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THE FRENCH BROAD.

SUMMER SLEIGHING IN WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA.

"WHAT is it?" asked Uncle Jack.

"A river," replied Ermine.

"Very well," said the old gentleman. Then, after a moment, "Where is it?"

"In Western North Carolina."

"Very well," said the old gentleman again, taking up his newspaper. "Pray don't forget my slippers."

Later in the day, however, he took me aside.

"Do *you* know any thing about this Western North Carolina, Miss Martha?" he asked.

"Only how it looks on the map, Sir."

"And how does it look?"

"Black in the face with mountains."

"Apoplectic?"

"Decidedly. Bald Mountain, you remember, had a stroke not long since."

"Are we going *there?*" asked Uncle Jack, resignedly.

"I don't think any one knows, Sir, exactly where we are going except Ermine," I replied.

We found it at Ashville. I use the word found because it was a regular game of hide-and-seek, in which the knolls, the river, and ourselves took part. It begins life down on the South Carolina border, and runs almost due north, placidly taking in small streams, and concealing its ultimate purposes with a delicate art worthy of Undine's watery relations. Near Ashville is the trysting-place where it meets the Swannano on its way down from the Blue Ridge, but so cunningly is it all managed that no road, no path, will take you there, and unless you have the spirit and the boots of a pioneer you will miss the wedding. Having neither, we yet went, driven by the fiat of Ermine.

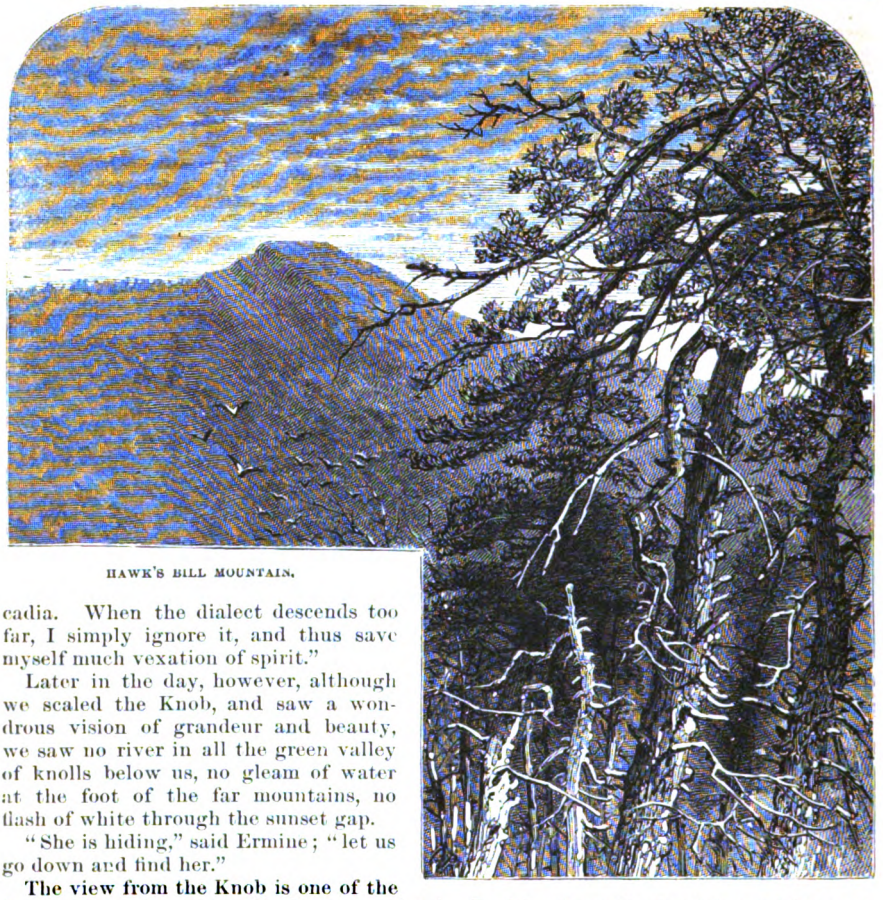
"I said I would witness this meeting of the waters," she began. Then, putting out a slender foot incased in a stern little double-soled boot, "Thus do I leave my mark upon the strand!"

"Upon the mud," said Uncle Jack.

"Witness, my friends," continued Ermine, "this is the majority of our river. Its life, so far, has been but awkward growing. It has had no definite character; no one could tell what it might come to—a swampy, a stony, or a bucolic and grassy end. Having received the Swannano, however, it now for the first time feels its strength. My friends, let us return. Later in the day we will view it from the summit of that fern-covered hill behind the town."

"Beaucatcher Knob," said Uncle Jack.

"I never hear that country-farmer name," replied Ermine. "I make it a point to not hear such titles in my rambles through Ar-



HAWK'S BILL MOUNTAIN.

cadia. When the dialect descends too far, I simply ignore it, and thus save myself much vexation of spirit."

Later in the day, however, although we scaled the Knob, and saw a wondrous vision of grandeur and beauty, we saw no river in all the green valley of knolls below us, no gleam of water at the foot of the far mountains, no flash of white through the sunset gap.

"She is hiding," said Ermine; "let us go down and find her."

The view from the Knob is one of the few that linger in memory distinct as a painted picture. As yet it is unknown to the world at large, but it will be famous some day, when the eager artists and tourists discover this hidden region locked up behind mountain walls whose peaks seem to thrust back scornfully the railroads that would penetrate within. So far they have stood at bay, these magnificent cloud-capped ranges, defying the world. Behind the Knob rise the rounded summits of the Blue Ridge, singularly blue always both in sunshine and in storm. Sitting on the grass-grown earthworks of the old Confederate fort that crowned the summit, one faces the west, glorious in sunset tints. In the north rise near and dark peaks leading toward the Black Mountain and its lonely grave. No man had ever a grander sepulchre than Elisha Mitchell, who lost his life while exploring this lofty range. The mountaineers buried him on the peak, whose height, as measured by his own hand, is cut in the rough stone at the head of the grave—6711 feet, the highest summit east of the Mississippi. The government signal station that once stood near has been abandoned and burned.

Looking from the Knob toward the west, we saw a crowd of peaks, apparently endless, fading away into the horizon on the far Tennessee border. But the southwest holds the *genius loci*, the god who guards the valley—Mount Pisgah, solemn, grand old peak, dominant in its gaunt majesty, although one hundred and eighty brother summits are in sight, and the Cold Mountain beyond is counted higher.

"Physically, perhaps, but not spiritually," said Ermine. "Pisgah is the king, the native-born god of the valley."

As the sun sank behind the mountains down into Tennessee the one gap in the massive western wall, the gap guarded by Pisgah, began to grow purple and soft, like a beautiful pass into some better country. Looking through, far beyond we saw a distant mountain all tinged with gold.

"And the building of the wall of it was of jasper, and the city was pure gold," said Uncle Jack.

"Ashville is a very pretty village, scattered over a valley of knolls," said Ermine, summing up her observations that evening. "Every man has an alp for his private resi-

VIEW FROM TOP OF BLACK MOUNTAIN.

dence, and giants walk the streets. One fine-looking young man I saw yesterday came up to the second-story windows."

"He is exactly six feet seven inches: I inquired," said practical Uncle Jack.

"The stages coming and going are picturesque," continued Ermine, unheeding the interruption; "the Eagle Hotel chicken is tender and unlimited; the cobble-stones are original; the Ashville dog is a mountain animal, a sort of 'merry Swiss boy;' and the teams are a regular menagerie, an ox and a mule behind, a small malicious steer and a particularly large and melancholy horse in front."

"And over and around all," I added, "is spread the most magnificent scenery to be found in the old States—scenery which has remained undiscovered, while the White Mountains and many minor groups are crowded with visitors and dotted with easels."

In the morning we began our search for the river. We asked no questions, but walked a mile to the east, a mile to the north, a mile to the south, in vain; at last we found it down in the west, hidden so cunningly that we were on its very bridge before we saw the water. "The witch!" said Ermine. "One might live months in Ashville without once seeing the gleam of her silver draperies as she flits through the valley, so hidden is her path."

