



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

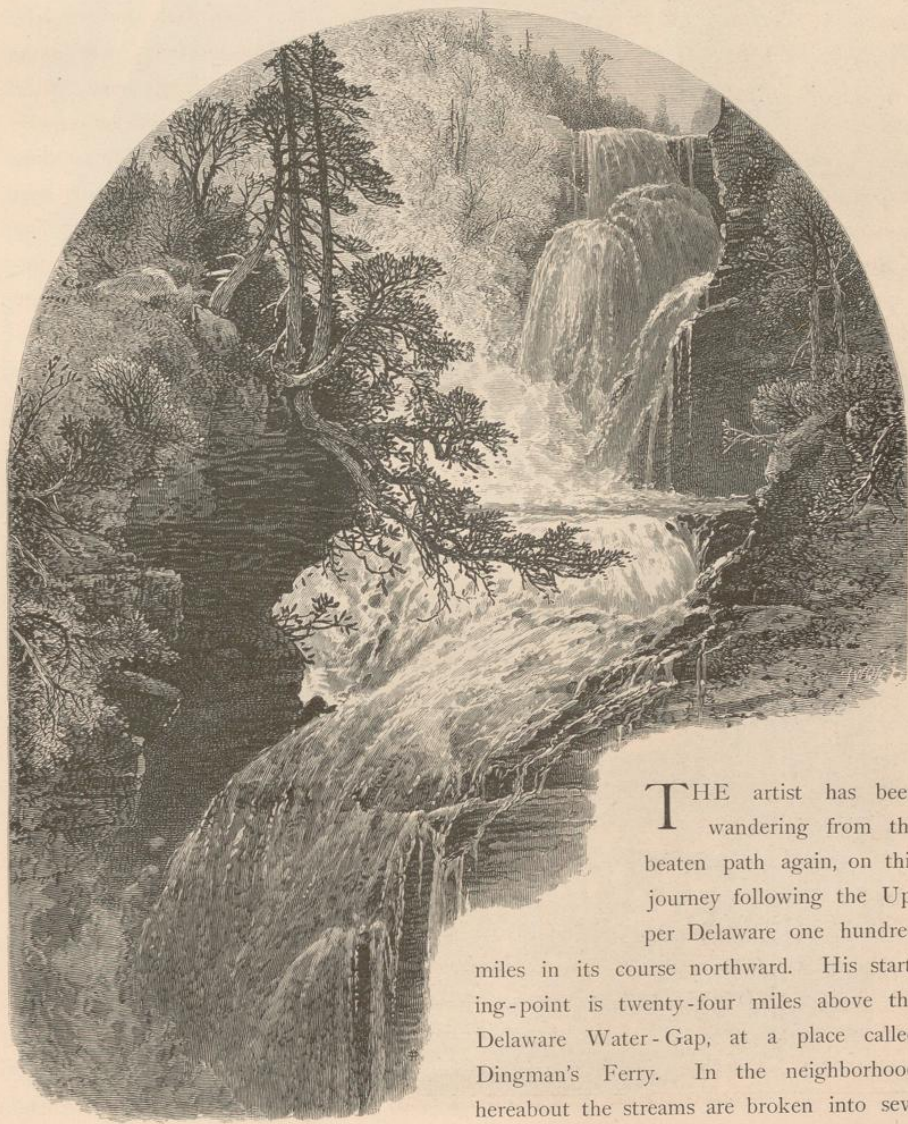
New York, 1874

The Upper Delaware.

