



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

West Virginia.

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IN WEST VIRGINIA.

ILLUSTRATIONS DRAWN BY W. L. SHEPPARD, FROM SKETCHES BY DAVID H. STROTHER.



Arched Strata.

IN looking at the map of West Virginia, we may observe that its central regions are so hatched and corrugated with the shadows of mountains, so scribbled over with twisted and meandering lines representing the water-courses, that it is difficult to trace, amid these topographical entanglements, the lighter lines and dots which should indicate the highways and centres of population, or to collect together into words even the bold capitals which tell us the names of the counties. Now, fortunately for the map-makers, the mountains and rivers have the field pretty much to themselves, and there is little else, in reality, to perplex the student's eye.

Yet the adventurous traveller who undertakes to explore this shadowy realm in person will be amazed to find how far the geographical picture has fallen short of the savage and tremendous reality. In its untrodden wilds he will find himself bewildered with difficulties he never dreamed of, and sometimes confronted with dangers he had not provided against. Far beyond the range of pleasure-seeking tourists, he will be often sur-

prised with scenes whose beauty would charm an artist into ecstasies, whose sublimity might awe a poet into silence. Unversed in the explorations of interested science, he may bark his shins over fossil specimens which would throw Wall Street into a fever, and stoop to slake his thirst at mineral fountains whose healing virtues might alarm the solemn quackery of our medical professors. In districts as yet inaccessible to industry and commerce he will see the earth encumbered with the crude materials which constitute the solid wealth and power of nations. Let every sturdy doubter go and see for himself! Yet there are many who would shrink from a personal encounter with the wilderness, and others, perhaps, whose jealous occupations deny the needful leisure for the exploration. Let these betake themselves to easy-chairs and slippers, snuffing the mountain-air in fancy through a hot-house nosegay, or the more virile fumes of a meerschaum pipe, and thus follow our leading through one of the most civilized, easily accessible, and curiously picturesque, of these mountain-districts.

For the sake of convenience and a pleasant starting-point, we will rendezvous at the Berkeley Springs, a famous summer resort near Sir John's Station, on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Thence, by a good graded road, on wheels or horseback, as may be preferred, we can in two days' easy travel reach Moorfield, seventy-five miles distant.

In skipping thus lightly over our preliminary journey, it must not be supposed that we have seen nothing worthy of remark by the way. On the contrary, the entire route abounds in objects of interest and beauty. We have seen the imposing cliffs of Candy's Castle, at the crossing of the north fork of Cacapon River. A few miles distant, on the same stream, is the famous natural ice-house called the Ice Mountain. Then, at Romney, we have the Hanging Rock and the view from the yellow banks; and, farther on, we pass through Mill-Spring Gap, and wonder at the long, regularly-scalloped ridge of the Trough Mountain, resembling a row of potato-hills; then under the impending cliffs at the Northern Gate, and finally the first glimpse of the great South-Branch Valley, stretching around Moorfield. All these, and twenty others that we have passed in our journey, are pictures to adorn an artist's portfolio, and to impress a tourist's memory. Yet, as we feel that neither pen nor pencil, nor both combined, can cope with Nature all in full light, in arranging our scenic drama, we are constrained to leave many subordinate beauties in shadow or demi-tint, that our feeble art may be enabled to exhibit the selected points more effectively. Yet we cannot conscientiously turn away from the scene immediately around us without something more than a passing word; for, while we may meet with many objects whose rugged and startling features bring them more readily within the power of the graphic arts, we shall see nothing in our travels more softly and magnetically beautiful, to soul and eye, than this same valley of Moorfield.

The South Branch of the Potomac has its sources in the county of Highland, and, after a comparative course of about one hundred miles, running from southwest to north-

east, and parallel with the great mountain-ranges, it joins the North Branch in Hampshire County, some fifty miles below Moorfield. Its upper waters flow in three principal streams, called respectively the South, Middle, and North Forks, the channels of which, like that of the main river, are bordered by extensive alluvial levels of extraordinary fertility, alternating with narrow, sharp-cut gorges domineered by bare, perpendicular cliffs of sublime height and picturesque forms.

After the junction of its chief tributaries, and about midway of its course, the river leaves the shadow of the mountains, and winds majestically with its double-fringed borders through an unbroken stretch of bottom-lands, eleven miles in length by three in breadth, lying, like a magnificent billiard-table, cushioned with mountain-ranges of graceful outlines and exquisite coloring, and rising to the imposing height of fifteen and eighteen hundred feet. This rich and verdant plain is mapped into fields and farms of manorial propor-



Hills near Moorfield.

tions, and dotted over with double-brick, tin-roofed houses and herds of stately cattle, betokening a land of easy wealth and old-fashioned abundance. Like the queen of this fat realm, the pretty village of Moorfield sits sleepily on the river-bank, half embowered in shade, awaiting the homage of her subjects, who gather in on court-days to settle lawsuits and talk of oxen, and who rejoice in a comfortable three-story brick hotel, with a landlord who understands good living. But we must tarry no longer in this enchanting Capua, lest amid its hospitable seductions we may forget the motives of our journey, and disappoint our artist, who is anxious to have a tilt with his crayon against the giants of the North Fork.

