



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, 1874

Mount Mansfield.

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MOUNT MANSFIELD.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY HARRY FENN.

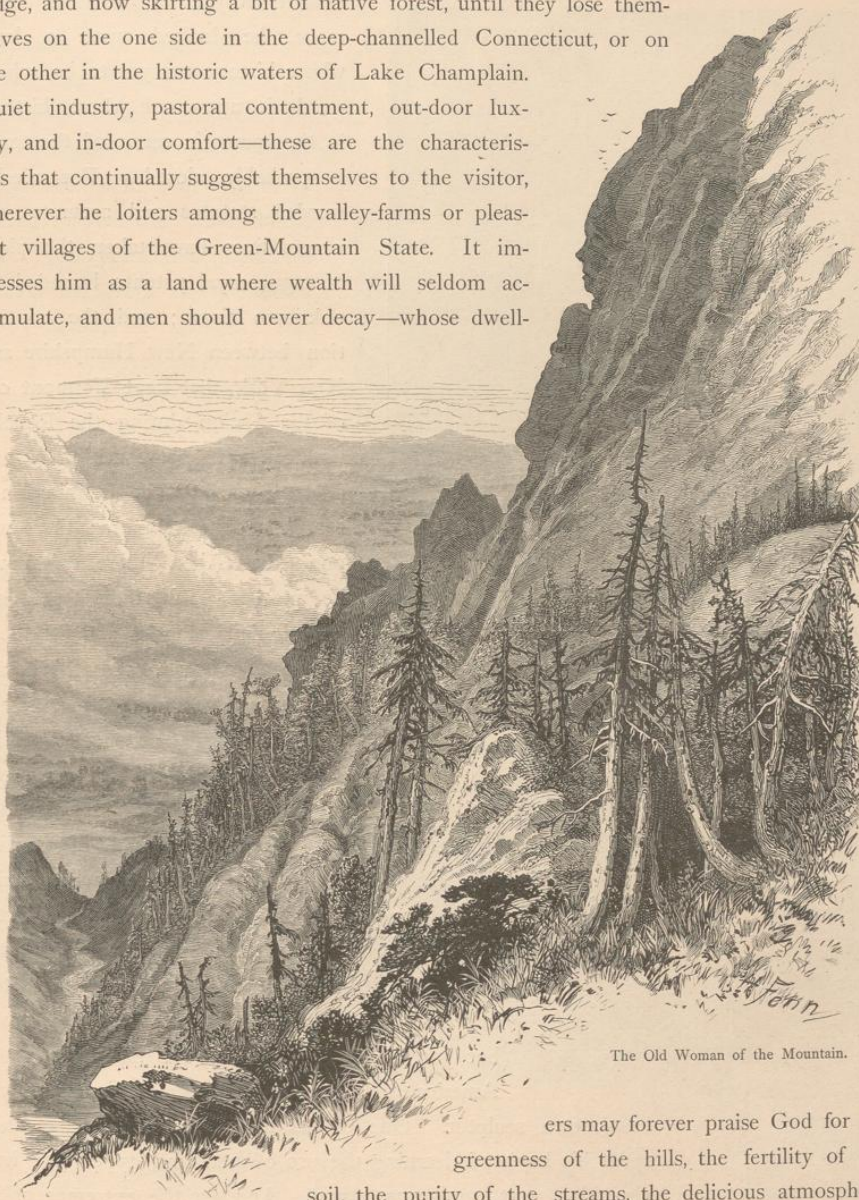


Rock of Terror.

VERMONT is, and perhaps ever will be, the most purely rural of all the older States. Though bordered by Lake Champlain, and pretty well supplied with railways, she seems to be aside from any great thoroughfare, and to hold her greenness nearly unsoiled by the dust of travel and traffic. Between the unyielding granite masses of the White-Mountain range on the one side, and the Adirondack Wilderness on the other, lies this happy valley of simple contentment, with its mellower soil and gentler water-courses, its thriftier farmers and more numerous herds, its marble-ledges, its fertile uplands, and its own mountains of gentler slope and softened outline.

