



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

Valley Of The Housatonic.

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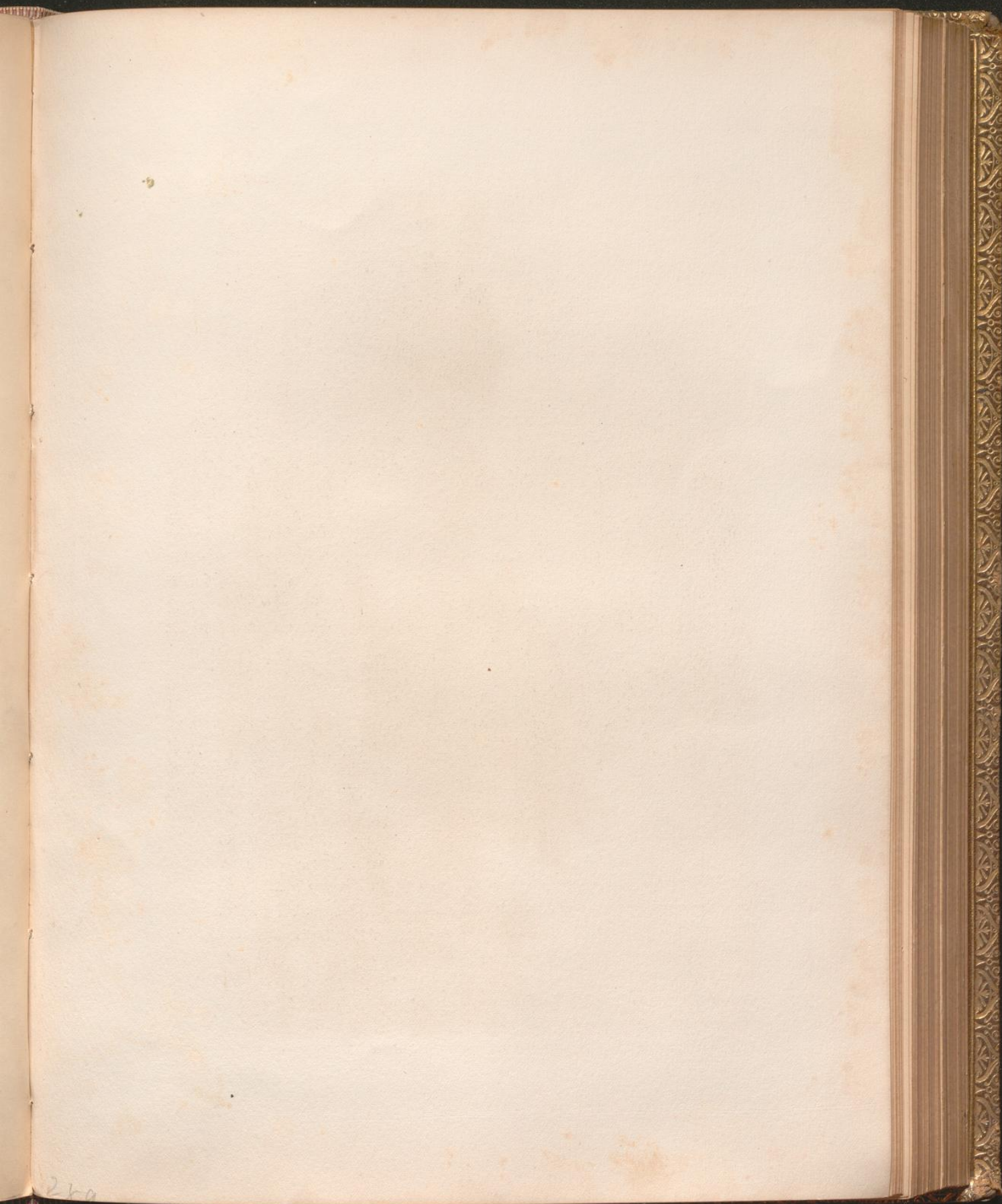
THE VALLEY OF THE HOUSATONIC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY J. DOUGLAS WOODWARD.



Mouth of the Housatonic.

THERE are few New-England rivers of any considerable length which do not present, in the range of their flow, not only a great variety, but also a striking contrast, of aspects. Rising ordinarily in the hills as sparkling rivulets, they dance and chatter, or foam and fret, into the valleys, slowly gaining sobriety of motion with the rapid growth of their bulk, which they roll, at length, with imposing amplitude and becoming dignity, into broader waters, or into the arms of the all-embracing sea.





FROM A SCETCH BY A. F. BELLOWS.
Engraved according to an original by E. W. HUTCH, Esq. in the office of G. G. & Co. Lithographers, New York.

The Housatonic

FROM A SCETCH BY A. F. BELLOWS.

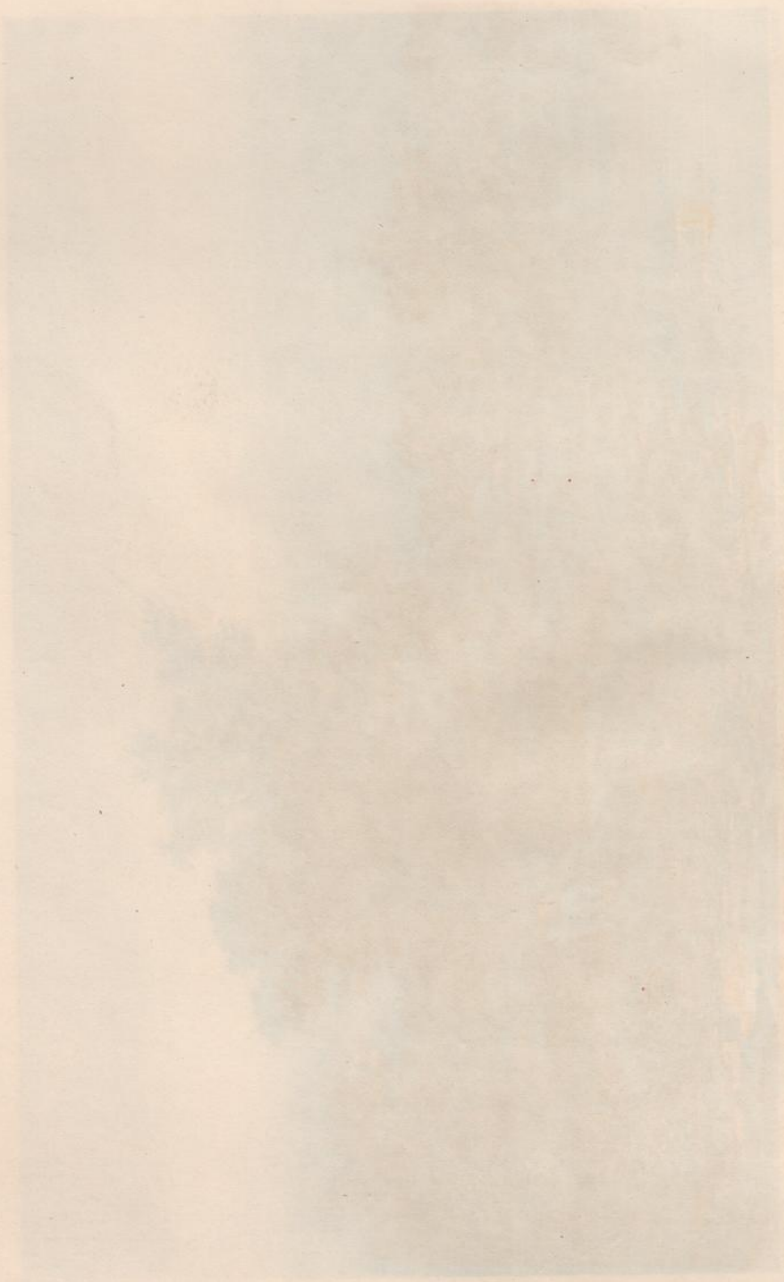
New York, D. Appleton & Co.

The Housatonic River is no exception to this rule. It springs in the beautiful Berkshire region of Massachusetts, where its first ripples reflect the crests of grand hills; and, after flowing for a century of happy miles amid scenes that do not suffer it to quite forget its mountain-cradled fountains, it glides gracefully enough through the plains of old Stratford, on the Connecticut shore, and recedes thereafter in the expanse of Long-Island Sound.