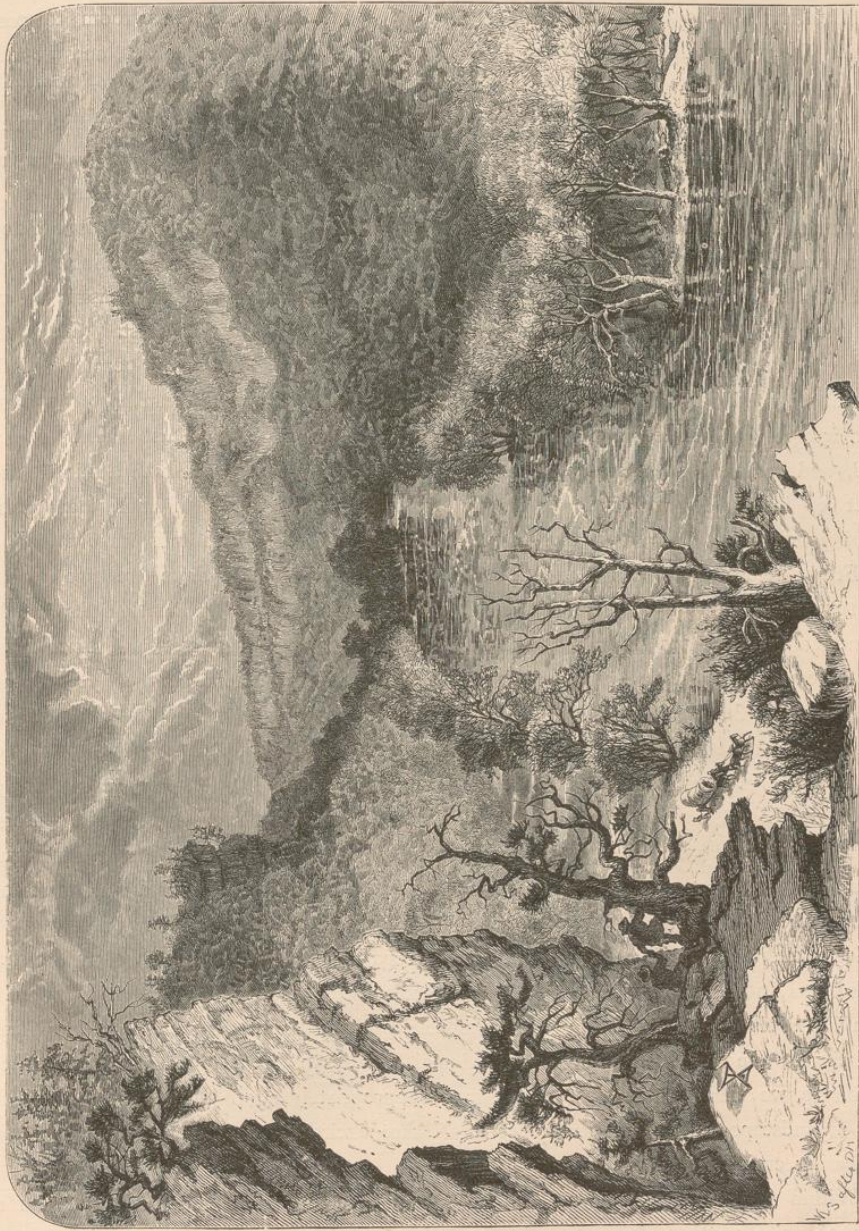
Continuing our route southward by a pleasant, graded road, in an hour's ride we arrive at Baker's, seven miles above Moorfield. Just before reaching the house, we catch a glimpse of a pretty cove on our left, overlooked by a secondary range of rounded hills faced with some curious rock-work. The view is interrupted by trees, and sufficiently imperfect to stimulate the imagination. So we open the bars, and, riding across cultivated fields for half a mile, find ourselves in the meadow immediately opposite the objects of our curiosity. The closer and more satisfactory view brings no disappointment, but, on the contrary, increases our astonishment. Here are five conically-rounded hills, rising to a height of several hundred feet above the plain, singularly regular in shape and size, each adorned with a half-detached façade of rock-work of the most peculiar and fantastic character. One is at first reminded of the Moresque castles and walled towns of Barbary; then follow suggestions of Oriental conceits from the ancient temples of Benares; but, as we continue to gaze, these vague fancies fade, and we become possessed with the grotesque and freakish originality of the scene, which finds no counterpart in any work of human art. Geologically, these rocks are of stratified sandstone, upheaved perpendicularly; cracked, splintered, and abraded, by the elements; their exposed edges wrought into the most strange and startling shapes—

"Like some Bedlam statuary's dream,
The crazed creation of misguided whim"—

images which might be worshipped without breaking the second commandment. So far overtopped by their loftier neighbors, these hills scarcely suggest emotions of sublimity; yet they hold us by the fascination of a curiosity not unmingled with awe, and, had we but a spice of Oriental faith and fancy, we could swear we had looked upon the ruins of some mighty race of genii who held this land before the flood.

We will now push on toward Petersburg, ever and anon casting a lingering look behind, over the level perspective of the beautiful valley, and the fading blue of its northern boundaries.