Nearly through the middle runs the Green-Mountain range, giving rise to a thousand murmuring rivulets and modest rivers, that lapse down through green-browed hills and crumbling limestone-cliffs and sunny meadow-lands, now turned quickly by a mossy

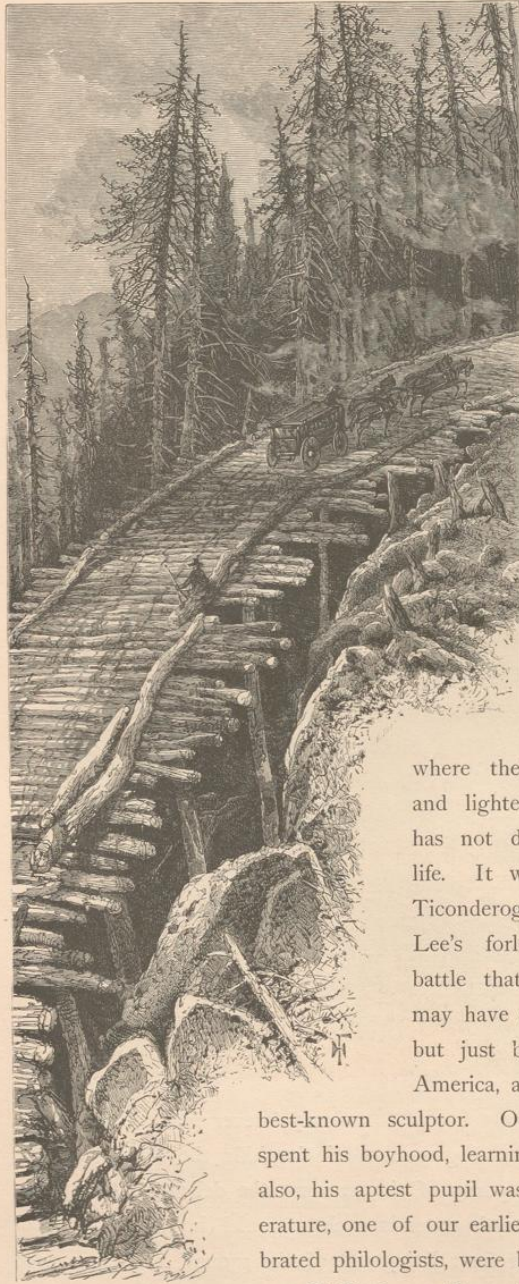
ledge, and now skirting a bit of native forest, until they lose themselves on the one side in the deep-channelled Connecticut, or on the other in the historic waters of Lake Champlain. Quiet industry, pastoral contentment, out-door luxury, and in-door comfort—these are the characteristics that continually suggest themselves to the visitor, wherever he loiters among the valley-farms or pleasant villages of the Green-Mountain State. It impresses him as a land where wealth will seldom accumulate, and men should never decay—whose dwell-



The Old Woman of the Mountain.

ers may forever praise God for the greenness of the hills, the fertility of the soil, the purity of the streams, the delicious atmosphere, and the mellow sunshine—where the earth extends such a genial invitation to labor that all must be allies, striving together for a living out of the ground, and none need be enemies, scheming to get it out of each other.

When Jacques Cartier, a third of a millennium ago, descried these peaks from



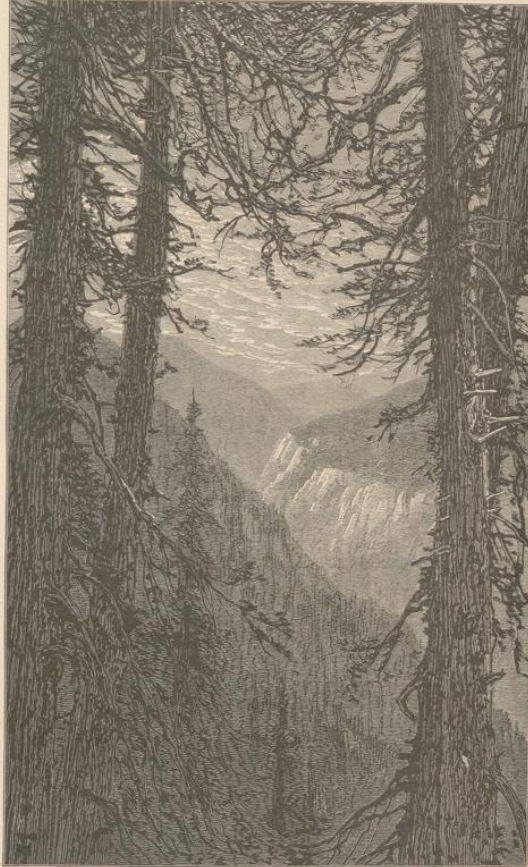
Corduoy-Bridge, Mount-
Mansfield Road.