The journey along the valley of the Housatonic and beyond it to that of the Hoosic,



upon which the valley of the Hoosic seems to have been himself to accompany it, may be fitly symbolized to him by the ~~mountain~~ ~~with~~ whose faint, early light it was begun. The gray, misty peaks of the Hoosic are well harmonized with the broad, pale shimmering of the river, and yet ~~seem~~ ~~to~~ ~~be~~ ~~lost~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~wide~~ ~~waste~~ ~~of~~ ~~waters~~ ~~beyond~~ ~~it~~. There was beauty enough, however, in the



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The journey along the valley of the Housatonic, and beyond it to that of the Hoosic,



The Housatonic at Derby.

upon which the reader of this sketch should imagine himself to accompany us, may be fitly symbolized to him by the mid-October day with whose faint, early light it was begun. The gray, misty gleams of the young morning harmonized well with the broad, pale shimmering of the river that was merging—consciously, it may be—its individuality into the wide waste of waters beyond it. There was beauty enough, however, in the



Housatonic Valley, near Kent Plains.

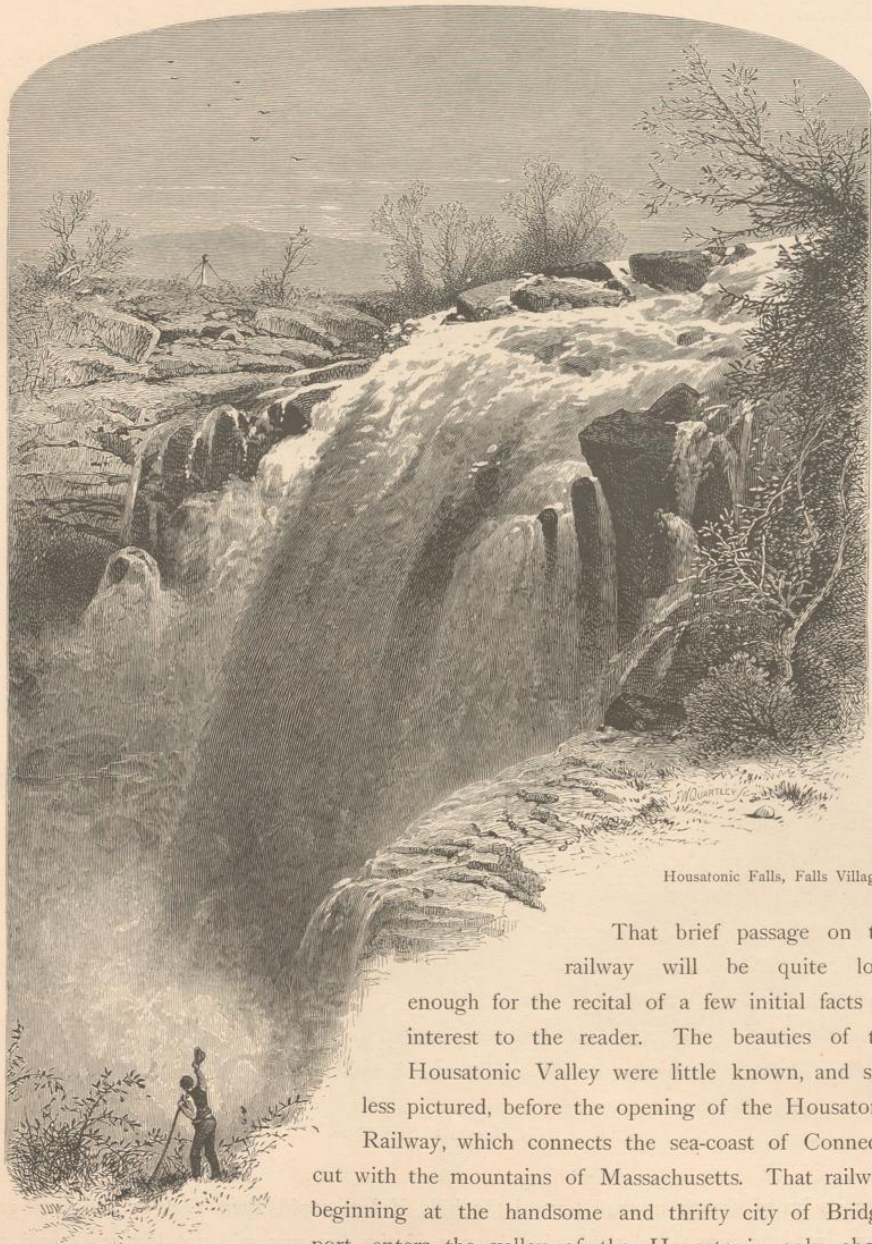
pink dappling of the sky, tingeing the clouds, the quiet river and bay alike, with Aurora's first glad smile; in the gentle swell of the green land, dotted over with white homes; in the flush of the wooded slopes, where the maples were mocking the eastern horizon with the faintly-kindling splendor of their ripened leaves—there was charm enough in all this to give pause to impatient feet, until the Sun had rent the veils of mist and cloud, and poured from his golden chalice a partial glory upon the scene chosen by our artist for the frontispiece of this sketch.

The change from quietness to romance in the aspects of the Housatonic Valley,



Old Furnace, at Kent Plains.

from its broad mouth upward toward the hills, if less rapid than that of the cool, gray dawn into the warm and shadowless beauty of the day, was still not less real; and our advance, helped at one point by the swift progress of the railway-train, brought us ere long into a region where such speed, amid the surrounding loveliness, would have been an impertinence, if not, indeed, a penalty.



Housatonic Falls, Falls Village.

That brief passage on the railway will be quite long enough for the recital of a few initial facts of interest to the reader. The beauties of the Housatonic Valley were little known, and still less pictured, before the opening of the Housatonic Railway, which connects the sea-coast of Connecticut with the mountains of Massachusetts. That railway, beginning at the handsome and thrifty city of Bridgeport, enters the valley of the Housatonic only above Brookfield. Thence it traverses the valley closely through nearly all its remaining extent; and there are few stations beyond at which the tourist might not tarry, and, with brief excursions to the right or left, fill his eye with the charms of mountain-outlines,

valley-reaches, crystal lakes, and silvery water-falls. There is, therefore, quite a long interval of the valley of the Housatonic which the tourist cannot, if he would, follow by the railway. He may, however, pursue it, for its first half-score of miles, from Stratford, on the rails of the Naugatuck road; and this will afford him pleasing glimpses of the river where it is joined by the noisy Naugatuck, and where the busy manufacturing interests of such villages as Derby and Birmingham subsidize and utilize the water-power of the streams, with little regard to picturesqueness of appliance or effect.

Of the bridges that span the rivers here, one, at least, is pretty enough to have taken the eye of our artist; and, with the accessories of fine old elms, and the placid, mirror-like face of the stream, it can hardly fail to renew its fascination on the page.

From Derby to New Milford the river is untrifled in its course by the shrill whistle and the crashing roll of the locomotive. There is too little, perhaps, of the romantic in this twenty-mile interval to tempt any one but the determined pedestrian to follow the banks of the stream.

An aside, by way of Stratford again, and of Bridgeport, will speedily overpass all the initial tameness of the merely undulating region near the coast, and bring into view the swelling symptoms of those hills which are soon to overhang—now with gloom, and anon with purple glow—the silvery lapses of the Housatonic.

If this sketch were not shut up to narrow limits, but diffusiveness were allowed, the question of the origin and meaning of the name "Housatonic" might be discussed. There was the usual variety of orthographic variations in it before it reached its present easy and euphonious form, which is a grateful refinement, probably, of the aboriginal title by which the Indians designated it. Its signification is "Flowing (or Winding) Waters;" and it is therefore no misnomer. There is the authority of one antiquarian for a primitive name of the river, of which the present appellation gives not the faintest prevision. The old Stratford records, we are told, make it the "Paugusset;" and we are quite content to have this name as mythical as it is remote.

This brief digression, historical and otherwise, has taken less of our time than the train requires from Bridgeport to New Milford. And now the railway tourist must use his eyes diligently to catch a tittle of the picturesque shapes which will pass before them as he is whirled—all too swiftly—along the west bank of the lovely river. He must be satisfied with glimpses only. The western hills, which will soon be mountains, shift rapidly their wavy outlines; and the autumnal hues of their thick forest-growth, which are fast deepening in tone, flash on his sight with weird effects. All the scene is, to him, simply kaleidoscopic—hill and vale, river and rustic bridges, white farm-houses and red barns, mingling together to surprise rather than really to satisfy the eye, which yet declines to linger on the attractive scene.

At Kent Plains the valley opens with such charming aspects as to well repay the patient tourist for his pause, even if it is brief. He will find it worth while to do a

little climbing, if it is only to obtain a clear idea of the shape and scope of the noble valley he is traversing, girt closely on the west by almost abrupt hill-sides, and, on the other hand, spreading out into sweet pastoral reaches and green undulations.