After a short ride of two miles, we suddenly turn into the cool and shadowy gorge



PETERSBURG GAP.

of the Southern Gate, through which the river pours its clear-green waters into the valley. Crossing by an easy ford, we follow the road, which barely finds room to pass between the stream and the overhanging cliffs. Presently the gorge widens, and we call a halt to view that gigantic wall of naked rock, divided from the clouds by a ragged fringe of evergreens, doubled in height by its mirrored counterfeit in the placid river. Here every thing is on a sublime scale; yet the scene is sweet and tranquil as the interior of a Christian temple. The neighborhood wonder is found in the likeness of a red fox at full speed, painted high on the cliff by the hand of ages. The uninitiated find some difficulty in making it out; but, once seen, the resemblance is strikingly good, tail and all. The gorge is about a mile in extent, affording grand and pleasant views from many different aspects, but no convenient stand-point for the artist. From its upper end we may see Petersburg, about two miles distant. Here our perplexed *Salvator* dismounted, and, scaling a rude cliff, nestled amid the gnarled branches of a dead cedar, hanging a hundred feet above the road. As he showed no disposition to descend, and returned no answer to our summons, we presumed he had attained the object of his search, and rode on to Petersburg alone. About nightfall, our companion joined us at the village-tavern, elated with his sketch, which tells its own story.

From Petersburg to Seneca—a distance of twenty-two miles—there are two roads. The turnpike, easily practicable for wheeled vehicles, clings to the mountain-sides, avoids the crossings, and misses many of the most interesting views. The river-road, practicable only for cavaliers, is rugged, miry, and crosses the stream by frequent plunges, yet, to the tourist looking for the picturesque, is far the most interesting; so we will not hesitate to choose it. About four miles above Petersburg, we see the junction of the North and Middle Forks of the South Branch. Near this point we halt to examine a singularly perfect and beautiful exhibition of arched strata, laid bare by the action of the waters. The arch is the segment of a circle several hundred feet in diameter, apparently as regular as if drawn by an engineer. The breakings of the rock are as clean and square cut as if they had been wrought by a master-mason, its colors and sylvan adornments rich enough to please the most exacting artist. The river sweeps its base in a succession of sparkling rapids; and in the middle of the stream, immediately opposite the centre of the arch, lies a huge, black boulder, looking as if especially introduced to complete the artificial regularity of the scene. Ignoring the incidental beauties of sparkling stream and graceful foliage, we think the subject would more appropriately adorn a geological museum than a landscape-gallery, and its aspect in Nature excites no other emotion than that of pleasing curiosity.

Within the next mile or two, we cross the fork again, and come suddenly upon a scene of quite another character. At the butt of a sharp spur rises a towering architectural mass, which any one familiar with the Old World would pronounce a well-preserved feudal ruin, and a purely American imagination would conceive to be the

chimneys of a burnt factory. As the probabilities of finding a feudal castle and a modern factory in this region are about equal, we must deviate a little from the highway to obtain a better view of the startling object. Even upon a closer inspection, it is diffi-



Chimney Rocks.

cult to divest one's self of the idea that human hands must have played some part in the erection of the pile before us. So regular and square cut is the masonry, so shapely the towers, so artistically true the embattled summits, the supporting buttresses, the jut-



Karr's Pinnacles.

ting turrets, the cold, gray walls, dappled with lichens, moss, and weather-stains—all combined so artfully to mimic the "ruined castle of romance," that the garish light of a summer morning is scarcely strong enough to dispel the illusion. Yet, by turning on a still stronger light—that of a materialistic age and traditionless country—our castle dwindles into a geological vagary, and we resume our journey, filled with vague regrets.

Since leaving the gorge of the Southern Gate, we have seen rising before us, like a mass of dark, rolling thunder-clouds, the cliffs and pinnacled spurs and grinning summits of the great Alleghany Ridge. Between these and a parallel mountain of gigantic height and savage aspect flows the North Fork, whose borders we are now bent on exploring. Following the river-road, we pass by many a wild and disrupted battlefield, where for unnumbered ages the elements have striven for mastery—

“Crag, knoll, and mound, in ruin hurled—
The fragments of an earlier world.”

On these fields the geologist may find a whole library of useful knowledge open for his perusal. Here, too, the statesman may read, in the continual abrasion of lordly peaks and elevation of humble valleys, the gradual but certain tendency of all created things toward the millennium of level equality. Here, also, is written stupendous confirmation of the simplest and grandest lesson of life's philosophy. Though the inconceivable power of primeval earthquakes has heaped up these mountain-barriers, ridge upon ridge, that trickling streamlet, born of a dew-drop, has reft them to their base. The hurricane flaps his frantic wing and the thunder roars in vain against the pride of those towering cliffs, which the sneaking, fairy-fingered frost will one day send crashing headlong down into the abyss below:

“Not to the haughty, nor the strong,
Do the powers of earth belong,
But to the patient and the meek
Who the paths of wisdom seek.”