Mount Royal, by the St. Lawrence, he looked upon a land whose history was yet to be, where we look upon one whose history, in the romantic sense of the term, is probably closed. For nicely-worded statutes and accurate surveyors' lines have taken the place of vague royal patents, bounded by unknown rivers; and the contention between New Hampshire and New York, that kept Vermont out of the Union during the Revolution, can have no repetition or parallel. There was one Bennington—there need be no more; there was one Ethan Allen—there can never be another. But, though the days of colonial jealousies and rebellious warfare are over, and this quiet people are counting their cattle and weighing their butter-firkins

where their grandsires shouldered their muskets and lighted beacon-fires, the glory of manhood has not departed with the romance of frontier-life. It was the sons of the men who carried Ticonderoga and Crown Point who annihilated Lee's forlorn hope at Gettysburg, turning the battle that turned the civil war. Vermont, too, may have a history of literature and art, which is but just begun. Here lies the marble-quarry of America, and here sprung America's earliest and best-known sculptor. One of her most famous journalists here spent his boyhood, learning the use of pen and type; and here, also, his aptest pupil was reared. And, for the extremes of literature, one of our earliest humorists, and one of our most celebrated philologists, were born in these same verdurous valleys.

If Professor Rogers's theory of mountain-formation be correct—that elevated ranges have been produced by a sort of tidal

wave of the earth's once plastic crust—then the Green Mountains must be the softened undulation that followed the greater billow which crested and broke in Mount Washington and Mount Lafayette, leaving its form forever fixed in the abrupt and rugged declivities of the White Hills and the Franconia group. The Green Mountains form the northern portion of what is known as the Appalachian Chain. Their wooded sides obtained for them from the early French settlers the term *Monts Verts*, and from this phrase is derived the name of the State in which they are situated. The continuation of the range through Massachusetts and Connecticut is also known to geographers as the Green Mountains, but by the inhabitants of those States other names are applied to them—as the Hoosac Mountains, in Massachusetts, for that portion lying near the Connecticut River, and constituting the most elevated portion of the State between this river and the Housatonic; and the Taconic Mountains for the western part of the range, which lies along the New-York line. These ranges extend into Vermont near the southwest corner of the State, and join in a continuous line of hills that pass through the western portion of the State nearly to Montpelier. Without attaining very great elevation, these hills form



View from Mountain-Road.

an unbroken water-shed between the affluents of the Connecticut on the east, and the Hudson and Lake Champlain on the west, and about equidistant between them. South from Montpelier two ranges extend—one toward the northeast, nearly parallel with the Connecticut River, dividing the waters flowing east from those flowing west; and the other, which is the higher and more broken, extending nearly north, and near Lake Champlain. Through this range the Onion, Lamoille, and Winooski Rivers make their

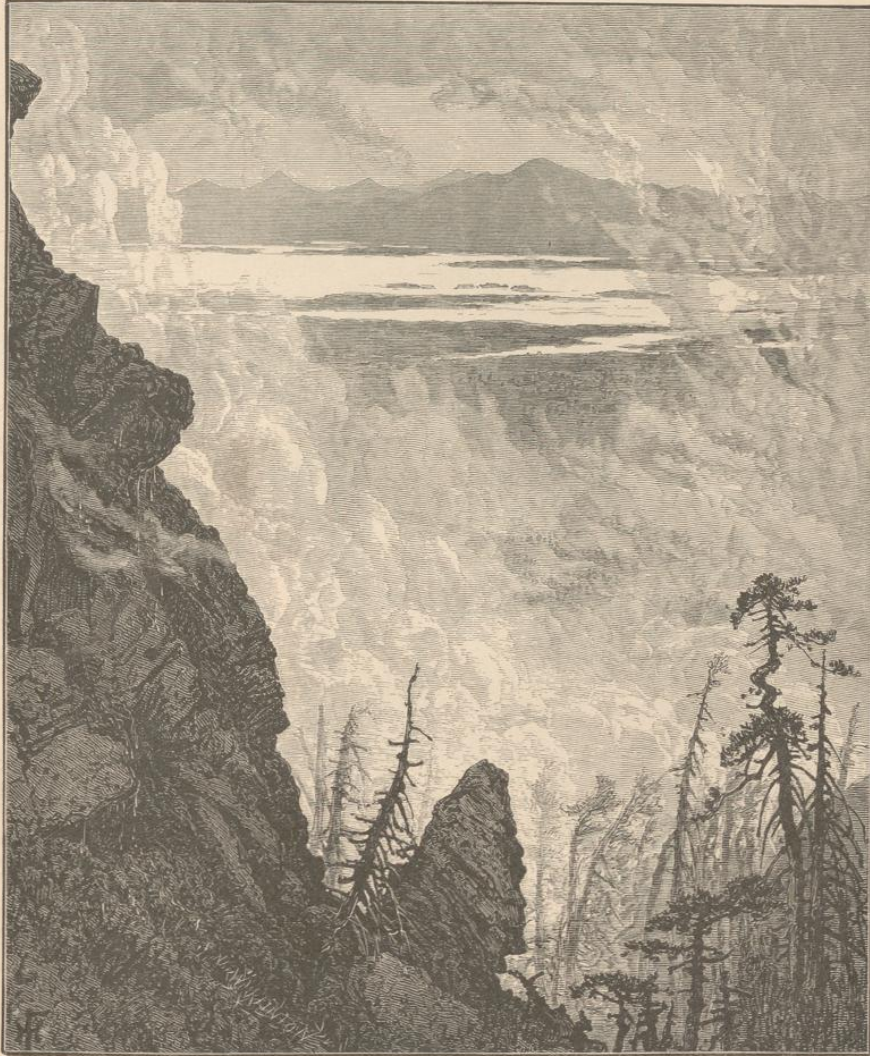
way toward the lake. Among the principal peaks are Mount Mansfield, Camel's Hump, both situated near Burlington; Killington's, near Rutland; and Ascutney, in Windsor County, near the Connecticut, and which has been illustrated in our article on the Connecticut River.