"Wait till she gets around the corner and you will see a change," said a voice behind us. We turned. "Major Ray!" exclaimed Uncle Jack, extending his hand cordially.

"Myself in person," replied the officer. "Cause, furlough; purpose, fishing; scene, French Broad. And you?"

"Ditto, without the fishing," replied Ermine, taking the blue-coated arm with her graceful nonchalance. (Ermine had a way of taking a person's arm.)

"*I* like fishing," announced Uncle Jack, in a general way.

"A tent, you know, and hammocks," pursued the officer, as we strolled back to the village; "trouting and books and pipes,

and a darky cook, one of those old fellows who can put two sticks together and give you a dinner fit for a prince."

"I'll go, Sir; say not another word—I'll go," said Uncle Jack, breezily.

"Without an invitation, uncle?"

"A truce to conventionalities, Miss Stuart. Was not my description seductively arranged to entrap not only your uncle Jack, but all of you?" said the officer, gallantly. (It was indeed, but not the only thing arranged, I thought. People do not turn up on bridges over the French Broad by chance.)

"Thank you," replied Ermine, sweetly; "nothing could be more charming. Uncle will enjoy the fishing so much, and you and I, Miss Martha, can swing in the hammocks and read the books, while the perfection of a cook serves coffee eight times a day in Sèvres cups. Then at night, telling stories around the camp fire in the tent—how romantic! Just what I have always dreamed."

"But the fire won't be in the tent, you know, niece."

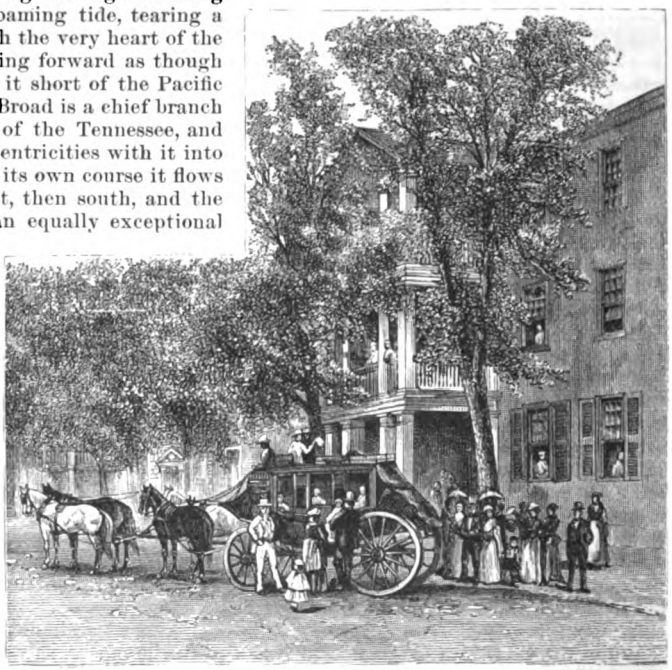
"On this occasion it will be," pursued Ermine, calmly. "It was always so in my dreams."

"Then they must have been choked with smoke in your dreams, my dear."

The Major started the next morning, and we followed two days later, finding, as he had said, a great change in our river around the corner. It rushed along with tremendous speed, roaring over rocks, boiling in little pools below, swirling back again in long eddies, a rampant, foaming tide, tearing a way for itself through the very heart of the mountains, and dashing forward as though nothing should stop it short of the Pacific Ocean. The French Broad is a chief branch of the head waters of the Tennessee, and seems to take its eccentricities with it into the latter river. On its own course it flows first north, then west, then south, and the Tennessee pursues an equally exceptional path by going south across the whole of its own State and well down into Alabama, as though intent on seeking the Gulf of Mexico at Pensacola, then, suddenly seized with hesitation, it meanders off vaguely toward the west, makes a little detour into Mississippi, considers a while, and finding itself once more on the Tennessee border, away it goes straight to the north, crossing the whole State a second time, and even voyaging up seventy miles into Kentucky before it decides where it really wants to go, and, passing by the Great River with characteristic willfulness, enters the Ohio at last. We traveled slowly, loitering along the bank, stopping to gather flowers, to make very bad sketches, to drink from the ice-cold springs, to follow the brooks up their wild gorges and find the hidden falls whose voices came down to the road below, and ever and always to gaze and gaze upon the mountain walls, the rugged rocks, the islands, and the rushing, foaming river. Our road was narrow, cut out from the rock itself at the water's edge, and often the cliffs above seemed toppling over on us, so far did they lean forward, massive and bare. In places the river flowed through what might well be called a cañon. Sheerly rose the perpendicular granite walls from the water's edge, inclosing us and our pigmy road as in a gigantic well, only a little slice of blue sky far above remaining as a link between us and the outside world. It seemed as though we should never see corn fields and the broad heavens again, unless the roc that aided Sindbad the Sailor would come to our rescue.

Uncle Jack remained placid, but we saw "fishing" in his eyes.

"He will be off with the Major to-morrow, Ermine, and we shall be left alone," I said.



EAGLE HOTEL, ASHVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA.

"A REGULAR MENAGERIE."

"If he is off, some one else will be on, Miss Martha."

"Surely you do not expect to meet any body in this remote place?"

"No," replied Ermine, idly swinging to and fro in the loop of a giant wild grape-vine; "I never expect any body—it is too much trouble—but they always come, nevertheless."

They did. That night we stopped at Alexander's, and found the Major awaiting us. He had pitched his tents a mile below, and came to meet us with a string of trout. With that singular mania for citizens' clothes which seems to afflict all our army officers, he had attired himself in a commonplace suit, with colored shirt and an old straw hat. Not a bright button remained, not an inch of blue. Uncle Jack examined the fish with enthusiasm.

"At dawn to-morrow," he said.

"What did I tell you, Ermine?" I said, in an under-tone, being left in a carriage drawn by two wild horses, with no other guardian than a constantly smiling and irresponsible darky named Zip, the road meanwhile but one inch wider than our wheels, and ponderous mountain wagons, drawn by oxen, thinking nothing of coming crashing and creaking around every corner. This was too much for me. After supper we strolled down toward the encampment, meeting the three-horse Tennessee stage on its way to Ashville. Two passengers were on top with the driver.

"Yes, Herr Frool," the elder man was saying, in a loud metallic voice that reminded one of tin scrapings, "the valleys of the White Mountain group are scarcely one thousand feet above the sea-level, while here, the very basin of the French Broad, along which we are now journeying, has an average elevation of more than two thousand feet."

"E-es it poss-sible!" ejaculated the companion.

"Professor Macquoid!" I exclaimed.

It was indeed that learned man himself, and with him a young German: "Herr Frool, a recent acquisition to the ranks of the foreign artists who have made this New World their home," explained the Professor.

They dismounted, returning with us to Alexander's, where they were to pass the night.

"What did I tell you?" said Ermine, when, late in the evening, we went to our room.

"But they are going on early in the morning."

"Are they?" said Miss Stuart. She was sitting before the little glass, brush in hand, her golden hair rippling over her shoulders. Her back was toward me, but I noticed that the reflection smiled. I gave it up immediately.

"Professor Macquoid is no doubt a learned man," I began, "and it is true that I did meet him in Florida last winter; still, the acquaintance was but slight, and—"

"Uncle Jack has long known him," said Ermine, brushing calmly on.

"And as to this Herr Frole—"

"Freulig is the name, Miss Martha."

"Well, Froilick, then. I don't know any thing about him."

"Do you want to know?" said Ermine, setting the stern little boots outside the door.

The next morning it was decided at the breakfast-table that we should stay a day or two at Alexander's in order that Uncle Jack might go a-fishing. The Professor had observed a remarkable dip in the strata near by, and the necessary measurements would detain him some time in the neighborhood. Miss Stuart, he observed, was interested in geology, and "Herr Frool, to whom I am showing some of the wonders of our country, Miss Martha, will be, no doubt, charmed to assist you in your search for ferns."