The artist, whose gifts are spread over the surface of life, does not perplex himself with these things, but is rather annoyed with the superabundance of pictorial attractions, and the difficulty of selecting. Especially pleased is he when we chance upon a subject so peculiar and impressive in its features that it leaves him no discretion. Such a point we find at Karr's, eighteen miles above Petersburg; and, as the day is usually far spent when we reach it, we will lie by for the night at the farm-house. Old Adam Karr has gone to his rest some years ago, but he has doubtless left behind some scion of his sturdy race to inherit the old homestead, and with it, we may hope, the quaint humor and genial hospitality of its ancient proprietor.

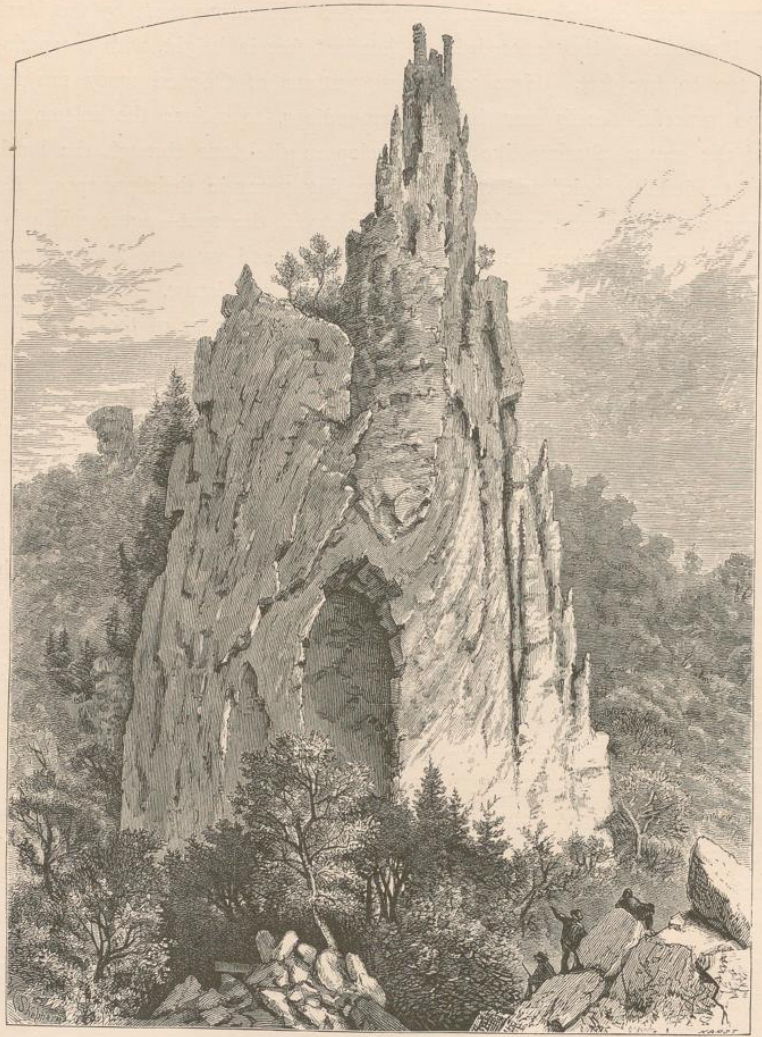
To approach the Pinnacles, about a mile distant from the house, one must ford the fork and ride up a narrow ravine, densely wooded. Jutting from the point of the opposite hill, we see two thin sheets of rock, towering perpendicularly, side by side, far above the tops of the loftiest forest-trees, their jagged and grotesque outlines drawn in dark *silhouette* against the clear-blue sky. The edge presentation exhibits a pair of monuments, one of which bears a rude resemblance to the obelisk of Luxor, the other to



THE CLIFFS OF SENECA.