Mount Mansfield, the highest of the Green-Mountain range, is situated near the northern extremity, about twenty miles, in a direct line west, or a little north of west, from Burlington, on Lake Champlain. This mountain has been less popular among tourists and pleasure-seekers than the White Mountains and the Catskills, principally because its attractions have been little known. The pencil of Gifford has made it familiar to art-lovers; but literature has so far done little toward making its peaks, cliffs, and ravines, known to the general public. That it possesses points of interest and picturesque features quite as worthy the appreciation of lovers of Nature as the White Mountains or the Catskills do, Mr. Fenn's illustrations fully show. Of recent years, it has been more visited than formerly; and a good hotel at Stowe, five miles from its base, has now every summer its throng of tourists. There is also a Summit House, situated at the base of the highest peak known as the Nose, where travellers may find plain but suitable accommodation if they wish to prolong their stay on the mountain-top overnight. Mansfield is conveniently reached by rail from Burlington to Waterbury Station, on the Vermont Central Railway; and thence by Concord coaches ten miles to Stowe. From Stowe a carriage-road reaches to the summit of the mountain.

As in the case of nearly all mountains, there is some difference in the various estimates of the height of Mansfield, the most generally accepted statement being four thousand three hundred and forty-eight feet—a few hundred feet in excess of the highest of the Catskills. Popularly, the summit of Mansfield is likened to the up-turned face of a giant, showing the Nose, the Chin, and the Lip. It is not difficult, with a little aid of the imagination, to trace this profile as the mountain is viewed from Stowe. The Nose, so called, has a projection of four hundred feet, and the Chin all the decision of character indicated by a forward thrust of eight hundred feet. The distance from Nose to Chin is a mile and a half. The Nostril is discovered in a perpendicular wall of rock. This mountain is, moreover, not without the usual number of faces and resemblances to familiar objects, among the most notable of which is that described as the "Old Woman of the Mountain," represented in one of our engravings. She leans back in her easy-chair, and her work has fallen into her lap, while she gazes out, in dreamy meditation, across the misty valley.

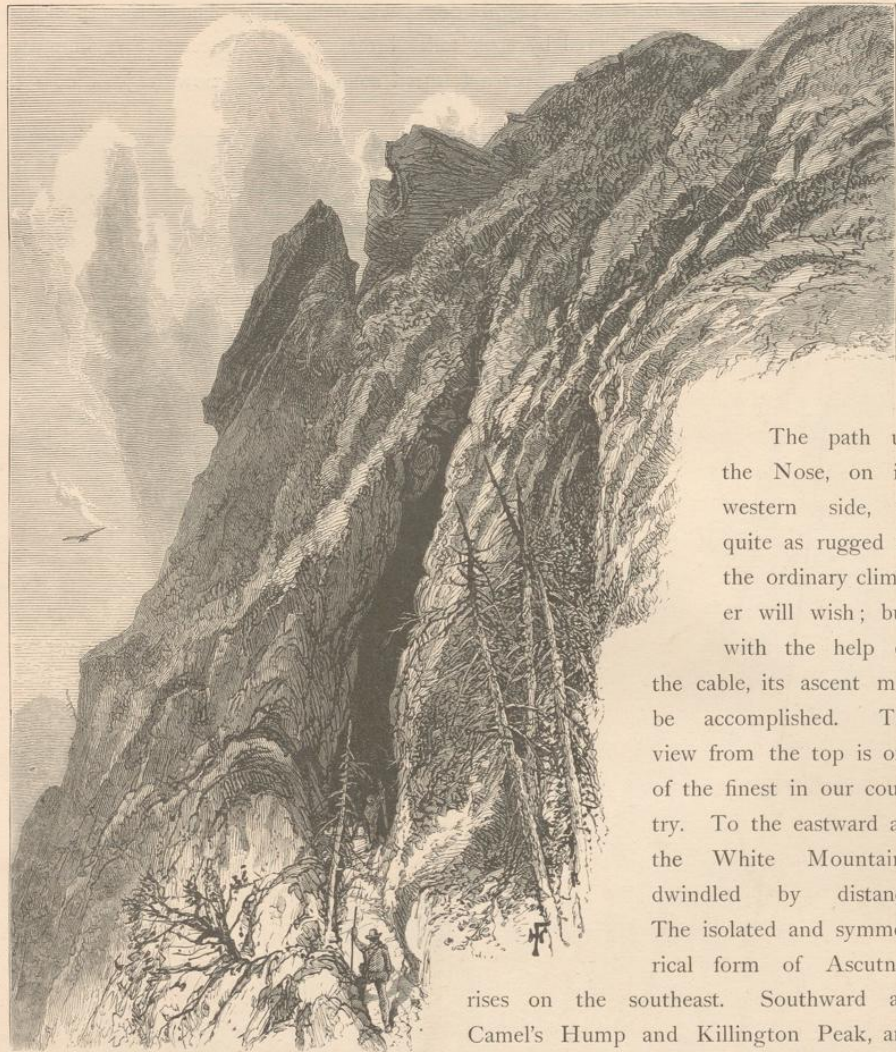
The ascent of the mountain is not difficult, which the hardy pedestrian would be wise to attempt on foot. Carriages from Stowe make the journey at regular periods. The ride up the steep road-way is full of interest, the changing views affording momentarily new and beautiful pictures. The mountain, until near the summit, is very heavily timbered; and the glimpses downward, through entanglements of trees into the deep