"Furrens?" repeated the artist.

"Yes, ferns," I replied, warming at the mention of my favorite subject; "little leaves, you know—leaves, not flowers, but *leaves*, growing on the rocks—*leaves*."

"Ah, yes, de leafs—I paint him," said the young German, vaguely. "You like leafs?"

"Indeed she does like them, Herr Fryle," said Uncle Jack, who, in high spirits, was preparing fishing tackle. "She is never happy unless she has a polly-stick-'em, or a polly-poddy, or something of the kind."

"E-es it poss-sible!" said the painter, evidently in a maze as to the meaning of these remarkable new words. Afterward I heard him saying softly over to himself, "bolly," "bolly," "bolly-boddy," as if trying them. Soon the Major appeared with fishing-rod, basket, and a barefooted aboriginal boy. "He knows the bank whereon the wild thyme grows, and will pilot us thither. Ladies, pray honor the river-side tent with your presence at dinner, and inspect our spoil," said our disguised soldier.

"Will the perfection of a cook serve coffee?" asked Ermine.

"He will, fair lady. Ah, Professor, I will bid you good-by now; the stage will soon be round."

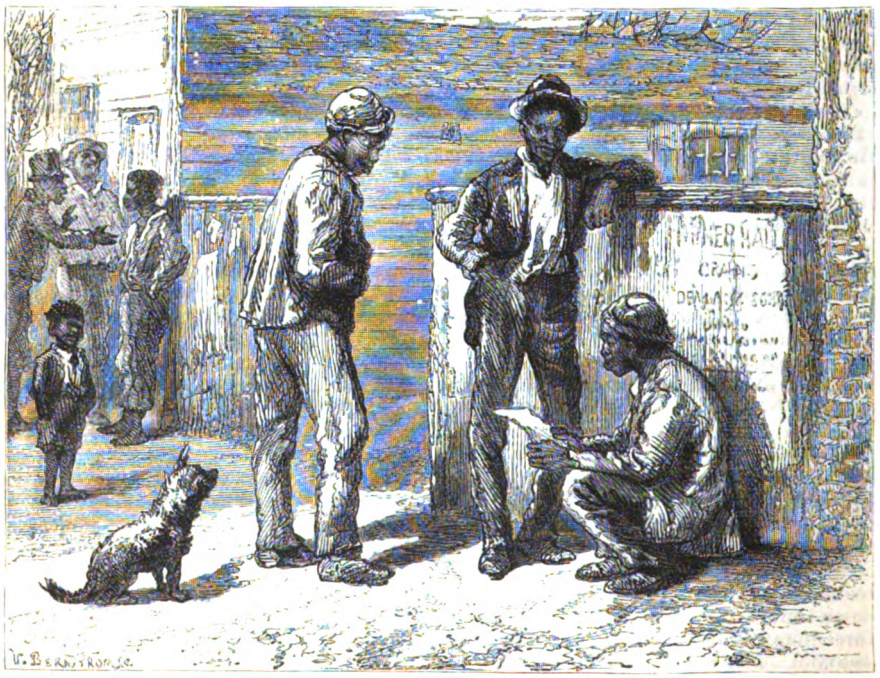
"A remarkable dip in the strata near by may compel me to remain some days in this vicinity, Sir. I shall therefore have the pleasure of seeing you again," said the learned man.

"Indeed! I am rejoiced to hear it. May I not, then, hope that you too will honor my tent with your presence to-day, you and your friend Mr.—Mr. Frawl?"

"Freulig," ejaculated the painter.

The Professor accepted with alacrity, and the fishermen started down the road, the barefooted boy who "knew the bank" going on before.

"Strange, isn't it," remarked Ermine, in her silvery voice, as we leaned over the piazza, "how suddenly an officer grows commonplace in citizen's clothes?" (When we reached the fishing ground I noticed that the Major had exchanged the old straw for his artillery cap.)



THREE MEMBERS OF THE JURY THAT WE SAW.

Left to ourselves, we strolled along the road down stream gathering flowers and idly talking. "I am going to climb up to the top of that rock," announced Ermine, suddenly; "I see a rosy cloud of flowers peeping over."

"The *Rhododendron maximum*," said the Professor—"a plant rarely found north of Pennsylvania, although growing here in thickets sometimes miles in extent. Miss Stuart, the rocks look slippery: allow me to assist you. The corolla is bell-shaped—(Have the goodness to pick up my glasses, Herr Frool)—bell-shaped, and about an inch broad—(In a moment, Miss Stuart, I shall be able to assist you if you will wait)—the color varying from rose to purple, greenish in the throat—"

"Greenish in the throat—horrible!" said Ermine from above, disappearing over the top of the rocks as she spoke.

The Professor meanwhile had stopped with his face to the cliff, clinging in a somewhat spread-out condition to four different projections; a branch had knocked his tall hat down over one eye and nearly blinded him. "Herr Frool!" he called down, "Herr Frool! will you have the goodness to step up and adjust my hat?"

The Herr, being long and lithe, stepped up, and having adjusted the hat, stepped on; we saw him no more.

"Which way did Miss Stuart go?" inquired the Professor, calling down again. Flattened against the rock, he could not look up without endangering his balance.

"More to the right," I answered, putting on my glasses. "You have selected the steepest part of the cliff, Sir."

"Such has ever been my custom, madam; the path of science is the path of difficulty," replied the Professor from his perch.

"Don't you think you had better come down?" I said, watching his movements nervously. "Surely it would be better to come down rather than to fall down."

"Are you aware, madam, that I have ascended the Alps?"

"But this is more than the Alps, for you are climbing straight up toward a ledge which ends in a smooth perpendicular wall, Sir; I can see it quite plainly from here."

RHODODENDRONS.

But the Professor, having cut loose from two of his pinnacles, made no reply, and I watched him execute a flank movement with some trepidation. Perceiving, however, that his hold was tenacious, his very feet seeming to cling like claws, I gave up the watch, and wandered on along the rocky shore, looking for ferns and finding many, including the delicate little purple-stemmed Pellæa, or cliff-brake. Meeting an advance-guard of beech-ferns coming down a gorge, I, too, in my enthusiasm was moved to climb. Before I began, however, I looked back; the Professor was still squirming up.

Is there any thing in the vegetable kingdom more beautiful than the plumy green grace of ferns? Like moonlight to the noonday sunshine, like Schubert's serenade on the violoncello to Rubinstein's Russian Hymn played by a full orchestra, like Undine to one of the French stage heroines of the day, so are the forest ferns to the ranks of the garden flowers. Robed ever in green, wild, shy, and beautiful, they nestle behind the rocks, wave by the brook-sides, and hide in the still dark glens, and the lovers of ferns are bound together the world over by that very tie that they do love them, needing no other introduction—reason sufficient for friendship between strangers, between the working gardener and the millionaire. Although a beginner, with unskilled eyes, I collected along the French Broad twelve different kinds—the polypody, the maidenhair, the bracken, the Cheilanthes, the cliff-brake, the dainty little ebony Asplenium, the

lady-fern, the Filix-mas, the beech-fern, the Cystopteris, the martial *Polystichum acrostichoides*, and the Mystery, so called because it positively refused to show me any seeds, so that I could not analyze it. Climbing on, half-way up the gorge I found a plateau of ferns so luxuriant, so beautiful, that I wished I might turn into tiny Tommelise, of the old fairy tale, and live down in the miniature tropic forest. Coming out at last on the top of the cliff, and wandering along at random, I saw again the blaze of the rhododendrons. There in the heart of the rose-colored thicket sat Ermine, her hat thrown off, and her hands buried in blossoms.

"Herr Freulig is giving me some lessons," she said; but I saw no pencils, and I thought it looked the other way.