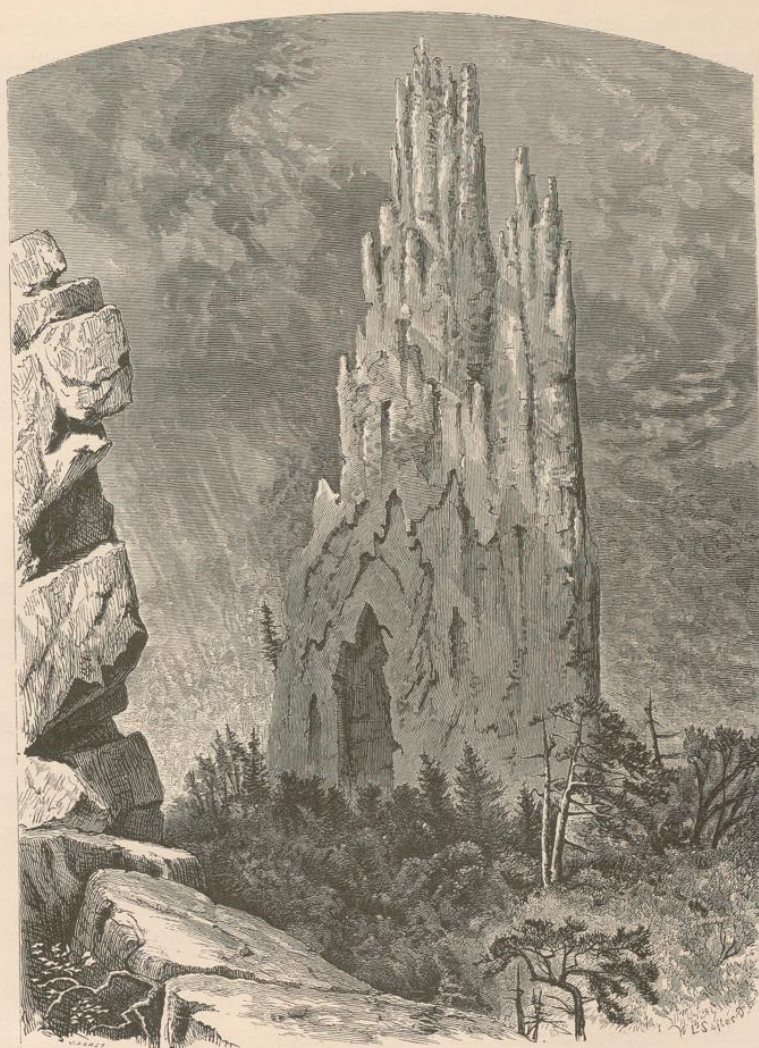
a monumental spire of the pinnacled Gothic style. Measuring them by the Yankee rule of guess, I should say they exceeded two hundred feet in height, with a tapering width of from ten to five feet. Here are no suggestions of Oriental fancy nor feudal romance, no graceful details nor bright surroundings, to relieve the solemn, tomb-like aspect of the scene. Staring like grim Cyclopean skeletons through the lonely wood, they have "a fiendish look," and we feel a creeping terror in their presence. An imaginative man, about twilight, would instinctively avoid the spot—never willingly visit it alone. We were glad when the sketch was finished, and we were free to return again to the friendly sunshine and the every-day beauties of Nature. Our picture, though technically correct, has quite failed to catch the haunted aspect of the locality.

From Karr's, an easy ride of five miles brings us to the mouth of the Seneca, where we find a little trading settlement. But this fact does not interest us at present. On reaching the open ground, all our faculties are at once concentrated on the magnificent object just across the river—a scene in which all the elements of curiosity, beauty, and sublimity, seem to have been accumulated and combined. Imagine a thin, laminated sheet of rock, half a mile long by five hundred feet broad, set up on edge, the base covered for one-third of the height by a forest-grown talus; its sides ribbed with narrow terraces, moss-carpeted and festooned with gay, flowering shrubs; the bare surfaces stained with varied colors, white, yellow, red, brown, gray, and purple; its upper edge riven, splintered, and carved with a succession of grotesque forms which the pencil alone can describe. On the left the cliff abuts against a wooded mountain, defended, as it were, by a double line of bastioned and embattled walls. On the right it terminates abruptly in a sharp precipice. From the opposing hill juts another towering pile of rock, which forms the narrow gate-way through which appears a long vista of woods and mountains. Now we have the picture sketched in outline; but how shall we describe the varied emotions excited by its diverse forms and ever-changing countenance? When the sun gilds its painted and festooned sides, we glory in its beauty; when a passing cloud veils it in shadows, we are awe-struck by its weird sublimity. Having partially satisfied our emotional appetites, we take a recess, and ride up to Adamson's to dinner. In the afternoon we return, and cross the river on foot by a fording-place so rugged and slippery that we cannot trust our horses to carry us. Up the steep bank, and across a shaded plateau, we enter the gate-way, which is farther from the river than we anticipated. Here we find the inevitable water-power—a trickling rill, whose current might be stopped by a thirsty ox—the insignificant author of this tremendous ruin. Turning from the horse-path, we clamber up the talus at the base of the right-hand abutment, and, when out of breath, sit down to recover, and look up. We are now directly fronting the perpendicular edge or gable-end of the great cliff. The first emotion is one of bewilderment, not unmingled with dread, at the impending proximity of the awful pile, as if we were standing under the leaning tower of Garisenda, at Bologna. As we next begin to



Cathedral Rock.

note the details, and comprehend the general effect of the mass, we are troubled with a strange sense of incredulity, a distrust of our senses, even a certain flushing of resentment, as if some imposition were practised upon us. All that we have heretofore seen and wondered at has not quite prepared us to accept this literally. Can this be reality, or is it only a stony nightmare superinduced by a surfeit of rocks? Yet, there it stands, in motionless and silent majesty, a vast minster of the Gothic ages, growing more and more marvellous as we scrutinize its carven details, and estimate its sublime



Cathedral Rock—Side-view.

proportions. There is the grand portal, with its pointed arch, from whose shadowy recesses we may presently expect to hear the organ pealing, and the anthem of chanting priests. There is the heaven-piercing spire, with its pinnacles, finials, turrets, traceries, and all the requisite architectural enrichments, from which anon will ring out the sweet and solemn chimes, calling the world to prayer. There too, sharply traced by sunlight and shadow, are the Gothic oriels and double-arched windows, suggestive of stained-glass pictures, only visible from the interior.

Below, the foundations are laid in square-cut blocks, and the sides ribbed with inclining buttresses, to give assurance of eternal stability; and, stranger than all, the short, unfinished tower has not been omitted—the begging tower, for whose completion questing monks will be collecting money for the next thousand years, perhaps.