ravines, are full of superb beauty. Neighboring peaks continually change their positions; lesser ones are no longer obscured by their taller brothers; while successive ravines yawn beneath us. Now the road passes over a terraced solid rock, and now it jolts over the



Glimpse of Lake Champlain, from Summit.

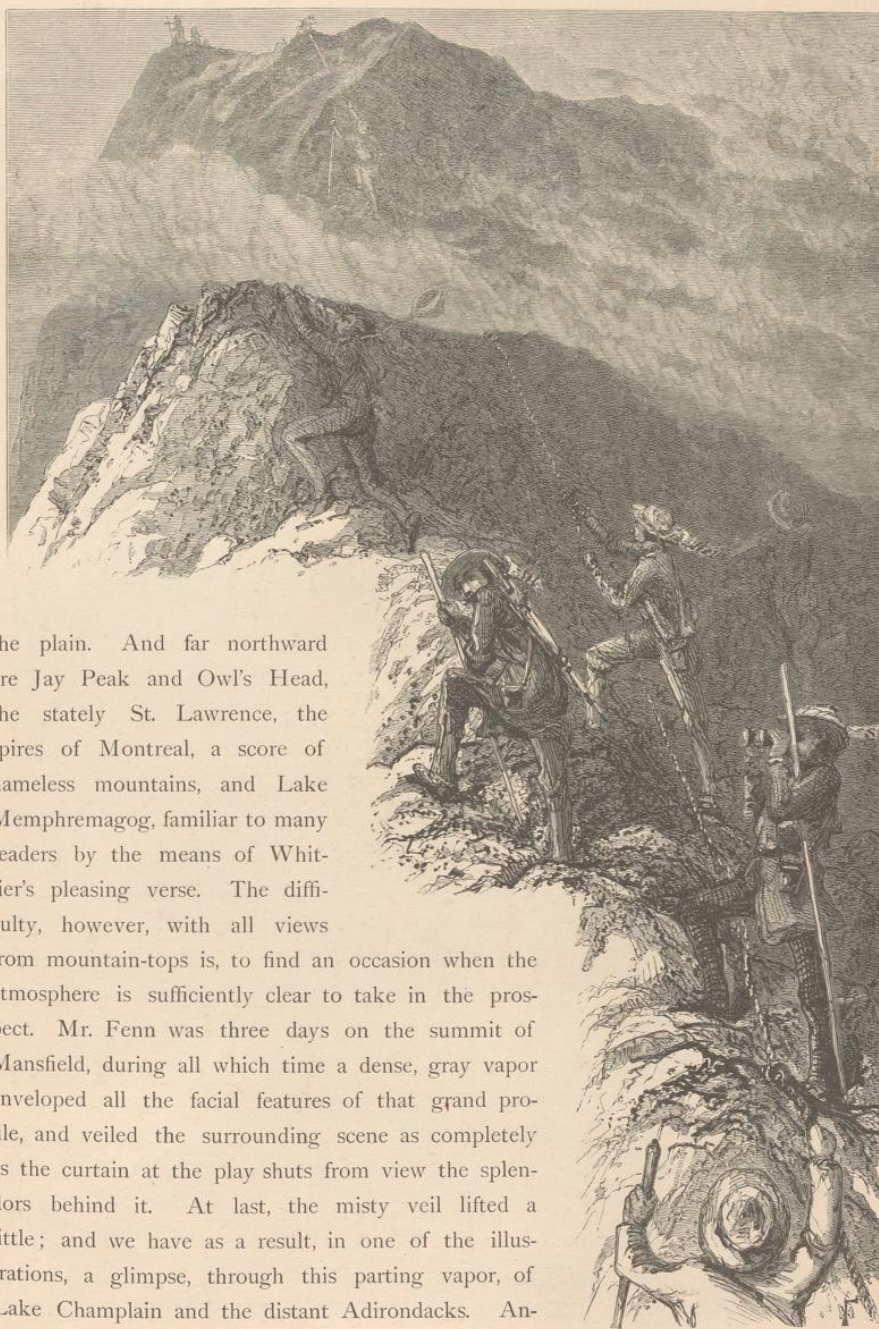
crazy scaffolding of a corduroy-bridge that spans a chasm in the mountain-side; soon the forest-growths begin to thin out perceptibly; and at last we reach the Summit House, amid masses of bare rocks, at the foot of the huge cliff known as the Nose.