His "*little climbing*" will not avail, however, to lift him to the level of the Spectacle Ponds, which are two very unique, but quite elevated, oval lakelets, fringed by



Old Bridge, Blackberry River, near Canaan.

dense woods, and connected by a slender water-belt, or strait. These lie west of the river, and are on the way to a fine hill-top, which commands distant and beautiful views across the Hudson.

The old furnace which the artist has so faithfully reproduced with his pencil will suggest to the mind one of the industries of the Housatonic Valley—the working of the iron which is found in many localities.

It would be doing less than justice to happy historic memories not to recall, at Kent, the story of the Schaghticoke Indians, among whom, long ago, the Moravians founded a mission, and of whom there are yet to be found descendants of a mongrel order, their aboriginal nature and habits strangely mingled and overlaid with the externals of civilization.

A day or two would be well spent between Kent and Canaan—a northward reach of twenty-five miles, which brings the valley of the Housatonic close upon the dividing line between Connecticut and Massachusetts. This interval is rich in picturesque delights. The lofty ridge has now assumed a true mountain-aspect, and lifts up, here and there, such noble crowns to the sky as tempt the tourist to unfold, with the legendary youth—

“A banner with the strange device,
‘Excelsior!’”

Falls Village is the centre of some of the chief attractions of the section under notice. There is a chance here, moreover, for the enjoyment of thoroughly rural entertainment, at a little hostelry nestled in a glen on the side of the river opposite to the village, which, like many of the Housatonic villages, is less picturesque than its accessories. Close at hand are the falls of the Housatonic—the most prominent, perhaps, of the cataracts in Connecticut. They are worthy of attention, but it is difficult to avoid some feeling of vexation on finding that near views of them are blemished by the unsightly encroachments of that barbarism which, under the misnomers of “civilization” and “progress,” clutter our water-falls and rapids with the ugly shanties and shops where dwell and toil the gnomes of factories, forges, and furnaces, useful indeed, but which we would fain banish into caverns, or at least into unlovely corners. These falls are commonly known as the Canaan Falls, and fill up the whole breadth of the stream with their tumultuous dash and roar over a steep, terraced ledge of dark rock. Their descent possibly exceeds fifty feet; and, seen at a distance, and especially under the sweet, soft magic of the moonlight, they inspire no small degree of admiration in the sensitive mind.

Mount Prospect rises about two miles from these falls, in a northwestern direction; and its very summit may be reached in a carriage, by the rude track which the woodmen follow with their teams. When gained, it opens to the view of the tourist such a scene as he can obtain from few other mountain-crests in the valley, though some are of more renown than this. The great bosom of the interval between the east and west ranges of hills is heaving with its green billows beneath him. A thousand wavy crests are in his view; and, threading its way near and afar, the silvery line of the river stretches amid picturesque homesteads, which now and then cluster into villages. A deep, dark and ugly fissure into wild, outlying rocks, at the foot of this mountain, bears the appropriate but not attractive name of the Wolf's Den.

Within an hour's walk of the Great Falls lies the pretty village of Salisbury, which, while it is not a railway-station—to its positive advantage in all picturesque respects—is, nevertheless, the social centre of the beautiful and populous county of Litchfield. Lying close under the deep shadows of the great Taconics, Mount Riga may be said to



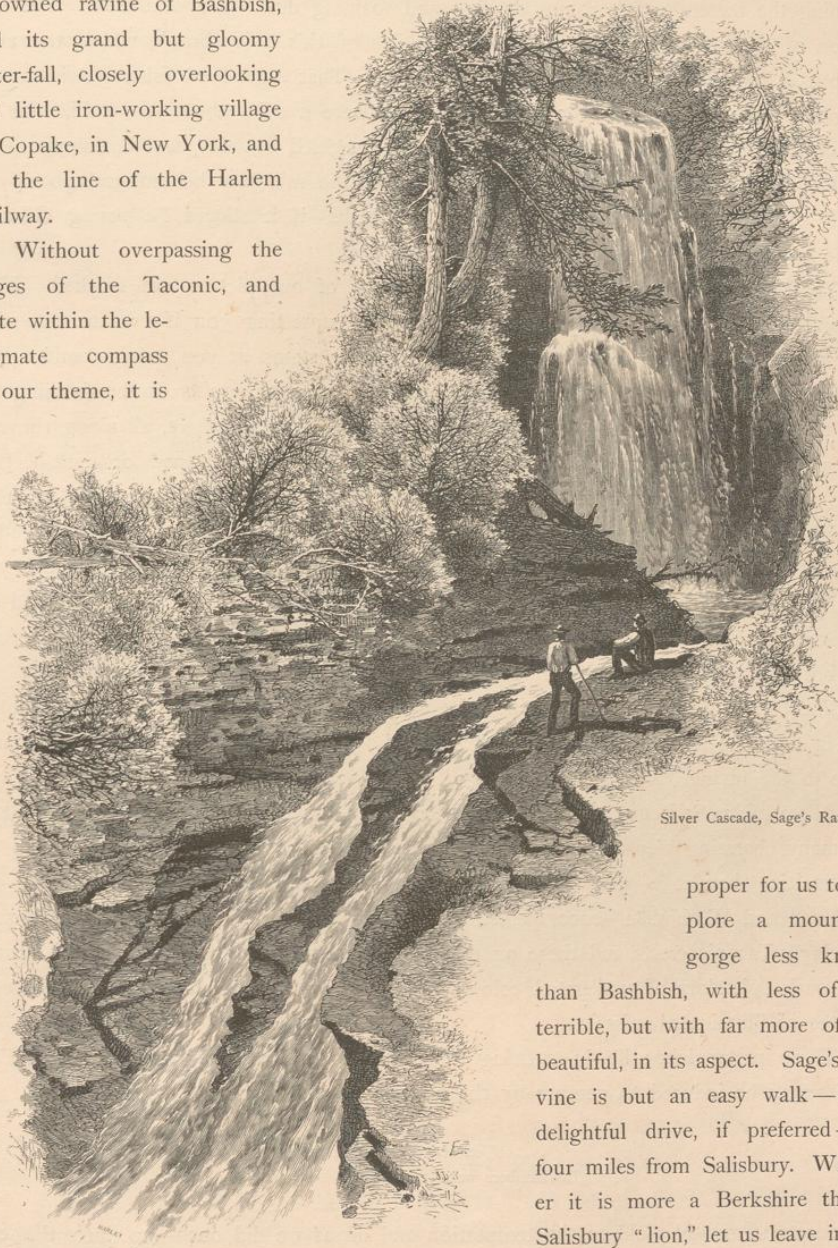
Old Mill, Sage's Ravine.

be its especial guardian, whose noble crest, known as Bald Peak, alternately smiles upon it in sunshine and frowns upon it in storm.

It would carry the reader quite out of the Housatonic Valley to press him beyond Bald Peak on to the Dome, and westward still, a dozen miles, until we came to the

renowned ravine of Bashbish, and its grand but gloomy water-fall, closely overlooking the little iron-working village of Copake, in New York, and on the line of the Harlem Railway.

Without overpassing the ridges of the Taconic, and quite within the legitimate compass of our theme, it is



Silver Cascade, Sage's Ravine.

proper for us to explore a mountain-gorge less known than Bashbish, with less of the terrible, but with far more of the beautiful, in its aspect. Sage's Ravine is but an easy walk—or a delightful drive, if preferred—of four miles from Salisbury. Whether it is more a Berkshire than a Salisbury "lion," let us leave in the doubt we cannot now resolve. It

lies along the dividing line of towns and States alike, and is certainly a grand bisector.

At the mouth of this noble ravine there are a fine old mill, and a picturesque bridge

spanning the torrent which comes dashing and foaming down the wild cleft. The suggestion of trout-treasures in the pools and eddies of this noisy brook, which the artist has put in his picture, is by no means gratuitous. That eager-eyed fisherman is sure of his game, unless his looks belie him; and, if he were a mile above the mill, with his rod and line he might still fill his creel with the speckled beauties, and be happy.

Leave the roar of the falls and the clatter of the mill-gear behind, and go up the ravine, with some one to show you the possible paths—if it should be young Gilmore, of the contiguous iron-furnace, you will be fortunate.

There is hard climbing before the Twin Falls of our picture are reached. Your feet will sink in clumps of moss and decayed wood, upsetting you if you are not wary. You must cling to birch-boles, and often to slenderer stems, as you swing round opposing barriers of rock. You may get a foot-bath, or worse, as you cross the foaming torrent to find an easier path on the other side. But here and there, all along the wild way, are pretty cascades, tortuous twists of the stream, gayly-lichened or dark-beetling rocks, mossy nooks or gloomy tarns, and, overhead, maples and birches, mingling their rare autumnal splendors of red and gold with the sombre greens of hemlocks, and cedars, and pines. The glory above, and the dash and foam at your very feet, will stir your soul, if Nature's charms can ever do so. Two hours will suffice for the ravine, and tire you at their close, but no consciousness of fatigue will avail to mar your sense of the rare beauty and picturesqueness of the whole scene.