"Don't let me interrupt," I said, using the phrase which always signifies the deliberate intention of interrupting as much as possible. I sat down on a rock near by and began arranging my ferns. The young German sighed—(a German's sigh seems to come from the heels of his boots)—and I had the satisfaction of perceiving that the "lessons," whatever they had been, were at an end. Ermine, however, sat dreamily enjoying the rosy radiance unmindful of any change; plucking the blossoms idly, she let them fall around her until she was covered with bloom.

"What destruction, Ermine!"

"Are they not happy so?" she answered.

"Ah!" sighed the young German.

It was nearly noon before we left the rhododendrons. Going back along the cliff, we descended through the gorge of ferns, and reaching the road, strolled on down stream toward the camp.

"I wonder what has become of the Professor," I said, remembering where I had last seen him.

"Probably measuring the dip somewhere," replied Ermine.

"I left him measuring it after a fashion of his own," I said, laughing. "I only hope he got safely down again."

"E-es there danger?" inquired the artist. "I veel ho-law."

He ho-lawed, and presently we heard a sound in reply. I call it a "sound" because it was not the ordinary shout or halloo; it was more like a dignified and long-drawn "ahem." We followed the sound, and going back around the curve, discovered the Professor seated on the very ledge I had noticed, an uncomfortable little shelf with a bare granite wall rising perpendicularly behind it.

"Ah, Professor," said Ermine, calling up in her silvery voice, "how it delights me to see a real enthusiasm in the cause of science! Two hours on that ledge might have seemed tedious to any ordinary mortal; but to you—what secrets has not the eternal rock whispered in your ear?"

"I breengs heem," said the young German, swinging himself up by an easier way; and presently we saw him walking out on the narrow ledge to his friend's assistance.

THE FRENCH BROAD, BELOW ASHVILLE.

But the Professor could not walk; vertigo, he explained, had seized him—the result of an overworked brain.

"R-ropes we haf not; and to carry e-es not poss-sible. You moste cr-rawl," said the Herr.

So back went the procession down the narrow ledge, the Professor crawling on his hands and knees, and his friend on the outside, tiptoeing along where there was scarcely room for a foot-hold, in order to guard against "the vertigo." For my part, I went down behind the rocks to laugh; but Ermine was equal to the occasion. Clasping her lovely hands, she went forward to meet the rescued man. "Oh, Professor!" she entreated; "we know your love for Science, yet we can not yield you entirely to her; do not, I beg, stay so long away from us again!"

The Professor thought he would not.

On a shady point we found our tent, and on the rocks in the river our fishermen, their number increased by an additional man and boy. "How they look, out on those rocks!" remarked Ermine, with the little drawl she affects at times. (Now I knew Ermine's conversational pitfalls of old: she did not say "how well," or "how ill," simply "how." The Professor, however, fell in at once.)

"Very undignified, truly," he said, supposing he was assenting.

"Yes, ver' undig," repeated the artist.

"Fishing, as an amusement, I have always condemned," continued the learned man. "It is a wanton destruction of animal life, accompanied by undue exposure to the elements; the boats, or as in this case the rocks, are apt to be singularly moist, and the effort of keeping the mind concentrated upon a stick called a rod is a waste of the nervous power."

"Do you think so?" said Ermine, languidly.

Seeing us on the bank, the fishermen came ashore, and the perfection began his savory work.

Dinner was served on the rocks at the door of the tent, and the Professor, having partaken heartily, waxed eloquent. "These mountains, my friends"—(why do we always hate a man who begins with 'my friends?')—"form the eastern margin of our continent," he began, "extending from Vermont to Alabama; the coast follows their direction, curving in at Hatteras as they trend off to the westward. The rocks in this neighborhood belong to the most ancient of the azoic series. In the language of an eloquent spokesman among our band of geologists, 'As North America is the eldest born of the continents, so the Black Mountain is the eldest born of its giant brotherhood, and was the first to emerge from the face of the water when the command went forth, Let the dry land appear!' In the group of the White Mountains, Mount Washington is the only one that rises above six thousand feet, while here there are peaks in all directions that rise above that height—yes, Sir, above that height," he continued, looking around the circle and sternly fixing the fact upon the artist, whose attention had wandered off toward Ermine.

"E-es it poss-sible!" said the Herr, hastily returning to earth again. He had no idea where the White Mountains were—(the mountains seemed to be all white or black in America); but never mind.

"Is the Bald Mountain in sight?" inquired Uncle Jack, beginning on a fresh trout.

"There are in this region many Bald Mountains so called—"

"But I mean *the* Bald, the volcano, you know, Professor."

"I beg your pardon, Sir, but I do *not* know," replied the learned man, with dignity; "and science is also silent."

"Probably because she don't know either," replied Uncle Jack.

"Nobody knows," said the Major; "the people in the neighborhood of the mountain less than the outside public, who at least gained some idea, however incorrect, from the New York reporters who sat on the fences all around within sight of the peak, and dated their letters fancifully 'in the shadow of the Bald.'"

"I am tired of hearing about that mountain," said Ermine. "Who cares for a doubtful volcano? If it wants to be fiery, why does it not stop this long-drawn preparation, and go to work in earnest? It might accomplish something then besides rumbling. A wearing set they are from whom people are always 'expecting' great things; they generally remain, as Bulwer says, 'mere promising young men,' or volcanoes, to the last. And now for those hammocks."

They were brought out from the tent, and soon swung from low-down branches near the water.

"Come, Miss Martha," said Ermine.

Personally, I am not very fond of a hammock; it is almost impossible to get in; and once in, it is entirely impossible to get out, at least with dignity; this "bounding in" one reads about is difficult to accomplish at my age! I did not bound, I climbed, assisted by the united strength of Uncle Jack, the Major, the Professor, and the artist. When we had finished our labors, all five of us, and I found myself safely in, Ermine issued her orders:

"Please go into the tent and take your nap, Uncle Jack. Professor, you will read aloud to us, I know. Herr Freulig, may I ask you to set my hammock swinging?"

She might indeed. Deftly attaching a rope to the tasseled net-work, the artist sat down under a pine and solemnly swung the tree-cradle to and fro, his large owl-like blue

eyes fixed upon the lovely picture before him.

"And I?" said the Major.

"Go and smoke—a good way off, please. They never smoked in Arcadia, you know," replied the lady.

The Major went; but several wild flowers lost their heads *en route*, switched off remorselessly by a little branch he happened to carry.

"Oh, not that book, please," said Ermine, as the Professor brought out his pocket Guyot; "the little volume on the rock, where the page is turned down. And pray sit over there behind us; poetry sounds so much sweeter from a distance."

"'When buttercups are blossoming,
The poets sang, 'tis best to wed,'"

began the Professor, in his tin-scraping voice. The river rushed by almost at our feet, and the sounds of the forest grew clearer. The old cook had finished his labors and fallen asleep in the sun. Ermine swung on in her hammock, her eyes fixed dreamily upon the opposite shore.

"'Whereat our footsteps turned aside
From lord and lady of degree,
And bore us to that brave countree,
Where merrily we now abide,
That proud and humble, poor and grand,
Enchanted, golden, gypsy-land—
The Valley of Bohemia,'"

read the Professor, and then I too fell asleep. Time passed (at least I supposed it passed, although I knew nothing about it). I came slowly back from the purple oblivion mountains, hearing while yet afar off the same rhythmic chant that echoed after me when departing.

"'Yet still the same old dance and song
We found, the kindly blithesome throng,
And joyance of Bohemia,'"

said a silvery voice, which surely was not the Professor's. I opened my eyes, and lo! a change. The Professor had disappeared, the artist was not, the rope trailed idly on the ground; it was Ermine who read. To herself? I raised my head softly. On the other side, half concealed by the hammock, I saw part of an artillery cap, and the fragrance of a cigar rose in the air. I went to sleep again immediately. It seems they did smoke in Arcadia after all.

"In the name of common-sense where have you been, Ermine?" I exclaimed, the next morning, when upon first opening my eyes I discovered my companion taking off her gypsy hat.

"Across the river, Miss Martha."

"But it is not daylight yet."