Cave under Lower Lip.

The path up the Nose, on its western side, is quite as rugged as the ordinary climber will wish; but, with the help of the cable, its ascent may be accomplished. The view from the top is one of the finest in our country. To the eastward are the White Mountains, dwindled by distance. The isolated and symmetrical form of Ascutney rises on the southeast. Southward are Camel's Hump and Killington Peak, and innumerable smaller elevations of the Green-Mountain range—respectable and re-

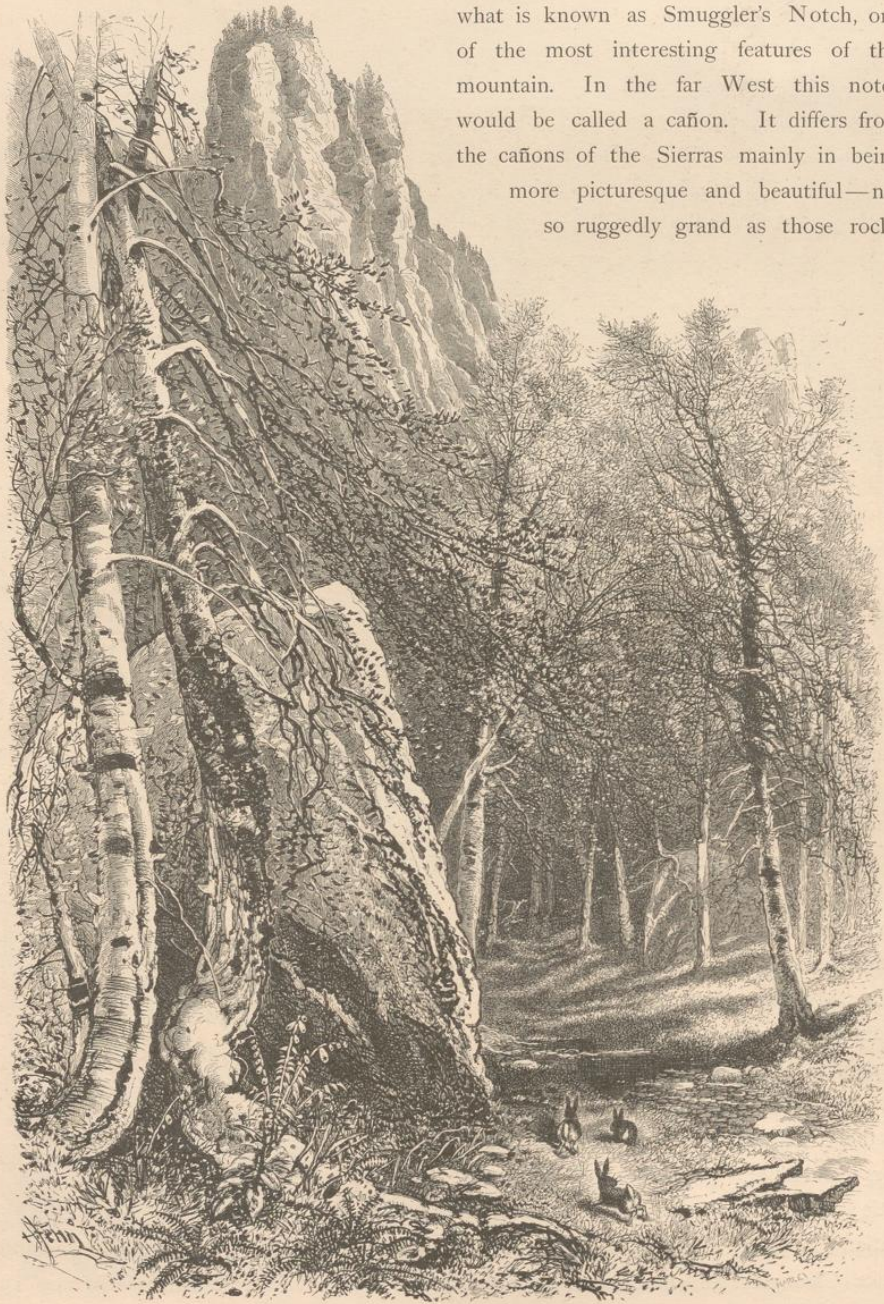
spected in their own townships, doubtless, but here losing much of their individual importance, like monstrosities at a fair. Westward lies a considerable expanse of lowland, with many sparkling streams winding about among the farms and forests and villages, the city of Burlington in the distance, and beyond them the beautiful expanse of Lake Champlain, with the blue ridges of the Adirondacks serrating the farthest horizon. On the northwest is the Lamoille Valley, watered by the Lamoille and Winooski Rivers, that tumble through the depressions of the outliers, and dream their way across



