following along the Ammonoosuc, the forest opens here and there, disclosing the White Mountains in all their beauty, until at the White-Mountain House, beyond the Ammonoosuc, the range of hills that connects the White Mountains with the Franco-

nia range, rises before you. This stream, which is often named the wildest in New Hampshire, on account of the rapid flow of its waters, that descend more than a mile between its source and where it joins the Connecticut, is broken by many water-falls, that gleam among the trees along the stage-road. The first town or even village that



Emerald Pool, Peabody-River Glen.

one passes after leaving Jackson is the little hamlet of Bethlehem, crouched close against a high, broad plateau, with great ranges of hills bounding it on every side. Along the valley toward the eastward rise the White Mountains and their attendant ranges; on the south, the range of the Franconia Mountains and Mount Lafayette, towering majestically above the rest, shut in the plain: while to the north appear the

mountains of Vermont. At one's feet on every side lie the valleys, and above this plain rise the mountain-peaks. Removed from the solemn gloom of the ravines, and from the exciting impressiveness of the mountain-tops, it would seem that dwellers in these elevated homes among the hills might have a healthier and serener life than anybody else.

Leaving Bethlehem, the road winds over a hill-top, and then descends into the valley of the Ammonoosuc, through which it winds its way till it reaches the narrow gorge, through which a branch of this river forces itself down; and the steep, difficult ascent begins into the Franconia Notch.

The Franconia range, though of the same group of hills as the rest, has a character as distinct from the austere forms of the White-Mountain range as from the soft swells of the Green Mountains of Vermont, and is eminently charming and picturesque.

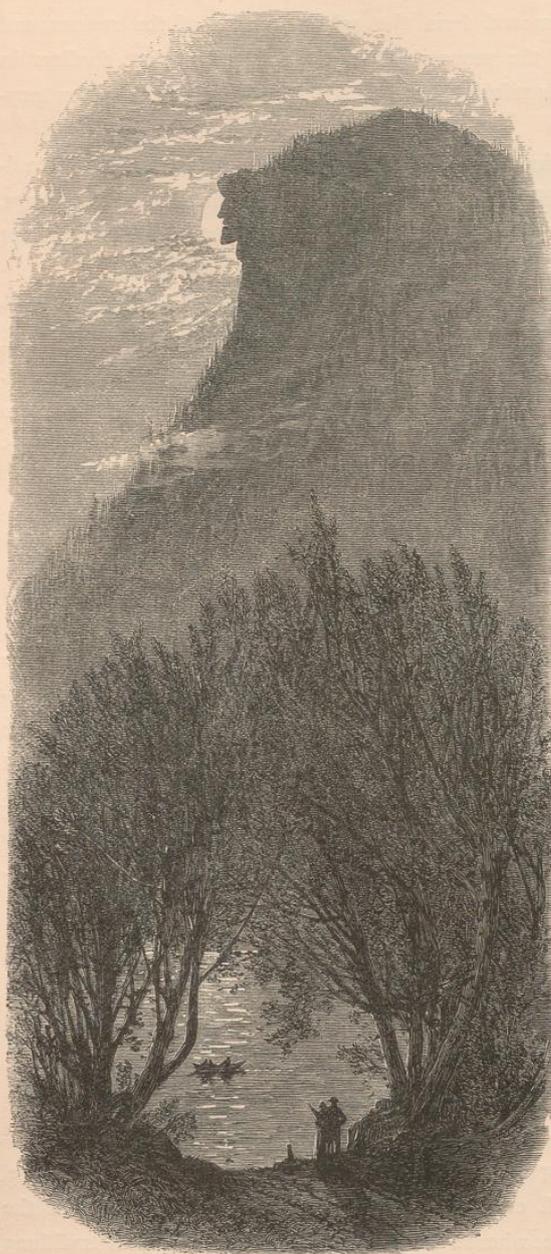
A little way from the Profile House the traveller finds himself beside the Echo Lake, surrounded by hills, with Mount Lafayette, the highest peak of any in that region, overlooking it:

"Mountains that like giants stand,
To sentinel enchanted land."