By this time doubts have vanished, for Salvator has exhibited his sketch, and I have more faith in a picture than in my own senses. There is no witness who swears so convincingly as the photograph or a sketch from Nature. The casual observer may be easily tricked by his careless eye or exuberant fancy. In the flow of language there is an irresistible tendency to exaggeration, and to subordinate fact to phraseology.

But the patient scrutiny of the pencil-point rarely errs, and the true artistic instinct unconsciously rejects the line that is false or out of character.

While this view presents, in the most satisfactory manner, the regular architectural features of this earth-born cathedral, we may vary the scene indefinitely by changing position. Thus, from a point a little higher and more distant, the stupendous height of the spire is more manifest, while a movement to the right develops a second group of pinnacles behind the first, and the change of perspective invests the whole scene with a wilder and more unearthly character. Indeed, within the charmed range fresh surprises and novel emotions attend on every step. I have made three several pilgrimages to Seneca, spending hours, and sometimes days, in the vicinity of the mighty shrine, yet feel that I have but half developed its fascinations.

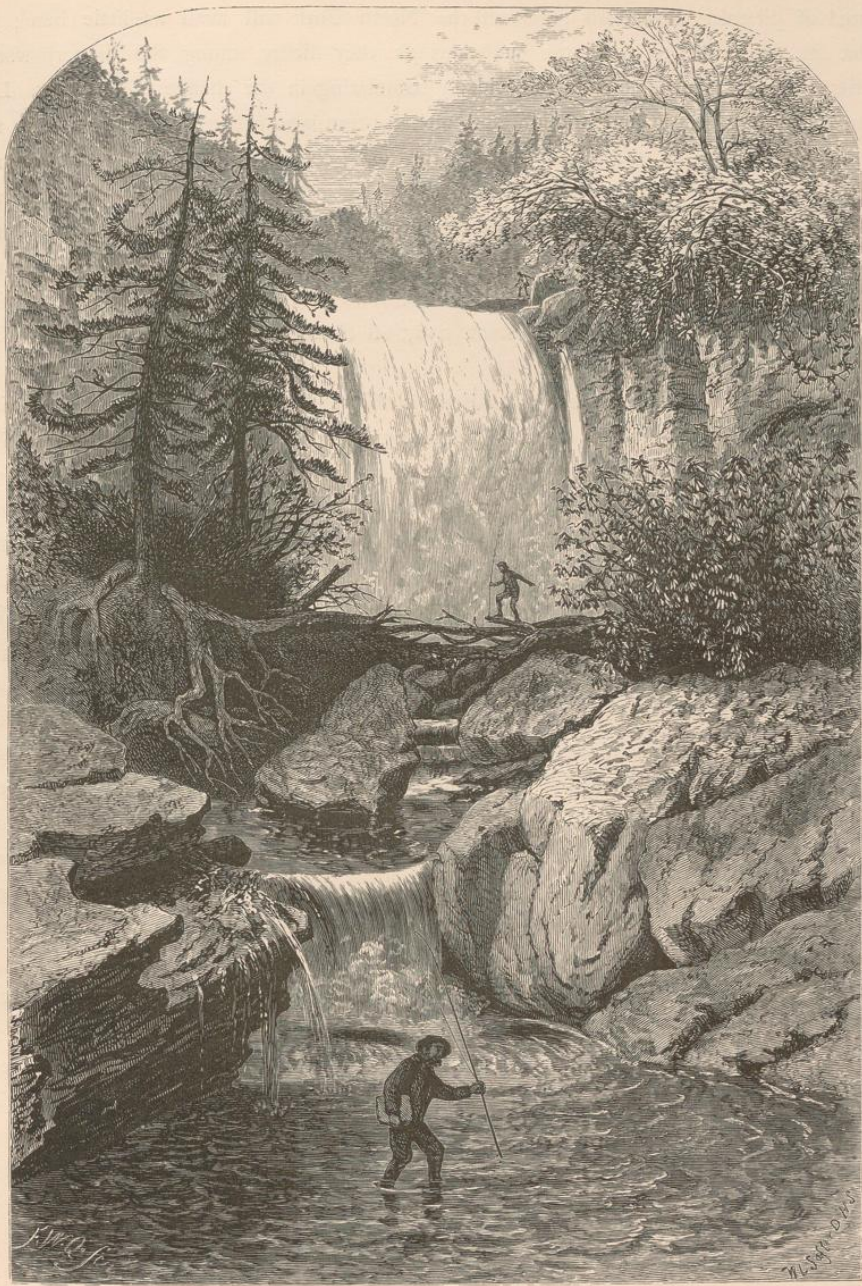
And now having faithfully, and we hope satisfactorily, done the valley of the North Fork, we take regretful leave of its wonderful picture-gallery, and follow our adventurous artist across the bleak summits of the Alleghany, through miles of swampy laurel-brakes and dim hemlock-forests, to his camp in the mountain-wilds of Randolph County, where the streams run westward.