the plain. And far northward are Jay Peak and Owl's Head, the stately St. Lawrence, the spires of Montreal, a score of nameless mountains, and Lake Memphremagog, familiar to many readers by the means of Whittier's pleasing verse. The difficulty, however, with all views from mountain-tops is, to find an occasion when the atmosphere is sufficiently clear to take in the prospect. Mr. Fenn was three days on the summit of Mansfield, during all which time a dense, gray vapor enveloped all the facial features of that grand profile, and veiled the surrounding scene as completely as the curtain at the play shuts from view the splendors behind it. At last, the misty veil lifted a little; and we have as a result, in one of the illustrations, a glimpse, through this parting vapor, of Lake Champlain and the distant Adirondacks. Another view shows us the mountain-cliffs looming

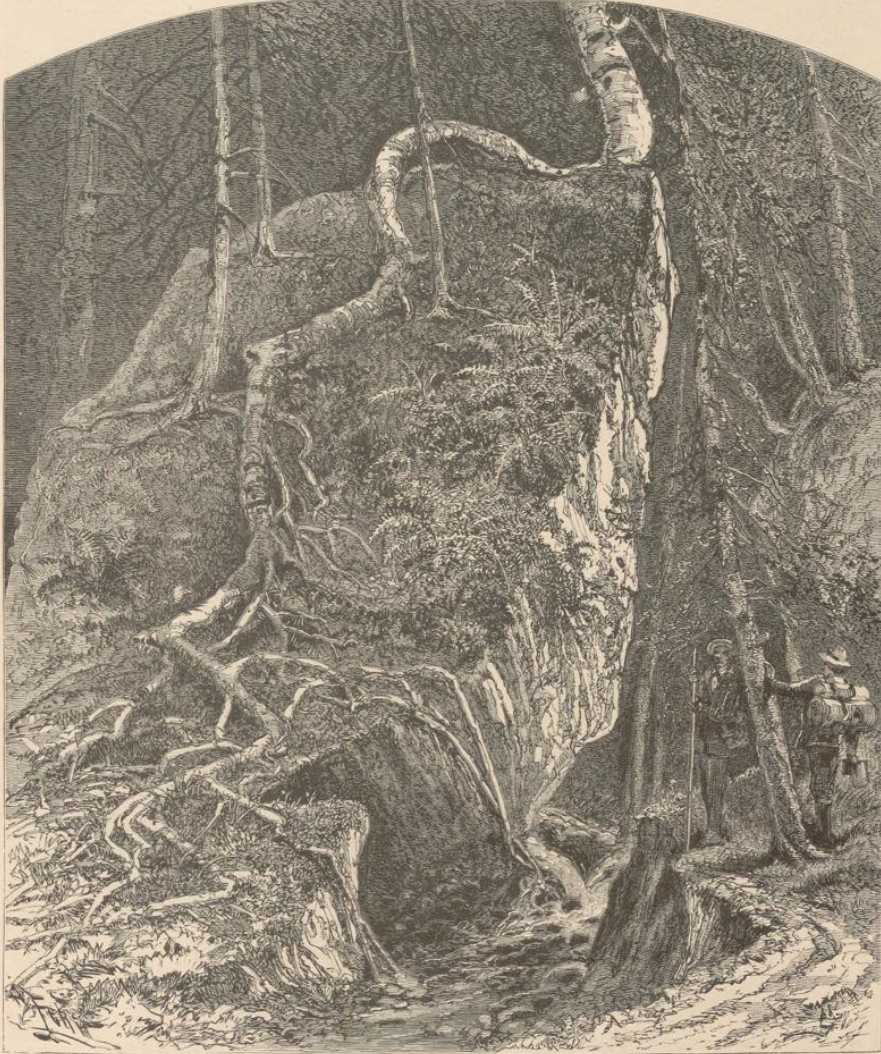
Climbing the Nose.