The thrifty Berkshire farmer, whose hospitable homestead lies just north of the old mill, is the descendant and inheritor of him who gave his honest though unromantic name to the ravine, "a hundred years ago."

A week in Salisbury would be none too much time for the leisurely enjoyment of the many charming views to be found in its neighborhood. There, very near to the iron-smelting hamlet of Chapinville, spread the sweet waters of the Twin Lakes—the Washinee and Washineën—encompassed by winding drives, with ever-shifting visions of the kingly Taconic crests, and these, on the nether slopes, displaying, in the bright autumn days, such splendors of variegated color as would intoxicate with delight the heart of a devotee of illuminated missals.

These pretty lakes lie in enticing proximity to a limestone cave, into which the tourist may be induced to venture by the promise of rare visions

". . . of stalactites and stalagmites,
In chambers weird and dim."

And, lest he should yield to the temptation and do as we did once—go into the cave with an inadequate supply of candles, and pay for the improvidence by half a day's incarceration in total darkness and in equally dense impatience—let him be warned to take care with whom he goes, and, above all, to take with him some extra "dips." With

these precautions, it is quite possible that the Salisbury Cave may be for him a place of pleasanter memories than it is to us, as we review our adventures in that part of the Housatonic Valley.

Canaan, near the outgoing of the river and valley from the Connecticut border, is an important station on the two railways—the Housatonic and the Connecticut Western—at their common intersection. A pretty village in itself, it has its special picturesqueness along the pleasant little valley of the Blackberry River, on whose banks it lies.

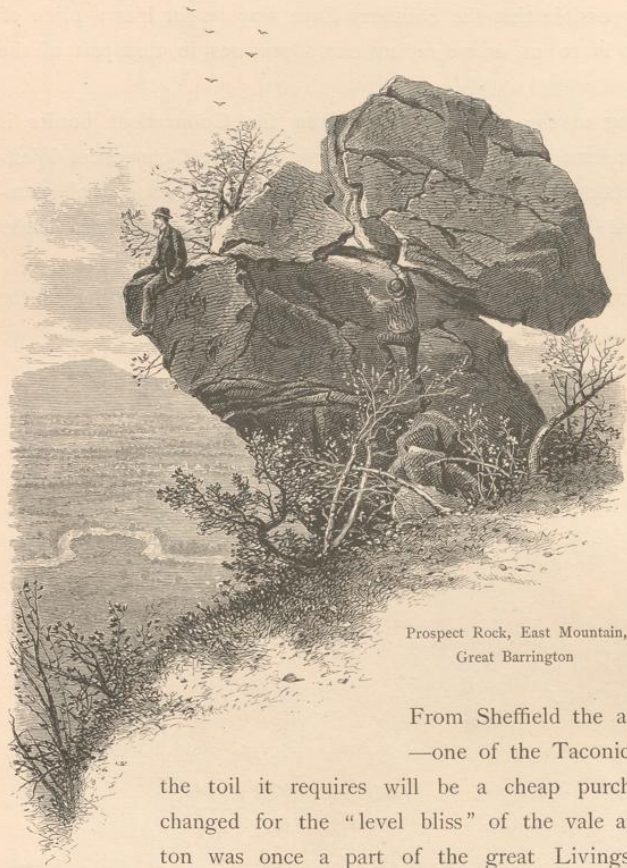
Leaving it, the tourist crosses, almost immediately, the southern boundary-line of the



Mount Washington, from Sheffield.

renowned Berkshire County, a region not surpassed, in picturesque loveliness, throughout its whole longitude of fifty miles and its average latitude of twenty miles, by any equal area in New England, and perhaps not in all this Western world.

The slave to the railway and its "rapid car" will not, probably, discover the truth of this broad generalization. He may, and indeed, unless he sleeps in the transit, or does the next most heathenish thing—reads some narrow-printed page instead of that open volume where God has imprinted his own grand symbols of beauty and power—he *must*, see a surpassingly-varied landscape, with perhaps astonishing atmospheric effects, though



Prospect Rock, East Mountain,
Great Barrington

for these he needs to bide through changing skies, and hours, and moods of Nature. Off the railway, in village-nooks, in glens and by-ways, upon near crests and remote hill-tops, the lover of the beautiful will find innumerable views to gaze upon, to sketch, or haply to daguerreotype only on his memory.

Sheffield is a good lingering-point for those who do not wisely shun, amid Nature's charms, the shrill pipe of the engine, and the sharp click of the electric hammer.

From Sheffield the ascent of Mount Washington—one of the Taconic giants—is easily made; and the toil it requires will be a cheap purchase of "far prospects," exchanged for the "level bliss" of the vale at its foot. Mount Washington was once a part of the great Livingston Manor, and its summit commands a view of the rich and lordly domain once included in that now half-forgotten name.

The tourist who is not in hot haste to get through his route, as if it were a task, and not a treat, could hardly do better than to take up his abode for a little while at the Mount-Everett House, in South Egremont, a few miles east of the railway, and just under the lofty crest whose name this quiet summer hotel bears. Thence, at his own sweet will, he may go and climb or ramble. He may scale the mountain, by way of "its vast, uncultivated slope, to a height of two thousand feet." There—to his astonishment, if not before informed—he would find a village, whose ten or twelve score of inhabitants are literally mountaineers, and whose eyes are familiar, by daily outlook, with such a panorama as a sensitive valley or sea-side dweller would go into ecstasies to behold. It is not finer, perhaps, though far broader, than that obtainable from Prospect Mountain; but then it takes in half the whole stretch of the Housatonic River, and below the eye lie lakes and woodlands, lawns and villas, gleaming spires, and little rifts and puffs

of smoke from furnaces and creeping engines; and all this so far away, so still, that it is more like a picture on canvas than a real scene. East and west, the eye has broad extent of vision into Connecticut and New York. The Catskills make a blue and wavy western horizon; and the Hudson, in the interval, twins the nearer Housatonic in its



Green River, at Great Barrington.

sparkling flow Here one may fitly repeat Thomson's panegyric on a vision not altogether unlike it, perhaps, but in Old rather than in New England:

"Heavens! what a goodly prospect spreads around,
Of hills and dales, of woods and lawns and spires,
And glittering towns and gilded streams, till all
The stretching landscape into smoke decays!"

The practical man, who shuns the toilsome clamber to Mount Everett's crest, may go afoot, or in his light wagon, from his inn, to see the famous marble-quarries of Egremont, whence were hewn the white columns and walls of the Girard College, more than a third of a century ago, and where to-day the old proprietor is still busily blasting and



Monument Mountain.

blocking out the brilliant stones, with far easier access to the market than when he

sent them by ox-teams to the Hudson.

Great Barrington — a name from which the modesty, perhaps, of its people is gradually eliminating the adjective—is a most attractive point in the valley of the Housatonic. The river, losing all the while in volume, is gaining

in picturesqueness. Its narrowing banks wear greener and lovelier fringes, and its tones ring more musically in the swift, broken and impetuous lapses of its waters. Barrington has many summer charms, in its splendid elms shading its streets, in its attractive drives over fine roads, and in its pleasant society. All around the village one may find new and lovely outlooks on the closely-encompassing hills. The stout-hearted pilgrim may think it worth while to covet the seat and copy the example of the adventurer whom the artist has giddily enthroned upon the very verge of Prospect Rock.

A stroll along the road that leads to the two Egremonts—North and South—will

bring the visitor to a charming bit of land-and-water view at the rural bridge over Green River, a babbling stream that flows along as if in sweet and delighted consciousness of the beauty it here and there discloses.

It would be a great mistake of the explorer of Berkshire to go from Barrington to Stockbridge by rail, unless, indeed, he had exhausted the interval by slower inspection. The highway is the shorter by nearly two miles, and not a furlong of it all is tame or tedious, for it is thick set with those sweet surprises that characterize ridge-roads in Berkshire.

Its half-way wonder is the renowned Monument Mountain, which Stockbridge numbers, with allowable pride, among her special attractions. This mountain was called by the Muh-hek-a-new Indians—the old Stockbridge tribe—"Maus-was-see-ki," which means "The Fisher's Nest." Its present appellation was given to it, perhaps, on account of a cairn found upon its southern crest, which has connected with it an Indian myth of a dusky maiden who, disappointed in love, jumped from the precipice, and was killed—a love-lorn sacrifice which the braves commemorated by flinging a stone upon the fatal spot whenever they passed by it. With or without legend, it is a weird and romantic spot.