In a fresh, cool morning, after a good night's rest under the comfortable roof of the Profile House, you wander down to the little pebbly beach that edges the lake-shore. Green woods tangled over your head protect you from the heat of the summer sun, and before you lies this little lake, each mountain clearly reflected in its pure depths as if in a mirror. While you sit enjoying the quiet beauty of the scene, and watching one or two eagles circling about the near hills, a note from a bugle sounds from the little boat that takes passengers to the middle of the lake. Immediately the echo repeats itself against the mountain-side, and, jumping from point to point, almost instantly the woods seem filled with a band of musicians till the echoes fade off and off:

"Oh, hark! Oh, hear! How thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going;
Oh, sweet and far from cliff and scur
The horns of elf-land faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes dying, dying, dying!"

Leaving the lake, and following the path that leads back to the Profile House, you come to the broken, scarred wall of Eagle Cliff, that rises directly in front of the hotel. Eagles build their nests here, whence its name, and there are various traditions of children and lambs being snatched away and borne up to their lofty eyries. At Franconia there seems to be a natural impulse to quote poetry, and echoes of measured strains



Profile Mountain.

beat time to the pulses of light in the stirring tree-tops or to the rippling rivulets. If you love Scott, you can hardly fail to have different bits of his verse running through your head when you see—

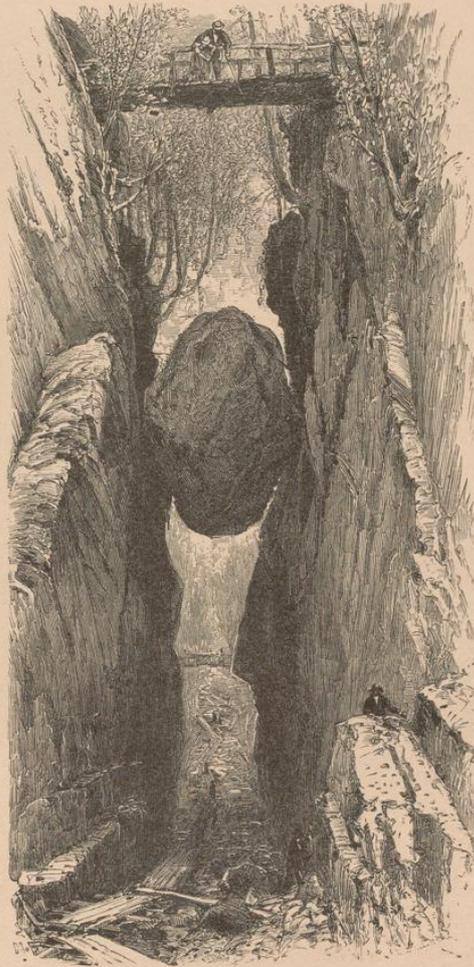
“Crag, knoll, and mound, confusedly
hurled,
The fragments of an earlier world,
A wildering forest feathered o'er
His ruined side and summit hoar.”

Nearly opposite Eagle Cliff, Profile Mountain rises abruptly from the margin of a little lake familiarly known as the “Old Man’s Wash-basin,” covered with forest-trees far up its side, over which, looking down the valley from its lofty position, nearly two thousand feet up the mountain, appears the wonder of this region, the “Old Stone Face,” as firmly defined as if chiselled by a sculptor. Hawthorne has thrown over this natural object a charm as much greater than others have felt, as his genius was more subtle and penetrating than that of the rude dwellers of these regions, to whom yet the “Face” appears always to have suggested an idea of something mysterious. The rocks of which it is formed are three blocks of granite so set together as to form an overhanging brow, a powerful, clear-