through the mist, affording a glimpse of what is known as Smuggler's Notch, one of the most interesting features of this mountain. In the far West this notch would be called a cañon. It differs from the cañons of the Sierras mainly in being more picturesque and beautiful—not so ruggedly grand as those rocky



Smuggler's Notch.

walls, it must be understood, but the abundant moisture has filled it with superb forest-growths, has covered all the rocks with ferns and lichens, has painted the stone with delicious tints. The sides of the Notch rise to an altitude of about a thousand feet, the



Rocks in Smuggler's Notch.

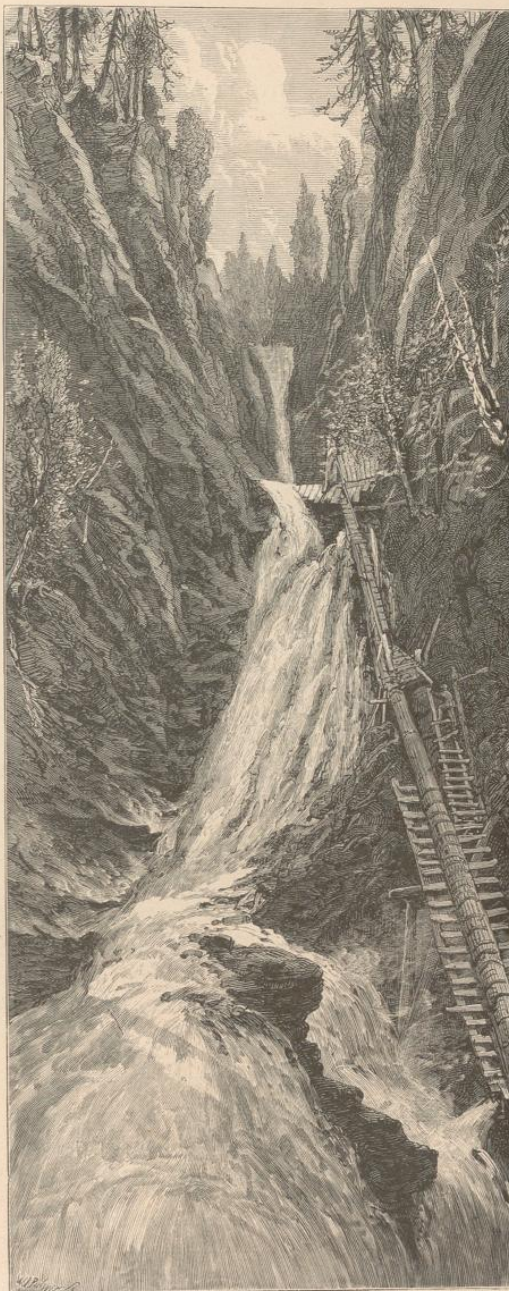
upper verge of the cliffs rising above the fringe of mountain-trees that cling to their sides. The floor of the Notch is covered with immense bowlders and fallen masses of rocks, which in this half-lighted vault have partly crumbled, and given foothold for vege-



LOOKING TOWARD SMUGGLER'S NOTCH, FROM THE NOSE.

tation. Mosses and ferns cover them, and in many instances great trees have found nourishment in the crevices, sometimes huge, gnarled roots encircling the rocks like immense anacondas. The painter could find no more delightful studies in color than this scene affords. At the time visited by the artist and the writer, there had been a three days' rain. The stream that flowed through the gorge was swollen into a torrent. Over the top of every cliff came pouring extemporized water-falls and cascades, while the foliage, of fairly tropical abundance, shone with a brilliant intensity of green. Smuggler's Notch has a hundred poetical charms that deserve for it a better name. It is so called because once used as a hiding-place for goods smuggled over the Canada border.

Another very charming picture in this Mansfield gallery is Moss-Glen Cascade, a water-fall that comes tumbling down, in successive leaps, through a narrow gorge. The pipe, or flume, supported by the rude ladders on the right, conveys a portion of the water to the wheel of a saw-mill. It seems like an impertinence to introduce any mechanical contrivance into so exquisitely wild a bit of scenery as this; for the brook is emphatically "a gushing child of Nature," not intended for homely usefulness.



Moss-Glen Cascade.