From Monument Mountain to the village of Stockbridge is less than half an hour's drive, when the carriage-road has been regained. This village—the "Housatonnuc" of past generations—is of a romantic beauty. Its houses and churches, its library and academy, its fountain and monuments, are pretty mosaics set in the emerald of wonderful elms. There are few—if, indeed, there are any—villages in our land that can rival it in rare and fascinating aspects of rural beauty, in immediate surroundings of unwonted charms, in worthy and precious historical associations, and in the renown of noble sons and daughters. The beauties of Stockbridge lie in many directions. To the north, the pretty lake Mahkeenac—more familiarly known as the "Stockbridge Bowl"—spreads its translucent waters, shapely, in its outline, as a gigantic basin, on whose margin Hawthorne once lived for a succession of seasons. A mile or more from the village is found that wonder of Nature, the Ice Glen, which pierces the northern spur of Bear Mountain; and in its long and awesome corridors and crypts, formed by massive and gloomy rocks, and huge but prostrate trees, the explorer may find masses of ice in the heart and heat of midsummer. The passage of this glen, though not perilous, requires nerve and patience, and the cheer of glowing torches withal. The heights that overhang the village are "beautiful for situation," and studded with pleasant villas, whose fortunate possessors may gaze at will over the fair interlocking valleys of the Housatonic and the Konkapot.

Among the names that memory loves to recall in connection with old Stockbridge, none will live so long or so prominently in history as that of Jonathan Edwards. This distinguished divine was not a native of the village, and, indeed, lived there only a few years; but he was so closely identified, for that time, with all the interests of the place, and especially with its religious and missionary work, that he grew rapidly into the reve-



Housatonic River, at Stockbridge.

rential regard and love of its people. It was there that he wrote his famous work, "The Freedom of the Will," undoubtedly his master-work. The salary of this great preacher—as the pastor of the Stockbridge Church, and distinct from his remuneration as mis-

sionary to the Indians—was, in money, less than seven pounds sterling per annum, and two pounds more in value paid in wood! Stockbridge honored the memory of this remarkable man by erecting to him, on the village green, a monument of polished Scotch granite.

On leaving Stockbridge, the tourist may scarcely venture to promise himself a beauty beyond that he has already enjoyed; and this may be suggested without disparagement to the varied scenery of Northern Berkshire. It may hardly be doubted that the rare and numerous attractions of this whole region—so aptly called "the Palestine of New England"—are crystallized, in excess of loveliness, around Stockbridge as a nucleus. If this verdict had gathered something of weight to the judgment from the acknowledged union in Stockbridge of all the forces—natural, historical, social, intellectual, and religious, alike—which have given to Berkshire its enviable renown, the influence would be, nevertheless, legitimate and just.

There is, however, much beyond this picturesque centre deserving the regard of all the lovers of Nature. And this *much* comprehends novelty, as well as similarity, of landscape and water view. It is, indeed, only that one half of Berkshire has been seen,

that the other half will possibly present fewer "delicious surprises" than otherwise to the eye of the explorer. There are new outlines of the mountains to be studied; new groupings of their massive forms, with new details and specialties of glen, and lake, and water-fall, to be noted.

The Hoosac range of lofty hills, on the east, comes now into distinct and close rivalry with the Taconics, on the west; and far away, in the northern end of the county, the lordly Graylock lifts his blue crest with such preëminence of majestic mien that the many peaks already named sink inferior to its grand central prominence.

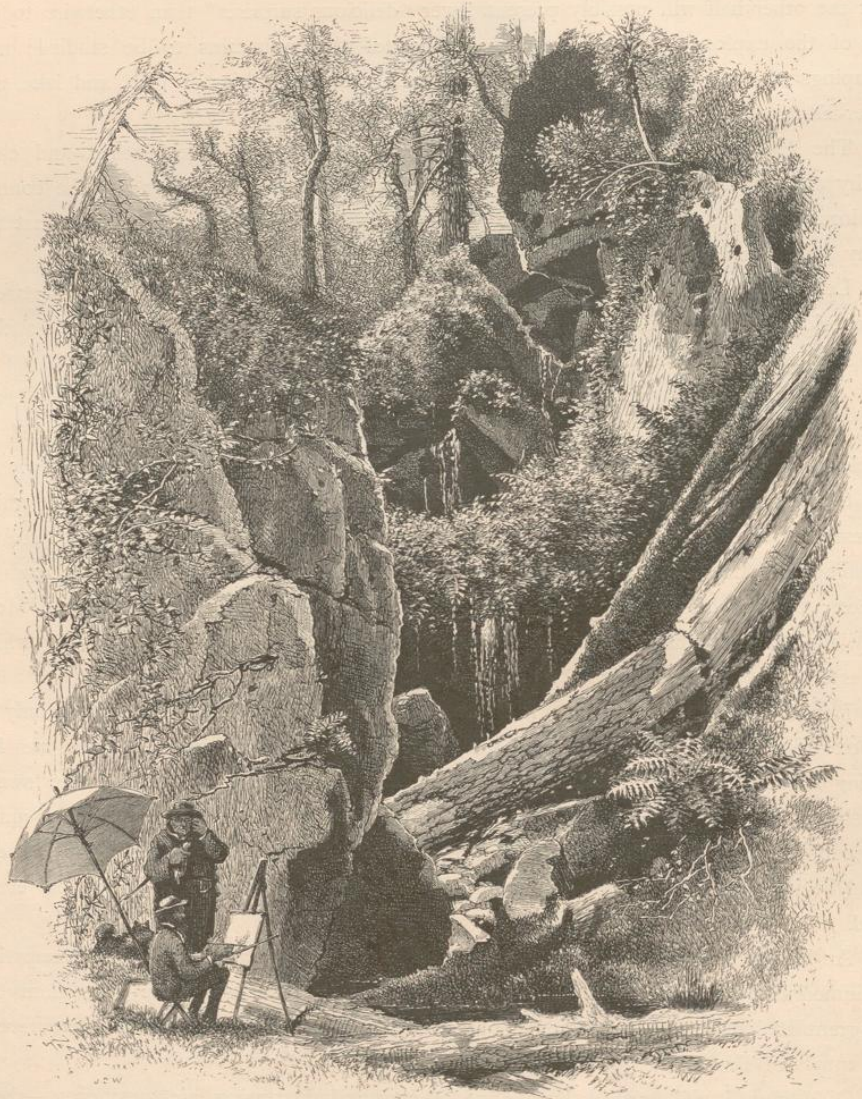
Lee and Lenox are the two villages that lie in the Housatonic Valley between Stockbridge and Pittsfield, which latter village is rapidly growing into the rank of a city, and is the metropolis of all the Berkshire region.

At Lee, through which the railway passes, the river is quite as useful as it is beautiful, lending its force and purity alike to the paper-mills which have contributed so much to build up and enrich the village. Another and perhaps the chief industry of this thriving and attractive place is the quarrying of its fine, white building-marble, which represents Berkshire, with such solid and permanent effect, in the walls of the Capitol at Washington. Lee has a pretty lake; within a pleasant half-hour's walk on the road to Lenox; but, for heavier charms, its summer guests make excursions to quaint old Monterey and to Tyringham, on the east, and to Lenox and Stockbridge, between which places it is about equidistant.

Lenox lies two miles apart from the line of the railway, having a station only at Lenox Furnace. At few—if at any—points immediately on the iron track we are following is there so much to charm and detain the eye as at this station. The sweet, translucent river, its rustic bridge, the swelling knolls of the interval, and the bold, grand sweep of the near mountains, make up a most exquisite picture, to which no artist's eye could be indifferent, even amid the profusion of charming views springing up on every hand.

At Lenox Furnace the double industry of glass and iron working gives occupation to numerous workmen. The recent production there of excellent plate-glass, from the fine-granulated quartz of the region about it, is a noteworthy incident in the manufacturing annals of Berkshire.

Of Lenox itself—reached by a drive of constantly-increasing picturesqueness—these chronicles can make but inadequate mention. Professor Silliman designated it, in his enthusiastic admiration of its pure, exhilarating air, and its lovely views, "a gem among the mountains." It deserves the praise. Till recently, it was the shire-town of the region, and term-time gave it a measure of importance and influence which it has since lost. But it cannot lose its beauty, and the summer doubles its population with hundreds of happy pilgrims from the cities, some of whom occupy their own villas, while more crowd its hotel and the numerous boarding-houses which challenge this periodical influx.



Ice Glen, Stockbridge.

All around Lenox, the crests and slopes of its constituent and outlying hills are covered by mansions and villas, which one might remember for their architectural individuality, if this were not always eclipsed by the surpassing breadth and beauty of the outlook.