"The sun rose over the cliffs half an hour ago."

"Whom did you go with?"

"A boy; the one who knew the bank."

"What did you go for?"

"An object."

"What did you go in?"

"A cooner."

"A what?"

"A cooner. Put on your wrapper and step to the piazza door; I will show you both the cooner and the object."

Somewhat sleepily I obeyed, seeing the opposite cliffs tipped in sunshine, the dark river below, and floating on its surface a long, narrow, singularly shaped boat, its forward end raking the air; in the stern sat a man using a pole to sweep his craft along as an Indian uses his paddle.

"That boat is a cooner," said Ermine, "and that man is the object."

"Who is he?" I demanded.

"Haven't the slightest idea," replied Ermine, beginning to rebraid her hair.

The young artist came to the breakfast-table portfolio in hand.

A MOUNTAIN WAGON.

"Here it e-es, Mees Herrminia," he said, eagerly, placing a drawing in Ermine's hand. "You haf tell me to do it; I take de yesterday of afternoon, and feenish dis morn."

I looked over Ermine's shoulder. It was a sketch taken a mile back on the road toward Ashville, a point we had noticed on our way out; one of the singular, huge, boat-shaped mountain wagons was drawn up on the curve. "Excellent!" I exclaimed; "the identical keel up behind! What the mountaineers gain by having their wagons tilted forward at such an angle I can not imagine; but perhaps they model them after the sun-bonnets of their wives."

Enter the Professor, carrying a large waiter covered with fragments of rock. "I obtained them all, Miss Stuart—with difficulty, I admit. Still, I obtained them, and in such a cause I am proud to exhaust myself. I will enumerate and describe the specimens to you whenever you please."

"I am so much obliged to you," replied Ermine. "Professor Macquoid was kind enough to devote yesterday afternoon to collecting specimens of all the native rocks for my benefit," she continued, turning to me.

"Very kind indeed," I replied. "Did they study geology, do you think, in Bohemia, Ermine?"

After breakfast, as we were all sitting on the piazza, the Major came up the road, rod in hand. (He was in undress uniform now from head to foot, the gallant array of the red-legged branch of the service.)

Uncle Jack was ready, eager for another day's sport.

"Wait, uncle, please," said Ermine, placidly; "I am going too."

"You are going too!" repeated the chorus, in astonishment.

"Yes. You all looked so delightfully insecure out on those rocks yesterday that I have longed to go ever since. I feel sure" (turning to the Major) "that you will take good care of me."

The Professor sat with his tray of specimens before him; he did not quite understand. Had he not given a decisive opinion against fishing only the day before? But the young artist sighed, and folded up his sketch. Now I did not care much about the disappointment of the Professor—(what is the reason that, femininely speaking, we never do care much about "the Professor?" does that honored title rob a man of all his natural aspirations toward romance?)—but the simple-hearted, solemn young Herr should not be, I resolved, so summarily dismissed. It was only too evident that Ermine was planning for a whole day with the army; this I would defeat!

"Let us all go," I suggested, affably. "Come, Professor, and you too, Herr Freulig. I will order dinner sent down to the tent."

"Well," said Uncle Jack, dubiously, "Frool might do it, and possibly Ermine, if she took a fancy; but how you and the Professor are going to climb out on those rocks, Miss Martha—"

But the Professor threw on his tall hat with *abandon*. "I will be a child for to-day," he cried, with enthusiasm. "Why should we labor always? For once let us be butterflies, happy butterflies!"

"Yes, de booter-fly," repeated the artist, thinking he was getting on admirably with his English.

Rods and lines were procured, and our party started down the road, Ermine in front with the Major.

"I should so much like to fish out of a cooner. Do you know any one about here who has a cooner?" she said, when we had reached the place, and were preparing to climb out to the rocks.

"Why, there was one back at Alexander's," said Uncle Jack. "Why didn't you speak before, Ermine? It has been lying there in front of the house ever since we arrived."

"Has it?" said Ermine, as innocently as though she had never seen it, much less crossed the river in it at sunrise.

"Shall I go back and get it?" asked the Major.

"Oh no; I could not think of putting you to so much trouble. See! there is a cooner now; I wonder who is in it?"

We all looked.

"My friend of yesterday, I declare," said good-natured Uncle Jack. "Hallo, there! come this way, will you?"

"Oh, uncle!"

"Why, I thought that was what you wanted, puss. But hush! here he comes."

The cooner—a mountain pronunciation of the word canoe—came slowly toward us; it was thirty feet long, barely wide enough for one person, flat-bottomed, and unpainted, a species of dug-out, although carefully shaped and planed. The man within managed the long pole skillfully, and soon floated alongside of our rock. The Major, a little vexed at the turn affairs had taken, stepped forward.

"If you will be kind enough to lend me your boat, Sir—" he began. Then stopping suddenly, "Why, Phil!" he exclaimed, "is that you?" and sprang into the cooner with extended hands.

The stranger was a man of about thirty-five years, thin and prematurely old, with close-cut brown hair and brown eyes. He was dressed in the common blue jean of the country, and instead of a coat he wore a jacket belted in at the waist like a blouse. An old military cape of Confederate gray lay in the bottom of the cooner. He smiled and

returned the Major's greeting, if not with equal excitement, at least with equal cordiality.

"To think now that you should have been over on that rock all yesterday morning—for it was you, wasn't it?—without any recognition on my part, Phil!"

"You were too far off to see my face, George."

"You did not recognize me, of course?"

"No; I heard them call you Major, and once I thought I caught the sound of a familiar name. But I was not sure, and—and, I am not what I was, George," he added, just indicating the crutch by his side with a sad little gesture.

"Come right ashore, old fellow," cried the Major, with a sudden moisture in his dark eyes; "we'll kill the fatted calf and talk over the old days. Ladies, let me introduce to you my friend Philip Romer. We were classmates at West Point in '59."

The man took off his coarse straw hat. "I beg your pardon, ladies," he said. "I did not observe you in the shadow: my eyesight is clouded."

By this time, of course, I had discovered that Ermine's plans had not been for "a day with the army," after all; and as for consolation, evidently the Major was as much in need of it as the Herr. Here I was, however, and a long, uncomfortable day on the rocks opened before me. My only comfort lay in the thought that Ermine's sunrise-on-the-river tableau had been wasted. The man in the cooner with his dimmed eyes had probably not even seen her.

Uncle Jack, quite excited by this meeting, had climbed down to the water's edge. "But you steered the boat straight up to us when I shouted," he said, looking with sympathizing curiosity at the fine brown eyes which showed no trace of blindness.

"I guided myself by the sound of your voice, Sir; and I know every inch of the river about here. It gives me my only amusement. I won't go ashore now, George, but I will try to come and see you before you leave the neighborhood. You are at Alexander's, I suppose?"

"No, I am right here at this tent, where you will take dinner with us this noon, I hope."

"You wanted my boat—"

"It was I, Captain," said Ermine, coming forward into the sunshine. "I felt a sudden fancy to try a cooner; but now, of course—"

"You will immediately get in," interposed the Major, offering her his hand. She did not refuse, but stepping lightly in, sat down on the bottom.

"You should have this end seat," said Philip Romer, trying to rise with the aid of his crutch.

"Pray do not," said Ermine, earnestly, leaning forward and laying her hand upon his arm; "I am well placed as I am. Push off, please."

The stranger obeyed, and the long, narrow cooner floated out toward deep water.

"Don't go far away," called out Uncle Jack, uneasily.

"Needen be oneasy, Sah; de Cap'n he knows de ribber, Sah, and manage de cooner like a fiddle-string, Sah," said the old cook, who had watched the scene from his camp fire near by.

"You know him, then?" said Uncle Jack.

"'Spects I do, Sah; libs across thar in a log-cabin, Sah. My ole cousin Pomp he libs with him, Sah. Ben thar more'n eight years, Sah."

"Poor Phil!" said the Major, as we slowly returned to our preparations for fishing. "He left us and joined the Southern army, being a South Carolina boy. I have heard nothing of him all these years."