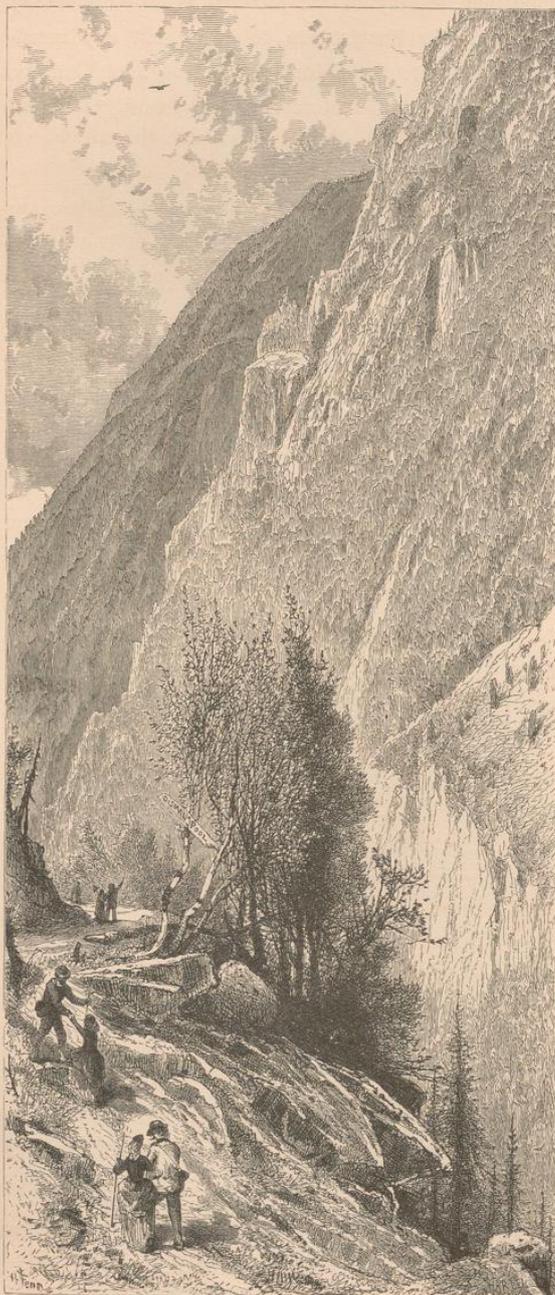
ly-defined nose, and a chin sharp and decisive. Many of the pictures made on rocks by fissures and discolorations require an effort of the imagination to make out any meaning from the tangle of involved lines. Such are the figures on the ledge at Conway, and the Indian Chief on one of the mountains in the Notch. "Arm-chairs," "Graves," and "Seats," are always being pointed out, and give little satisfaction to eye or mind; but this view of the old man's profile is startling, and requires no description or suggestions to make it real.

Following the course of the Pemigewasset, whose source is in the "Old Man's Wash-basin," as that of its sister-stream the Ammonoosuc is in Echo Lake, with only the rise of a little mound between them to turn the waters north or south, one comes upon beautiful cascades, where the little stream rushes over its rocky bed, fashioning itself as it moves along through green moss, wet at noonday with the spray from the falling water, till you come to the Flume House, where the narrow gorge of the Pemigewasset River widens out to the long, flowing sweep of the open valley that closes no more, but sweeps down amid constantly lower hills till it reaches the sea, and the wild woods with their beauty are left behind in the mountains. Leaving the main stage-road at the Flume House, you strike into a rough wagon-path, following it where the sound of falling water attracts you not in vain.

Here you come upon smooth, flat rocks, over which flows the pure, colorless sheet of the mountain-water. Above this rocky stairway the water dashes over a green, mossy bed, the rich hues of which are seen in the sparkling sunshine that penetrates below the flood, revealing the golden and amber tints on sand and pebbly floor.



The Flume.



Cliffs above Dismal Pool.