To describe this, would be to repeat—only, perhaps, with new allocations of epi-

thets—what has been said of the more southern part of the valley. Here, however, the dwellings are far more numerous, and a richer social element mingles with and enhances the simply picturesque in the landscape.

That gifted and genial woman, Frederika Bremer, is but one of a score of literary notabilities who, living, or lingering for a while at least, amid the charms of Lenox, have recorded their admiration of it in glowing words. Hers may serve as a type of their kindred utterances. She writes: "The country around Lenox is romantically lovely, inspired with wood-covered hills, and the prettiest little lakes." In describing the Housatonic scenery more generally, she justly uses these emphatic expressions—"wonderfully picturesque, and sometimes splendidly gloomy."

It was at Lenox that Fanny Kemble lived, and expressed the wish to be buried, saying: "I will not rise to trouble any one, if they will let me sleep here. I will only ask to be permitted, once in a while, to raise my head and look out upon this glorious scene."

The English origin of this delightful place is commemorated, after the lapse of more than twelve decades, in its name, which was the patronymic of the Duke of Richmond.

The fine view which the "Ledge" contributes to the embellishment of this paper will be its own best commentary on the breadth and manifold charms of the Lenox landscape. The summer guests of Lenox find great delight in gazing out from its noble "coigns of vantage." For still wider range of vision, they go to Perry's Peak, a bald and lonely summit on the west, easily reached in an hour's ride, and standing like a grim sentinel on the New-York border.

There is a scientific interest, also, about Perry's Peak, in that it is strewed with the fine boulders which are traced, in seven parallel lines, across the Richmond Valley, intervening between the peak and Lenox Mountain. These stones attracted the careful notice and diligent review of that eminent English geologist, Sir Charles Lyell. On this peak, also, in 1869, some local scientific associations held a "field-day" for the especial commemoration of the centennial anniversary of Humboldt's birthday. A fine photograph of the grand old *savant* was uncovered, and a tribute-poem read, on the pleasant occasion.

Among the attractive points included in the magnificent overlook from the peak are the Shaker villages of both Lebanon, in New York, and Hancock, in Massachusetts, the former being, perhaps, the metropolis of the sect of Shakers. The Boston and Albany Railway passes close by the village of the Hancock Shakers, and has a station there. The town of Hancock is itself one of the outlying characteristics of the Housatonic Valley. It is altogether mountainous, being only a long and narrow tract on the backbone and slopes of the Taconic range, with a single hamlet crouching in a beautiful cove, or interval, near the northern end of it. The roads which cross this attenuated township are very romantic and very rough, except, perhaps, those from Lebanon and Hancock villages direct, which are fine in summer, and much travelled.

Pittsfield is the terminus of the Housatonic Railway, one hundred and ten miles from Bridgeport; and here the Housatonic River dwindles greatly by its division into two arms, one of which flows from Pontoosuc Lake just northward, and the other, with far greater meandering, from distant northeastern hills in Berkshire towns.



Lenox Station.

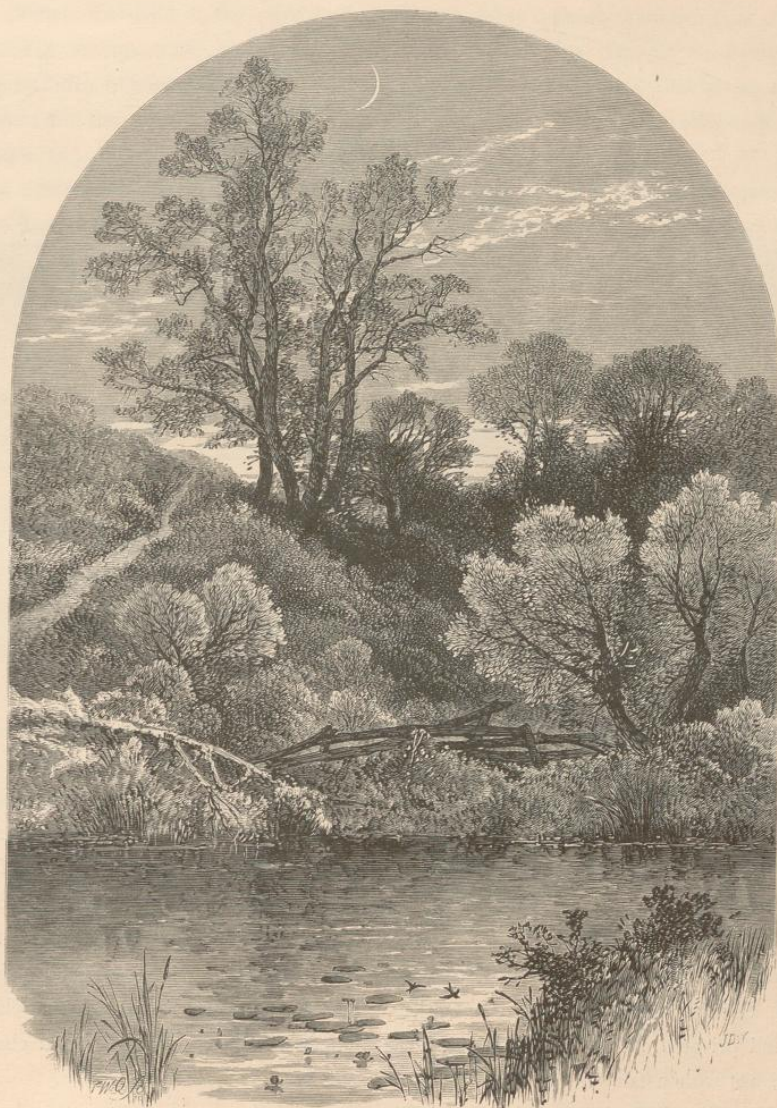
Pittsfield commemorates in its name the fame of England's noble statesman, William Pitt. It is one of the handsomest villages in New England, and perhaps the "New-England Hand-Book" anticipates events only the least in calling it a "city." It might be so, but it is not now. It is already suburban in its aspects, and exhibits fine architectural ambitions in several recent public buildings.

Its just pride in its history, and in that of the county it represents, had a happy



View from the "Ledge," Lenox.

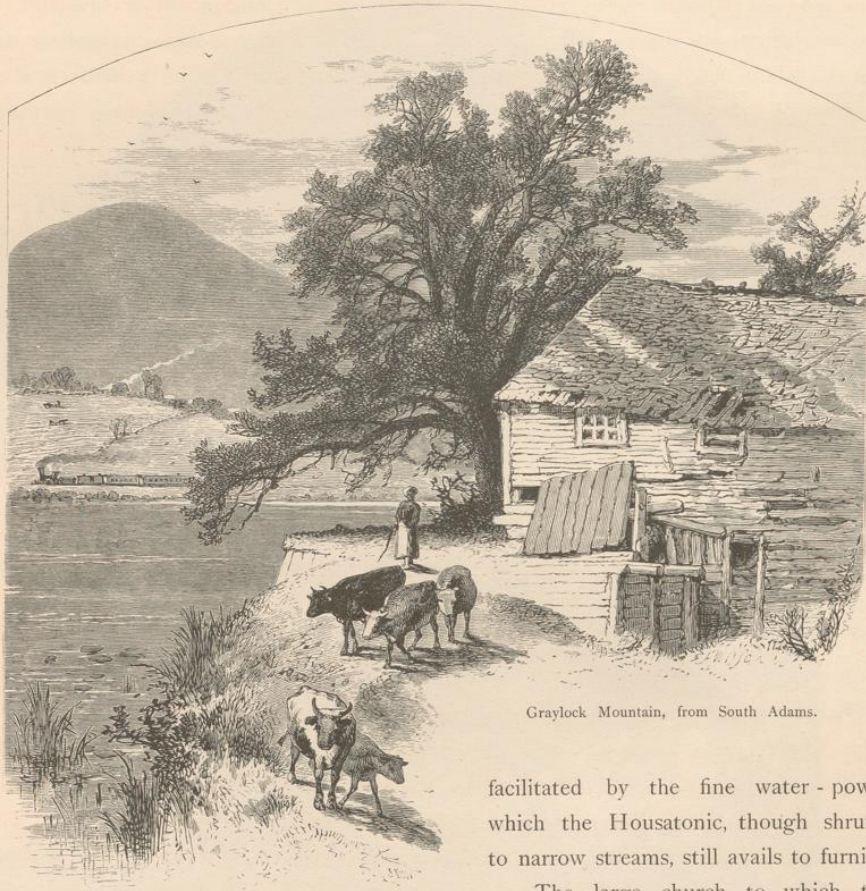
exposition, nearly twenty years ago, in the Berkshire Jubilee, a festival which gathered the sons and daughters of Berkshire by hundreds "from near and from far," and made a bright and memorable page of history for the place. The historic elm-tree of Pittsfield,



Banks of the Housatonic, at Pittsfield.

which stood and bourgeoned for more than three centuries in the very centre of the village, was necessarily cut down in 1864; and the ground it once shaded is now a pretty park, adorned with a fountain and a soldiers' monument designed by Launt Thompson.