"He haf no leg, and he haf not see well mit his eyes," said the artist; "I feels fur heem moche peety."

"Superfluous, Herr Frool, superfluous," said the Professor, sternly. "Are you aware, Sir, that we have at the North fifteen thousand men with one leg only?"

"Feefteen t'ousand von-leg mans? E-es it poss-sible!" ejaculated the artist.

My fishing consisted principally in sitting on a safe rock near the shore reading some newspaper items about the mountain country. (I always try to read up while on the ground, having discovered that a line on the spot is worth two volumes away.) I learned, in the first place, that Buncombe County, where we then were, was named from Colonel Buncombe, a gallant officer of the Revolution; over the door of the family mansion once stood this legend,

"To Buncombe Hall
Welcome all."

It was a Congressional representative of this mountain neighborhood who made himself and his district immortal by "only talking for Buncombe." Close upon this information came the fact that in 1871 Buncombe took the first premium for tobacco at the Virginia State Fair, surpassing even the celebrated yield of the Danville region. Buncombe apples were giants of their kind, weighing from twenty-five to thirty ounces, and measuring fourteen and sixteen inches in circumference. (I was not surprised at this, having seen the men who eat them.) The Catawba grape originated in Buncombe, on Cane Creek, a branch of the French Broad. In the surrounding region there were sixty mountain peaks more than six thousand feet high, and thirty-nine over five thousand feet. I had read as far as this, and was beginning on the climate, when the Professor fell in. Herr Freulig, who was sit-

ting on the shore making a sketch, dropped his pencils. "E-es it—" he began; and then seeing the tall hat disappearing under the water, he made a dash across the rocks to save his friend. But the Major had already scooped him out and landed him on a slippery knob, where he sat dripping from every angle. The tall hat, however, was hopelessly gone, voyaging down toward the Tennessee line.

"You had better go back to the house immediately, Professor," shouted Uncle Jack from his rock; "you will have a chill unless you do. And you'd better run all the way—on the double-quick, you know."

But the Professor did not know.

"I veel go mit," said the young German, with his ready good nature. But seeing his eyes wandering regretfully toward his sketch, I interfered, and finally we sent off our learned friend under the care of the negro cook. The pace was a gentle amble.

"What did he try to fish for?" said Uncle Jack, in a disgusted tone. "Do you suppose trout are going to bite when a man sits there like a scarecrow in black clothes, tall hat, and prunella gaiters?"

Ermine came back after a time, and the Major took her place in the cooner. She did not care to fish, however, but went off to swing in the hammock. "No, keep your place, Herr Freulig," she said, as the young artist rose to accompany her. "By-the-way, can you sketch heads?" she added, carelessly. "Why not throw in the cooner and Captain Romer from this point? There is a very fine view here."

The artist set to work upon a new design.

I went on with the climate, and discovered that while in New England two hundred and fifty out of every thousand deaths are from consumption, in Minnesota and California one hundred and fifty, and in Florida fifty, here, even with an almost total lack of luxuries, the proportion was only thirty in the thousand. I was musing upon this, and wondering whether an abundance of luxuries might not do away with any necessity of dying at all, when Herr Freulig brought out his sketch for my criticism—a Hercules fiercely glaring from an Olympian cooner. "But the Captain is slighter, younger, than this," I said.

Half an hour later out he came to my rock again with another sketch, this time an Antinous, fair and radiant.

"But the Captain is older and darker," I said.

"I haf not well see heem," apologized the young German, "but Mees Herrminia she say he haf a fery fine few."

"A what?"

"A fery fine few—*few*, you know. What you call heem?—dis;" and he drew a profile on the side of the paper.

"Oh!" I said, "you mean a profile. Miss Stuart said the *view* from here was very fine, but she meant the scenery."

"Did she?" said the Herr, doubtfully. "I thought she mean *heem*." (So did I.)

"He will be with us at dinner," I continued, aloud, "and then you can look at him."

He did look indeed. His large light blue eyes, solemn as an owl's, fixed themselves upon the stranger's face with the persistent artist stare.

"Come, come, Mr. Frowl," said Uncle Jack at last, in an under-tone, "pray eat your dinner. Why do you look at the man so?"

"Mees Herrminia she say he haf a fery fine few," replied the artist; but fortunately no one understood him.

We were all very gay at dinner. There was something so pathetic in the man sitting there with his crutch and his uncertain vision, something so mournful in this unexpected meeting with an old comrade full of health and strength, prosperous and honored, while he had lost all, that of necessity we were very gay—perhaps to keep ourselves from the other extreme. Mr. Romer (for he had said, quietly, "I have no title now") listened to our stories, smiled when we laughed, and bore his part pleasantly as the talk went round the table, or rather the rock on which our cloth was spread. But after the meal was over, and Uncle Jack had gone into the tent to take his nap, and the artist, having gazed his fill, had withdrawn with pencils and paper for another attempt, "Come, George," he said, "I want to hear all about the boys. Are any of them dead?"

"All but four, Phil."

"Where did they die?"

"Fair Oaks, Gettysburg, Chancellorsville, and Drury's Bluff."

"I lost my leg at Gettysburg. Were you there?"

"Yes."

"Strange, isn't it? that we two, who were— But never mind. You escaped unhurt, George?"

"Yes, thank God!"

"Thank Him indeed," said the stranger, baring his head. As he sat there in the afternoon sunshine, I remembered what Ermine had said. Yes, he had a noble head and fine outline, but he stooped slightly, and all his movements were slow and weary. The two talked on, asking questions, hearing and telling little histories of old comrades, too often chronicled as "dead."

"And you, Phil?" asked the Major at last.

"You see me: there is nothing more to add," replied the other.

I glanced at my companion, suggesting with my eyes that we should leave the friends alone together.

"No," said Ermine, replying aloud, "why should we go? Not unless Captain Romer wishes it." For she persisted in using the

title, and very beautiful did she look as, with an unwonted flush on her cheeks and a softened light in her steel-blue eyes, she sat leaning against an old pine-tree. I almost wished he might see her, see her as I did, with every tinge and outline. Perhaps he did; perhaps at times the mist over his eyes dissolved.

At any rate, he said, gently, "Do not go; it is so long since I have heard ladies' voices!"

"Where is your sister, Phil?" asked the Major. (He too had seen the flush on Ermine's cheeks, and bravely made way for the victor, the poor, maimed, unconscious victor.)

"She is dead, George. Nay, do not apologize; we are most of us dead down here," said Romer, with a shadowy smile. "She married a Georgian. He was shot at Gaines's Mill, and she did not long survive him. Mother died too that winter. It was a hard winter with us. Since then I have been alone."

There was a silence. "Why do you not go to Charleston or Richmond? You are buried alive here, old fellow."

"What can I do there? After I left the hospital I tried for a whole year to get some employment, and failed. Nobody wants a cripple. I did fill a small clerkship for a few months, but when my eyes began to fail —the trouble is connected in some way with an old wound near the spine—I lost even that. I am but a useless hulk, George. I can not dig, to beg I am ashamed. And so I came up to these mountains."

"And you live here?"

"Yes, in a cabin across the river. I have a little field where my man Pomp raises corn and potatoes; and then we can fish, you know. Wood costs us nothing, and—don't laugh, George!—but I have learned to knit."

"Knit?"

"Yes, stockings and other things. We trade them off for supplies. I can knit quite well now, and—and the people about here are very kind," concluded the Confederate soldier, simply. We did not laugh; we could not for tears.

The next day we drove on down the river to Warm Springs. In the carriage by my side, on the comfortable back seat, rode Philip Romer, while Uncle Jack and Ermine sat opposite. We had all so insisted that he had found no room for excuse. The Major accompanied us on horseback, and the Professor was some miles behind, in the stage. Herr Freulig had with difficulty obtained a mule, and now rode wherever that animal preferred, sometimes far ahead, sometimes off on side tracks up gorges, but generally close behind, the mule's head in uncomfortable proximity to my backbone. We met several country-women on horseback, going to town, with the usual white sack hung over the saddle behind.