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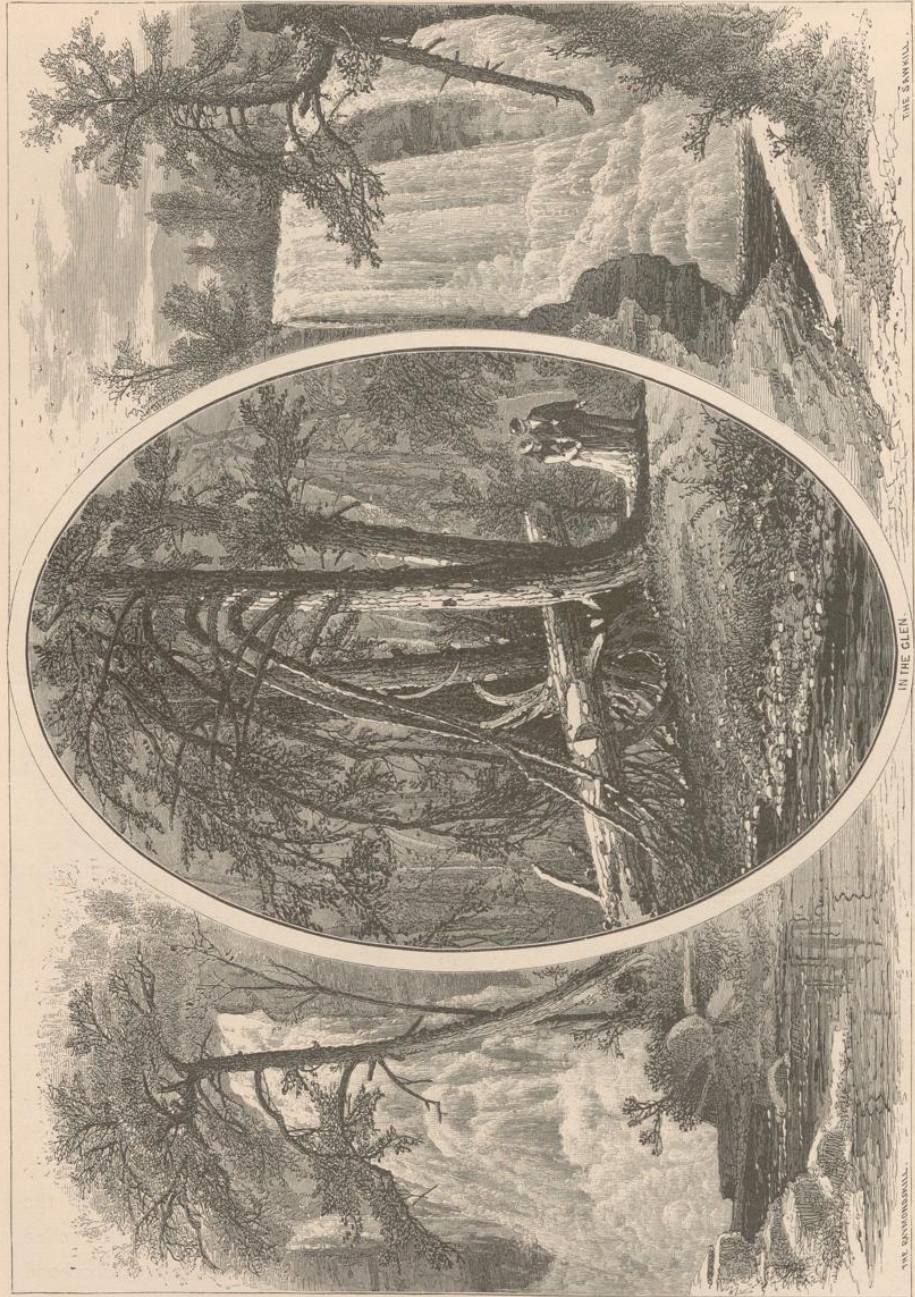
THE UPPER DELAWARE.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY J. DOUGLAS WOODWARD.



High Falls, Dingman's Creek.

THE artist has been wandering from the beaten path again, on this journey following the Upper Delaware one hundred miles in its course northward. His starting-point is twenty-four miles above the Delaware Water-Gap, at a place called Dingman's Ferry. In the neighborhood hereabout the streams are broken into several picturesque falls, the most important



THE ENNSWALD.

IN THE GLET.

THE GLENWATER.

SCENES IN AND ABOUT MILFORD.

of which are the High Falls, shown in our first sketch. It was in the morning when we first rambled through the bosky approaches to this cascade; and, after leaping down slippery, moss-covered rocks, we reached the foot, only to find a thin stream of water trickling down, with very little music, and less spray. The weather had been dry—but that fact scarcely consoled us—and we could only admire the tints of the rocks, and the foliage that seemed to grow out of the basin into which the waters made their first leap before rushing through a narrow bit of hill and descending to a lower level. The artist was content, thankful for the smallest share of Nature's bounty; but the literary soul was disappointed and growling.

We were retracing our steps to the hostelry leisurely, when the premonitions of a storm urged us into a quicker pace. Gusts of wind soughed among the trees, and heavy drops of rain pattered fast on the trembling leaves and parched earth. The sunshine was hidden beneath the gray clouds that came rolling from the east. We considered ourselves in for a wet day, and we dozed near the veranda, puffing at our brier pipes in a mood of bachelor meditation.