To one in the flesh the journey is tedious, tiresome, full of privations and difficulties; but to you, our friends of the cushioned chairs and worsted slippers, the transit shall be as brief and easy as though you sat upon that magic rug described in the "Arabian Nights."

And what can be the attraction here in this gloomy, dripping forest, where the high sun can scarcely penetrate, where the eye is refreshed by no vistas of blue distance, and where the artist hardly finds elbow-room or light enough to exercise his faculty?

Listen. We are here upon the broad, wooded summits of the great dividing ridge of Alleghany, about three thousand feet above the ocean-tides.

Have you observed all these pretty amber-tinted brooks fringed with flowering rhododendron, meandering quietly and unconsciously under the vaulted forest? Just below us flows the famous Blackwater through an awful rift nearly two thousand feet in depth. These younglings must join their mother in the briefest space, and it is glorious sport to see them do it. This is the land of water-falls. That pretty knack we have ac-



FALLS OF THE BLACKWATER.

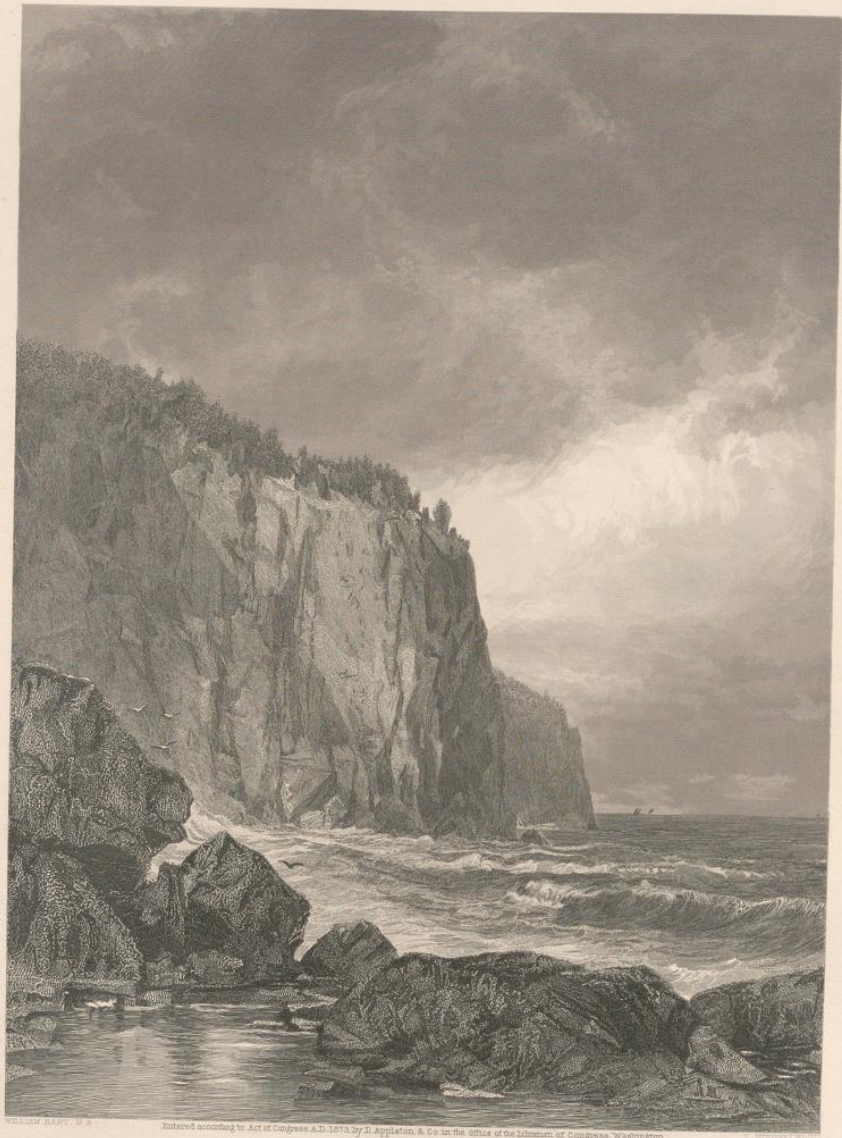
quired of picturing the steady sitters of the North Fork will avail us little here; we must set our traps to catch the sunbeams as they flicker among the slippery water-spirits. Indeed, there is something decidedly stimulating in the change of elements. Life must have both music and motion, and, after a fortnight with those dusty roads, the haughty immobility of those lordly peaks, the death-like silence of those stony monuments, we had begun to feel as arid and passionless as if we had been studying in a sculpture-gallery or promenading a cemetery. Now it is deliciously refreshing to breathe this atmosphere of whirling spray, to witness the wild gambols of these frisky streams, to hear the chorus of their thousand voices, from the tinkling treble of the tiny rill to the thundering bass of the distant river, all timed and tuned to the merry dancing of the mountain Undines.

The first leap made by the Skillet Fork is forty feet in the clear, and thence without a halt she goes plunging down a break-neck stairway, with a descent of some four or five hundred feet in half a mile's distance, where she joins the main stream of Blackwater, while in our enthusiasm we clap our hands and roar out, "Weel done, Cutty-sark!" This initial plunge is selected by our artist as one of the best-arranged pictures to be found in the mountains, and, in rendering the subject, he has lost nothing of its graceful forms and effective disposition of light and shadow; but, after all, the real fascination of the natural piece is in the exquisite freshness and variety of its tinting.