"Now those sun-bonnets and calico dresses, if ugly, are at least comfortable," said Ermine; "but the riding dresses of the class next above are something unique both in ugliness and total want of fitness as to place and circumstance. The grim-faced wife of a well-to-do farmer, riding into town on horseback, clad in a green delaine flounced dress, a broad cotton lace collar low down on her collar-bones, and a small bonnet perched on the back of her head, with a brown veil dangling down behind, is—"

"Worth coming to see," said Uncle Jack.

"Perhaps you are right, uncle. But a bonnet on horseback! Then the brown veil! Will any one explain to me why it is that in the country a veil always seems to be considered a trimming for the bonnet? In all my rambles through Arcadia I don't know that I have ever seen a veil down fair and square over the face, city fashion, where it belongs."

"Country women are sensible, and like the sunshine, niece."

"Then why wear a veil at all?"

"There are noble hearts under those gaunt, ungraceful exteriors that excite your mirth, Miss Stuart," said Philip Romer. "Those very women will come over the mountains from miles away, when you are ill, and nurse you tenderly for pure charity's sake. When the winter is hard they will share with you and bake you a cake from their last meal. They will spin their wool and dye and weave, and make you clothes from the cloth. This jacket I wear was such a gift. You must excuse its homeliness, for it is all I have."

The river grew more wildly beautiful with every western mile; the cliffs on each side were higher, towering above us almost perpendicularly hundreds of feet, with high mountains directly behind them. The swift current sped forward, now foaming over scattered rocks, now sweeping in one unbroken sheet over a smooth ledge with the green tints of Niagara, then suddenly becoming as still as a mill-pond, as if determined to surprise us. Passing Laurel Creek, with the Walnut Mountain behind, we came in sight of Mountain Island, a single mountain, around whose rocky base the river flows in two streams with a tremendous rush and bustle, as though proud of its conquest from the haughty shore. The island is one rock-mass, rising boldly from the water, and as our carriage wound along the little road on shore we were obliged to throw back our heads and look up, in order to see its top, with the trees against the sky.

"There is no island in the Rhine at all equal to this," said Uncle Jack, with enthusiasm.

"But it wants a castle, uncle."

"It would not be difficult to build one," said Philip Romer. "You could take the granite right out of the island itself, and labor is cheap here. Your vassals could defend you from attack by land or by water, Miss Stuart."

"And how much must I pay for my island?"

"About twenty-five cents an acre, or less. You would have no competitors," replied the soldier, smiling.

"And the title?"

"Excellent; it comes straight down from Adam."

"Behold, I will build me a castle on this unknown mountain island," said Ermine, gazing up at the rocky heights. "Hither shall come my few congenial souls who never make calls, or go to dinner parties, or read Macdonald's novels. We would have some of Boughton's pictures, and some of Winslow Homer's, and just one of those inscrutably smiling heads from the Cesnola collection to remind us that there is plenty more of life after this one is over. We would have Rhine wine, and George Eliot, and Mendelssohn, and heliotrope, and little cakes with raisins in them. No one should play games, or tell any body else what he or she 'ought to do,' and every body should be perfectly happy."

"Sejed, Prince of Ethiopia," I began, "resolved to have three days of uninterrupted happiness—"

"Begone with your ancient fables!" said Ermine. "This is the New World, and this shall be my Bohemia.

"'Beyond, the magic valley lay,
With glimpse of shimmering stream and fall,
And here, between twin turrets, ran,
Built o'er with arch and barbacan,
The entrance to Bohemia.'"

"The question is," said Uncle Jack, "when they got in finally, did they have a good time?"

"How was it with you, uncle?"

"WILDLY BEAUTIFUL."

"Do you mean to insinuate, Miss Puss—"

"Only a youthful excursion, uncle. The atmosphere of Bohemia is so kindly; it lingers around you yet."

"Peter's Rock," said the Major, reining in his horse alongside. "It is early. Shall we not rest here a while?" (He was but human, and he had ridden a long time alone.)

So we descended and inspected Peter's Rock with great gravity, Philip Romer remaining in the carriage.

"And who was Peter?" inquired Ermine.

She had taken the Major's arm immediately, with one of her sweetest smiles. The Major would have answered gladly had he known, or had an appropriate fiction occurred to him in time; but he could think of nothing save Mother Goose's celebrated pumpkin eater.

"Yes, who was Peter?" said Uncle Jack.

"Who vas he, dis Pete?" echoed the Herr, who had at last alighted safely from his mule.

A countryman was coming up the road with an ox team.

NORTH CAROLINA INDIANS.

"I shall ask him," said Ermine, stepping forward. "Is this Peter's Rock, Sir?"

"Ya-as," replied the man, staring solemnly at our party.

"And who was Peter?"

"Wa'al," said the man, reflecting, "I reckon he was an Injun."

"But Peter is not an Indian name?"

"Oh, the whites gave 'em all sorts of names, marm. This Peter he come out on that thar rock with his bows an' arrers, an' he shot some whites a-comin' along the bank goin' west."

"Why?"

"Didn't want 'em thar, I reckon; said 'twas Injun country. What mout be yer name, folks, an' whar be yer from?"

"Our family name is Dolce-far-niente, and we are from Bohemia," replied Ermine.

"Never heerd of it. Is it fur away?"

"Friend, the glimmering glories of our land are far, yet ever close at hand. Will you go with us?"

"Wa'al, no; I reckon I can't jes now. Yer see, I'm goin' to Ashville. But yourn must be a mighty nice country, I reckon," replied the mountaineer, stimulated to unwonted praises by the lovely vision of Ermine; then, seized with sudden embarrassment, he urged on his team and disappeared.

"No doubt he will often tell of the singular people he met on the river, who said they came from Bohemia," remarked Ermine, laughing. "But we have our legend. What a picture it would make! Herr Freulig, look at that rock, and imagine the noble form of the Indian chieftain on the summit outlined against the sky, his arrow aimed at the destroyers of his race!"

"Of hees rase, yes," replied the artist, eagerly. "I makes heem, Miss Herrminia. Here e-es de r-roke, so;" and seating himself on a log, he began sketching rapidly.

While we were loitering in the shade we heard the rumble of the stage behind us, and presently it came into view jolting over the rocky road. The yellow face of the Professor looked from one of the windows. "I will alight," he said, seeing us. "Driver, do you hear? I will alight. There being no one in the coach save myself," he explained, as he climbed slowly down, "I have been most unpleasantly jolted. I assure you, ladies, that I have bounded up and down like a rubber ball. It is but a short distance to the Springs; I will walk."

Ermine was sitting in a little leafy nook with the Major. The Professor, always serenely confident, directed his steps thither.

"Who was Peter?" demanded Ermine, barring the entrance with a long wand of mountain ivy.

"Who was Peter?" repeated the Professor, in a bewildered tone.

"Yes; this is his rock, you know. I can allow no one to enter until he has solved my riddle."

The learned man invested himself with all his gallantry as with a garment. "Fair Sphinx," he replied, affecting with some trouble a playful smile, "your orders shall be obeyed. Know, then, that it was a—a geologist named Peter, an ardent votary of science, who, penetrating into these unknown mountains, measured that rock, and —and—"

"Fell over," suggested the Major.

"And was killed," concluded Uncle Jack. "They always are, you know. That is one comfort about geologists."

"But the mountaineers, who in this case must have been Indians, in their enthusiastic admiration for science, made him a solitary grave on the top of the rock, where he now lies alone with—with the sky," I added.

"Precisely what I was about to say," observed the Professor, bowing airily to us all.

"How beautiful!" said Ermine, enthusiastically; "and above all, how new! Science hath gilded the rock. Imagine the lonely figure of the geologist suspended by a rope, engaged in the noble work of measuring. Sublime!" And taking the Major's arm again, she walked off down the road, leaving the learned man to the exclusive enjoyment of the little leafy nook.