Above this mossy bed we reach a fissure in the hill, with steep, rocky sides fifty feet or more in elevation and hundreds of feet long, narrowing at its upper end till it is only ten or twelve feet wide. Stepping from one stone to another, and then threading the narrow footpath, crossing and recrossing the ravine, alternately climbing rocks and traversing rude tree-trunks thrown across for bridges, at length a little point is gained in the narrowest part of the ravine. The rocky walls are dark, and the little stream bounds along between them. Emerald mosses hang from the sharp angles of the ledge or from the tree-trunks on its side. Just above the place where you are standing, a huge boulder is wedged, seemingly just ready to slip from its uncertain resting-place, and this is the famous Flume.

The cliffs above Dismal Pool, near the Crawford House and the Willey Notch, are among the loftiest and steepest to be found in the mountains. Our illustration gives a very good impression of these stupendous precipices.

The White Mountains are even yet not fully explored, and every year adds some new mountain-pond, another cascade

or a glen, unseen till now, to the multitude of charming spots, which, with their composite associations, make this region delightful. Among these places, *new* in comparison with the Willey Pass or Mount Washington, is the Dixville Notch.

This remarkable pass, which has only recently attracted much attention, is in a group of hills some sixty miles to the north of the White Mountains; and, though as yet but imperfectly explored, the region is known to abound in scenery of the finest kind. Even the White Mountains, it is said, do not surpass it in sublimity and desolate and wild grandeur.

Following the track of the Grand Trunk Railroad by its course along the Androscoggin, at length the train turns into the more cheerful valley of the Connecticut River till you come to North Stratford. Here a stage conveys you to Colebrook, a flourishing village on the New-Hampshire side of the Connecticut, from which you can easily reach the Dixville range of hills, which are only ten miles from the village. The road lies through the best farming region of New Hampshire, and a person would never imagine there could be mountain-scenery of any degree of impressiveness near at hand. Suddenly the heavy walls of the Dixville Mountains show themselves, rising like thunder-clouds above the tree-tops of the forest. While you are admiring the gloomy sides of these hills, covered by dark woods, a turn in the road brings you in front of the savage opening of the Notch at its west end—a region of vast and mysterious desolation. The pass is narrower than either one of the great Notches of the White Hills, and the scenery is much bolder and sublimer.

Nothing can give an adequate impression of these bare and decaying cliffs, which shoot out into fantastic and angular projections on every side. The side-walls of this narrow ravine—for it can scarcely be called a pass—are strewn with *débris*. The only plant that appears to have maintained itself is the raspberry-vine. The great distinctive feature of this Notch is barrenness; and very great is, therefore, the transition of feeling from desolation and gloom, when you ride out from its slaty teeth into a most lovely plain called the Clear-Spring Meadows, embosomed in mountains, wooded luxuriantly from base to crown. It is in this Notch that you come upon one of the most characteristic formations of this region—Column Rock.

The glories, the beauties, the delights of this wild region might be dwelt upon for months and fill volumes, but little suggestions and slight hints are all that our space will allow us to give. We shall close, therefore, with repeating the advice of Starr King, the great authority about the White Mountains,* who declares that the right time to visit them is in the early summer: "From the middle of June to the middle of July, foliage is more fresh; the cloud-scenery is nobler; the meadow-grass has a more golden color; the streams are usually more full and musical; and there is a larger proportion

* "The White Hills." By Thomas Starr King.

of the 'long light' of the afternoon, which kindles the landscape into the richest loveliness. The mass of visitors to the White Mountains go during the dog-days, and leave when the finer September weather sets in with its prelude touches of the October splendor. In August there are fewer clear skies; there is more fog; the meadows are apparelled in more sober green; the highest rocky crests may be wrapped in mists for days in succession; and a traveller has fewer chances of making acquaintance with a bracing mountain-breeze. The latter half of June is the blossom-season of beauty in the mountain-districts; the first half of October is the time of its full-hued fruitage."



Column Rock, Dixville Notch.