The tender opal of the narrow strip of sky; the soft, bluish-gray border of distant forest appearing above the fall; the sparkling amber of the water mingling and contrasted with the snowy whiteness of the boiling spray; the dark plumage of the stately hemlock; the glistening foliage and delicate-pink bloom of the rhododendron; the gemmy greenness of the moss-carpeted rocks; the luscious splendor of the pool at our feet, like a dancing caldron of calf's-foot jelly crowned with whipped syllabub—all combine to form a natural picture before which the most ambitious art may hang its head. Yet this wild region is full of such scenes, some of them far surpassing this in grandeur, if not in beauty of details.

And, in conclusion, we may pertinently ask, Will not some one of our famous masters of landscape-art who have buried the Hudson and White Hills under mountains of canvas, and venturously plucked the mighty hearts out of the distant Andes and Rocky Mountains, condescend to accept this challenge from the virgin wilderness of West Virginia?

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WILLIAM BART. W.A. Entered according to Act of Congress A.D. 1873, by D. Appleton & Co. in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington. S. BARRETT. W.A.

Lake Superior

(ENTRANCE TO BAPTISM BAY.)

New York, D. Appleton & Co.

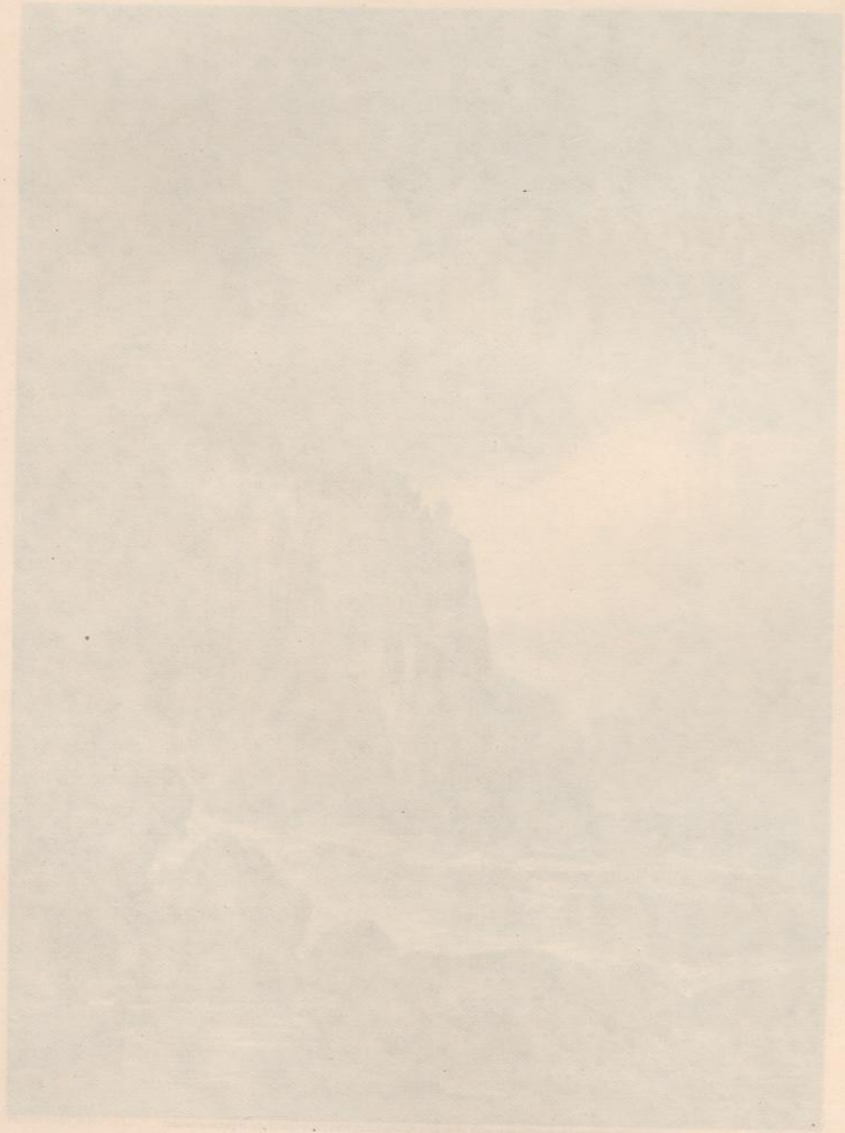
LAKE SUPERIOR.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY WILLIAM HENRY



Two hundred men were employed on the coast of Lake Superior. The first of these was a Frenchman and other Americans were sent to the same place by the United States Government. The first of these was a Frenchman and other Americans were sent to the same place by the United States Government. The first of these was a Frenchman and other Americans were sent to the same place by the United States Government.

Five years later came the first of the white men of Lake Superior, men who were sent to the Indians in the forest near the Mohawk River.



Lake Superior

FRANCIS H. BARTON, ENGR.

New York, H. Colver & Co.