The industry of Pittsfield is chiefly directed to manufactures of cotton and wool,



Graylock Mountain, from South Adams.

facilitated by the fine water - power which the Housatonic, though shrunk to narrow streams, still avails to furnish.

The large church to which the late Dr. Todd ministered for twenty years is the foremost of half a dozen of various denominations, which are all in vigorous growth. Several banks represent the wealth of the village. It has good schools, both public and private. Of the latter, Maplewood Female Seminary, situated upon charming grounds, has won a fair renown.

Such is Pittsfield, the capital of the Housatonic Valley, at a slight external glance. A closer view would reveal more than ordinary social culture among its inhabitants. Music and the fine arts have their happy influence there; and a generously-endowed institution, known and incorporated as the "Berkshire Athenæum," is destined to be an elevating and refining power in the community.

Pittsfield is situated at an average elevation of nearly eleven hundred feet above the sea. Its position is peculiar, as being the geographical centre of valleys and defiles, affording opportunities for crossing its flanking mountains such as are found at no other

single point. Pittsfield is the centre of perhaps as many distinct attractions for the summer tourist as any other Berkshire village; and its growing likeness to a city in the special facilities it affords—railway, postal, hotel, shopping, and social—makes it an excellent place for the headquarters of the visitor in all the length and breadth of its matchless shire.

In every direction from the village, fine, natural roads lead to lovely scenes. The Taconic and the Hoosac ranges of mountains are about four miles distant, on the west and east respectively; and from their slopes, or their summits, Berkshire—both Southern and Northern—opens broad vistas to the eye.

Some of the reaches of the Housatonic River near the village are of great beauty; and there are places on the banks of its eastern confluent where it would be meet to sit, of a summer eve, and read or quote Tennyson's dainty rhymes of the brook that would "go on forever."

One of the fairest views in all the county—the especial pride, perhaps, of the people of Pittsfield, as it well may be—is that which takes in and overpasses the exquisite contour of Onota Lake, two miles to the west. This view, besides its immediate loveliness, in the silvery sheen of its waters, and the sweet variety of the pastoral and wooded banks that environ them, has for its central but remote background the splendid outline of old

"Graylock, cloud-girdled on his purple throne."

In the near east rises the fine range of the Washington Hills, of the Hoosac Chain, over which the Boston Railway is carried by sharp gradients of eighty feet in a mile. On their crest is a romantic lakelet, called Ashley Pond, the water of which is brought into the village—at present only a barely adequate supply for its demands, but soon to be reënforced from a neighboring pond, a recent purchase of the Pittsfield Gas and Water Company.

Roaring Brook, the outlet of a contiguous pond, is a wild mountain-torrent that dashes down the side of the mountain in a rugged cleft known as Tories' Gorge. This brook is a tributary of the eastern branch of the Housatonic. To the eastward, also, lies the village of Dalton, with its busy paper-mills; and beyond it, on the acclivity of the Boston Railway, the village of Hinsdale, from which point, as also from Dalton, the very pretty Windsor Falls may be reached by a brief carriage-drive. These falls lie at the extreme limit of the review which this article will make of the Housatonic Valley. Beyond them the "winding waters" narrow into shining becks and brawling brooks, and make up the vision pictured by Holmes in his pleasant verses of

". . . the stream whose silver-braided rills
Fling their unclasping bracelets from the hills,
Till, in one gleam beneath the forest-wings,
Melts the white glitter of a hundred springs."

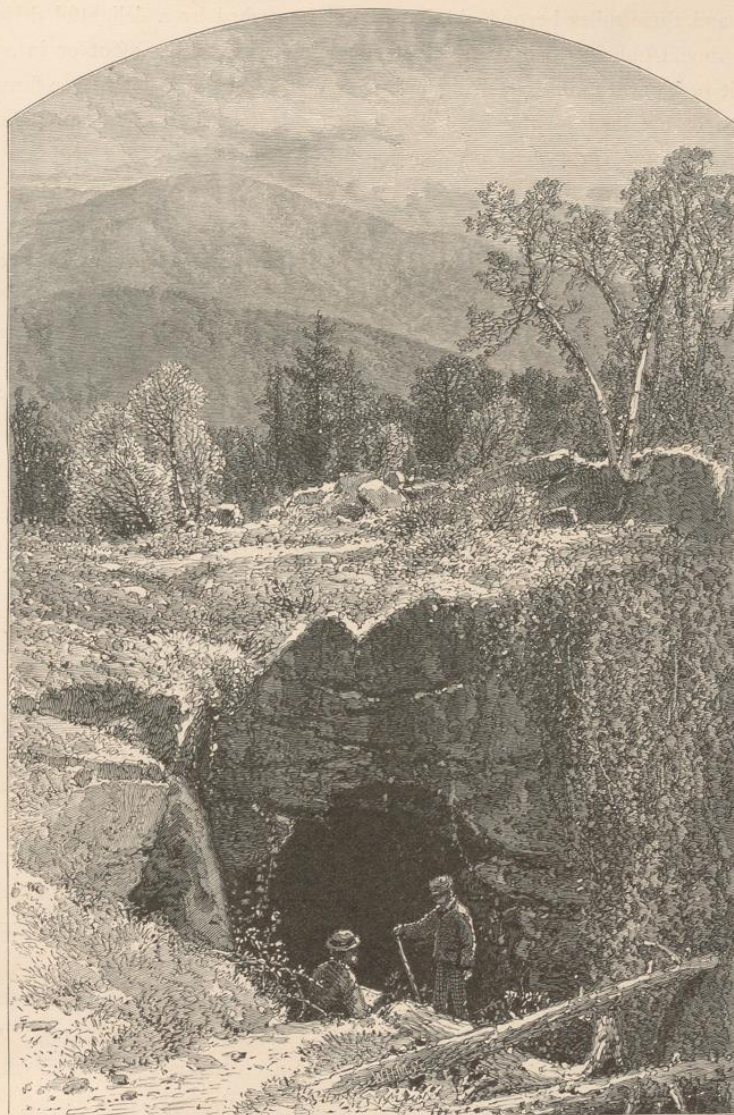
West of Pittsfield, beyond Onota already named, a mountain-road leads across Hancock Town to Lebanon Springs, and to the village of the Lebanon Shakers, affording, all the way, lovely prospects, but, from its highest point, a scene never to be forgotten. It takes in the whole expanse of the sweet vale of Lebanon, and, beyond this, stretches away to the Catskills, vague and violet-hued.

Northward of Onota, on the slopes of the Taconics, are found delightful bits of



Hoosac River, North Adams.

Nature—here, the Lulu Cascade, a much-frequented haunt of those who fain would find where the “shy arbutus” hides; there, Rolling Rock, a huge and nicely-poised boulder; and far above it, on the table of a giant crest, as pretty a mountain-lake as the eye could covet. It is called Berry Pond, but not for the profusion of raspberries to be found there in summer. The name is said to be that of a stout-limbed and brave-hearted



Natural Bridge, North Adams.

man who once lived on its borders, and wrested from the scanty soil about the pond a living for himself and family. The lakelet has crystal waters, a sparkling, sandy beach, is fringed by masses of evergreen and deciduous trees, and to these charms adds that of a clear, fairy-like echo to all sounds upon its margin.

Northward of Pittsfield lie Pontoosuc, a populous mill-suburb, and a lake bearing

its name; and, three miles beyond, old Lanesboro' is reached by a delightful drive. Here the visitor should not fail to make a slight circuit, and gain, either afoot or in a carriage, the summit of Constitution Hill, lying just west of the village and the iron-furnace. Of the view to be obtained by this excursion let a resident of Berkshire, and a contributor to APPLETONS' JOURNAL of some popular papers on the glories of that region, afford the reader a few glimpses:

"Though you can drive to the very summit if you are sure of your horse, you will grow dizzy as your eye rests on the grand prospect outspread before you—green, fertile valleys, reminding one of that which shut in the happy Rasselas; blue lakes; Pontoosuc at your feet, Onota farther south, and Silver Lake east of Pittsfield; great stretches of table-land, well tilled, and spanned by shady roads; forests that look as old as creation, and hills mantled with a fresher growth; the line of rich foliage which marks the course of the streams that unite to form the Housatonic; Lanesboro' basking on the hill-side, with its great elms drooping over its old homesteads and quaint road-corners; Stearnsville and Barkersville, farther off; the whole extent of the chief town in the valley, its spires gleaming in the light; Lenox, Lee, and Stockbridge, through the opening in the hills; sunny farm-houses, grazing cattle, browsing sheep, brown grain-fields, flying cloud-shadows—and all domed by a brighter than an Italian sky."