But in the afternoon there was clearer and warmer weather, and we again tramped to the foot of the High Falls. If the spirit of the artist was content before, it was aglow now. The scene had changed, and, instead of a mere thread of water, there was a bubbling, foaming, boisterous torrent, echoing its voice in the walls of the hills through the veins of which it found a sparkling way. The moss in the crevices held glittering drops on its velvety surface; and the branches of overarching trees looked as though they, too, were crystallized. The changing position of the clouds threw shadows across the water, varying its tints, and first giving it the appearance of a pure white, then of a faint green, afterward of a soft blue. The artist drew our attention this way and that—one moment toward yonder darkling hollow in the rocks, as the spray dashed itself into the brown seams; next toward the water, as the light played ever-new tricks with it; and then to a little pool formed in the cup of a boulder. That keen eye of his discovered effects in the smallest nooks, underneath the fronds of the tiniest fern, among the grains of sand that lodged in the crevices, and in the swaying shadows of the forms around. He occupied us constantly for more than two full hours, and was even then inclined to linger, although our journey was long and the time short.

From the ferry we proceeded toward Milford. The stage-road runs along the base of a mountain, so precipitous as to resemble the Palisades of the Hudson. Atoms of rock, rolling down, have made the bed as hard as concrete; and they have been spread so evenly that travelling is smooth and comfortable. The outlook is magnificent. The sheer wall of the mountain is on one side of us, protecting us from the scorching rays of the sun; and undulating meadows reach afar in the opposite direction, dotted with many a snug farm-house, painted red or white, that shows its thatched roof over the tops of the orchard. The river glistens through this green expanse, and is spanned, here and



PORT JERVIS AND VICINITY.



THE UPPER DELAWARE.

there, by a picturesque bridge. Still farther away are the purple lines of more hills, mysterious in the haze of a warm autumn morning.

Some distance below the village of Milford, we reach the falls of the Raymondskill, in which the artist finds more beauties and wonders. The torrent tumbles from among a mass of foliage down a rock, and is broken several times by projections, which cause it to surge and foam in a grand tumult. Three miles farther in our course, we enter the village, which is prettily situated in a valley, and divided through the centre by a romantic glen. Glens always are romantic, for lovers invariably choose to make love in their shade and quiet. Who that reads novels ever read of a troth pledged in the sunlight? From some inscrutable instinct, it is always done in shadowy places; and here in Milford Glen, on a summer's afternoon and evening, young men and maidens flock, and wander, arm-in-arm, through the narrow paths and murky hollows. The Sawkill, scarcely more than a brook, trembles over the pebbles, and glints vividly as a stray shaft of sunlight breaks through the boughs overhead. Ferns, mosses, and wild-flowers, are sprinkled on the path, and strive to hide the decay of a felled hemlock that rests between two sturdier brothers. It is a lovely spot, picturesque in the extreme, a fit retreat for the shepherds and shepherdesses of the Pennsylvania Arcadia.

Not more than two miles farther north are the principal falls of the Sawkill, which in general characteristics much resemble the High Falls and the Raymondskill. As in the latter, the water dashes against some projecting rocks in its downward course, and is broken into clouds of spray, which the sunshine colors with rainbow hues. The volume of water is, in reality, divided into two separate falls by an elbow of the rock; but, before the two reach the level below, they commingle in one snowy mass.

Following the windings of the river, our next stopping-place was Port Jervis, which borders on New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Near here the Neversink River enters the Delaware from a valley of great beauty. We followed the artist to a place called Mount William, from which there is a superb view—a wide, extended plain, through which the winding river can be traced for many miles. The afternoon was far advanced, and the sun was declining westward. The whiteness of the light was subdued, changing into a pale yellow, that soon again would deepen into crimson. You see how he has expressed this mellowness in the gray tone of his sketch. He has included, too, a considerable range of ground, bringing in the opposite hills, the town, and the river. As far as the eye can reach, the land is under cultivation. In yonder wide plain there is not one wild acre; and, out beyond the limits of the little town, the farm-houses are numerous, and close together.

After leaving Port Jervis, we touched at Lackawaxen, to get a sketch of the Delaware and Hudson Canal Aqueduct, and thence continued our journey to Deposit, in which vicinity the scenery becomes grander and wilder. The artist's work tells its own story more eloquently than we could, and we have no further notes to add to it.