The route we are now pursuing is aside from the track of the railway which connects Pittsfield with Adams and the north; and the true tourist would greatly prefer to follow its rural windings, along the course of the supposed Upper Housatonic, now scarcely more than a rapid, laughing brook, sliding along under its alder and willow fringes. A few miles still farther north, in the town of New Ashford, it is lost in silvery threads from the hills. The road from the "deserted village" of New Ashford to the Williamstowns is solitary, but beautiful, with its ever-shifting views of grand mountain-outlines, bringing one at length into the deep shadows and sweet repose of the close-encompassing hills that keep solemn watch and ward over the time-honored sanctuaries of wisdom at Williams College.

This hasty generalization has done no justice to the interval of twenty miles over which we have glided with haste that would be impertinent, if these notes were not necessarily telegraphic for brevity. Williamstown is a unique and delightful village, with a green park for its main street, and the sparkling, hurrying Hoosac singing along its borders. It is a fit place for study, and a charming one for summer life and recreation, though hardly for fashionable dissipation, to which, indeed, its vigilant wardens evermore oppose their classic *procul*.

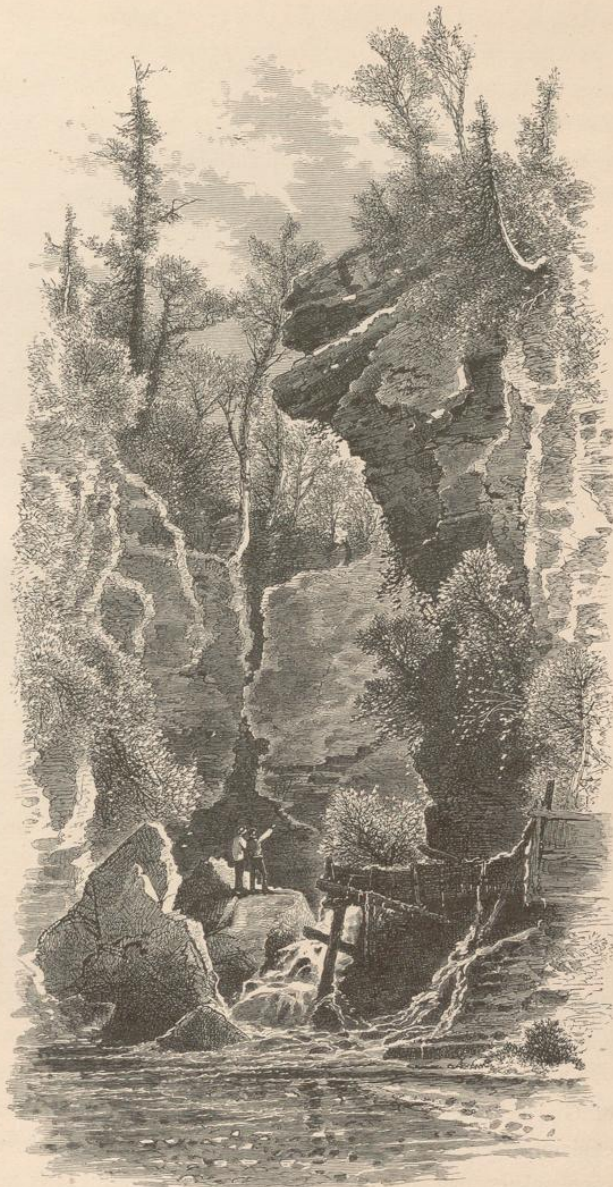
Visitors at Williamstown, who are familiar with Swiss scenery, are wont to say that the splendid views and wonderful atmospheric effects they see there more nearly resemble Alpine pictures than those of any other mountain-recesses in this land.

Our promise, in the opening of this sketch, that it would carry the reader beyond

the Housatonic Valley, has been fulfilled. He is now in the valley of the Hoosac, and not far from the termination of these autumn rambles.

Whoever follows the railway from Pittsfield to this region passes twenty miles through a country contrasting strangely with the deep rural isolation of that just glimpsed along the by-road through New Ashford. It is a tract of new activities and industries, of glass-furnaces and sand-quarries, of lumber-mills and cotton-looms, of woollen-mills and populous hamlets—in succession, Berkshire, Cheshire, South Adams, until he comes at last to North Adams, where he will wonder more and more, as more he sees, how so large and flourishing and ambitious a town has contrived to find "room and verge enough" amid the encompassing, encroaching, overhanging hills, for its steady, sturdy growth.

It is a pushing-rival of Pittsfield; behind it, probably, in general, but making well-founded boast of excelling it in the value of its school-property, as it does equally in the cost and elegance of its chief hotel, which would be a credit to any city. North Adams is a rich manufact-



Profile Rock, North Adams.



Hoosac Mountain and Tunnel Works.

uring village, where "Chinese cheap labor" has been a specialty and a success for years in the shoe-shops. It is the upper "metropolis" of Berkshire, and is more thickly studded about with wild and romantic spots than its southern sister. Gray-

lock, the loftiest mountain in Massachusetts, is within easy distance, though not visible from its streets. It is perhaps more easily reached from South Adams, a less bustling village, four miles below, whence the commanding summit may be seen in all its royal pomp, rising majestically just over its pleasant homes.

This is the less picturesque, however, of the two or three routes by which the top of Graylock may be reached. The mountain exercise already taken by the Housatonic explorer, when he comes within the shadows of Graylock, will stand him in stead as he contemplates the conquest of the kingly height. It is no child's play, especially if he chooses the North-Adams and Bald-Mountain route, by that mountain-cluster, the "Hopper." All the roads need great improvement, and there should be one, at least, kept in excellent condition. But there is no reaching the top without toil, without fatigue—no "royal road," though the end of the way is most royal.

When Graylock, and the Hopper, and Money Brook, have been explored—or be-

tween these explorations, as separate adventures—there are dainty and most compensating “bits” about North Adams, which should not be left unseen. Some of these lie close about that curious object, the Natural Bridge, a rare freak of the waters of a pretty brook among the rocks—itsself a scene for the painter, as it and its accessories so commonly are for the photographer. The Natural Bridge is a vast roof of marble, through and under which a mere brook has yet contrived, with incessant, fretting toil, to excavate a tunnel—a passage five or six yards wide, and ten times as long. This wonderful viaduct is loftily arched over the torrent, and displays its marble sides and ceiling sometimes of a pure white, but oftener with strange discolorations, as of mineral stains or lichen-growths. Through this weird corridor the brook flows with thunderous echoes, booming up to the ear and filling the mind of the beholder with strange, wild fancies.

In the ravine of this brook there are many picturesque points to arrest the tourist's attention, but next in interest to the bridge itself is a strange, columnar group of rocks, which at its overhanging crest assumes, to a facile imagination, the aspect of gigantic features, and bears, therefore, the appellation of Profile Rock. These and other scenes are within a mile or two of the village, where there will be found inducements for more than ordinary lingering, and still more reluctant leave-taking, on the part of the visitor. Those who have enjoyed the magnificence and varied charms of the eight-mile coach or carriage drive from North Adams to the east end of the great Hoosac Tunnel, during its long working, will doubtless almost lament that it is now an accomplished fact, because the splendid road across the great Hoosacs will now be no more needed, and will very likely fall into disrepair, thus spoiling a most unique and almost unparalleled mountain-ride. That road climbs the Hoosacs by easy-returning gradients, affording all the way up, and across, and down on the east slope, marvellously-fine prospects. The west mouth of the tunnel is only two miles from North Adams, and lies amid the picturesque scenery of the Hoosac Valley, and full in front of the monarch of the Berkshire hills.

The Hoosac Tunnel is a bold and fortunate feat of engineering skill. Second in length only to the famous Mont-Cenis Tunnel under the Alps, it pierces the solid micaceous slate of the Hoosac Range with a grand artery nearly five miles in length, and thus opens, after incredible toil and immense outlay, a railway-passage between Boston and the Hudson River, about ten miles shorter than any preëxisting route. Long before these pages have reached their final numbering, this tunnel, already open from end to end, will be the scene of swift and multitudinous transit for passenger and freight trains speeding between the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans.

Upon that busy and tireless flow and ebb of life and labor, old Graylock, and his compeers of the Taconic and Hoosac Ranges, will look down as peacefully as they did upon the turmoil and trouble and disaster with which the western end of the vast work was wrought to proud completeness, adding something to the physical and moral, if not to the natural, beauty and grandeur of the Berkshire hills.