But Herr Freulig sat dejectedly on his

log; his pencil had stopped. "I moste alter," I heard him murmur; "it e-es not Indeens at all." And the rubber came into play.

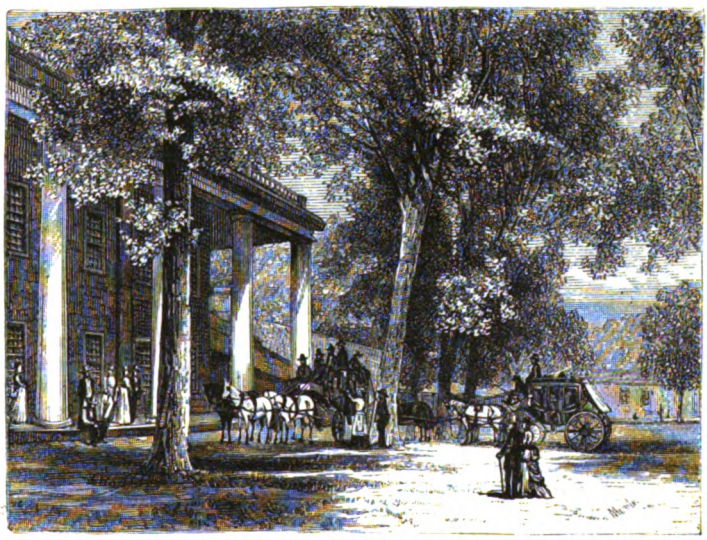
After another half hour spent on the shore we drove on toward the Springs, leaving the Professor walking youthfully along, with an impromptu alpenstock. He had replaced his lost hat with an old straw, purchased from a rich wagoner who had two, and this head-gear he had adorned with a large bunch of rhododendrons, as much as to say, "I too can be pastoral;" he wore it tilted over on one side, and hummed to himself as he walked. The tune was *Old Hundred;* but never mind.

CASCADE NEAR WARM SPRINGS, NORTH CAROLINA.

"Why should this foaming, rapid river be burdened with such a name?" said Ermine, as we drove on, each curve showing us new vistas of grandeur and beauty. "French Broad!—you have to take two breaths to finish it! The river is neither broad nor French that I can see."

"It was named by a party of hunters," said Philip Romer. "They were exploring the mountains, and the first river they met they called the Broad, the next they called Second Broad, and the third Main Broad; finding still a fourth, they called it French's Broad, after their captain, whose name was French."

"What a poverty-stricken set of minds!" said Ermine. "Why could they not take the Indian names? Or if they must baptize things for themselves, they should at least have chosen a characteristic ugliness. They managed these things better along the Great Lakes. What grand names are Thunder Bay and Porphyry Point! What unwritten stories of the past belong to Misery River and Death's Door! Then, descending to the



WARM SPRINGS HOTEL—ARRIVAL OF STAGE.

rude, every-day life of the hunter, what could be better than Knife River, Kettle Point, and Pie Island? For my part, I have always cherished a liking for the man who sent that Lake Huron town down to posterity labeled 'Bad Axe.' No doubt it commemorated the day when, alone on the edge of the boundless forest, the struggling settler found that his axe, the most precious treasure of the pioneer, was a bad one."

"The Indian name of the French Broad is Tockeste, the Racing River," said the soldier.

"There," said Ermine, "that is what I mean. How entirely appropriate! The Indians were poets."

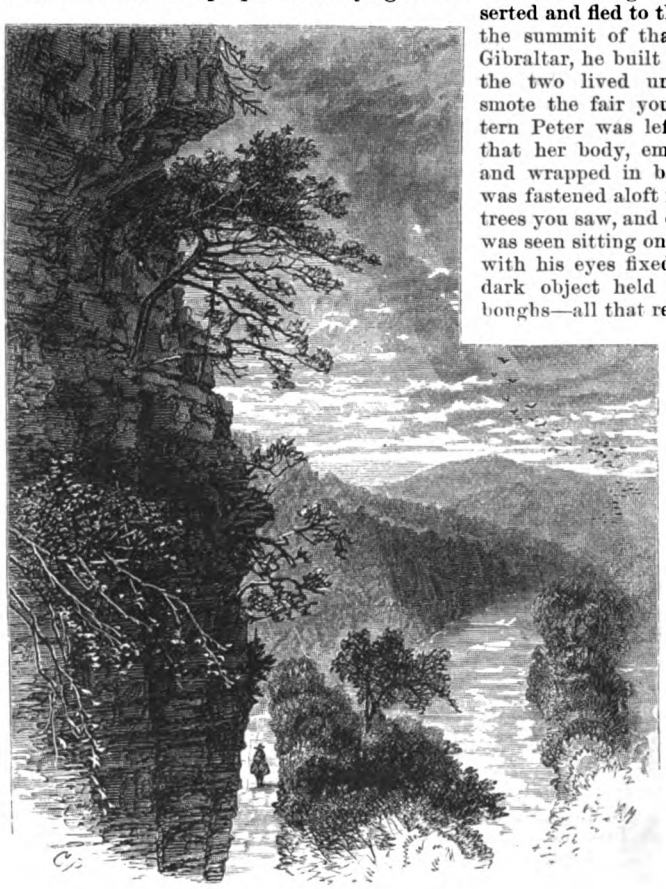
"Did you know that some of the Cherokees still reside in the State?" continued Philip. "Their settlement is not very far from here —more to the south. I suppose they are by far the wildest Indians left within the borders of the old States. These mountains still give them many a free hunting ground. Singularly enough, too, they are not without their public spirit. Before the war, when the mountain people were trying to build a railroad through their country, these redskins brought out their shovels and picks, and actually graded and prepared voluntarily two miles of the road near their village. It still remains there in fair order, although the road is but a ghost."

"I have noticed a phantom pursuing us all the way from the other side of the Blue Ridge," said Uncle Jack. "Ruined culverts, half-excavated tunnels, shadowy grading, and lines of levels. I have even fancied that I heard a spirit whistle."

"The ghost of the poor mountain railroad, Sir. Swindlers made off with all the money, and the robbed mountaineers gloomily make fences of the ties—all that is left to them."

"By-the-way, Captain Romer, can *you* tell us who Peter was?" said Ermine, as we drove on. "We were discussing the subject at the rock. So far, he has been an Indian chief and a geologist."

"He was neither, Miss Stuart," replied Philip, with ready invention. "He was a British officer under Cornwallis, who, falling madly in love with a beautiful maiden on the march along the Carolina coast, deserted and fled to these mountains. On the summit of that rock, a miniature Gibraltar, he built his cabin, and there the two lived until death suddenly smote the fair young wife, and subaltern Peter was left alone. It is said that her body, embalmed with spices and wrapped in bark, Indian fashion, was fastened aloft in one of those pine-trees you saw, and often at sunset Peter was seen sitting on the edge of the cliff, with his eyes fixed mournfully on the dark object held aloft by the green boughs—all that remained of his love."



VIEW FROM THE TOP OF PAINT ROCK.

"That," said Ermine, "is by far the best, and is adopted from this time forth. Herr Freulig" (for the mule was close at my backbone again), "did you hear that? He must be sitting on the edge of the cliff —in his uniform, of course — with his eyes fixed upon the dark object swaying in the green far above. The very thing for a sketch! I don't know that I ever met a finer subject straying around loose in Arcadia."

"E—es it—" began the artist, trying to take out his

portfolio on the spot. Then, slowly shaking his head, he stopped, and dismounting from his mule, tied that playful animal to a tree. The last I saw of him he was sharpening his numerous pencils.

The approach to Warm Springs is very lovely. Crossing the river on a long bridge, we drove up to the large hotel which stands here alone, maintained in the heart of the wilderness by the maimed and the halt and the blind who come here to bathe in the magical waters. The springs bubble up from the ground in a large pool near the river's edge; the temperature of the water varies from ninety-eight to one hundred and two degrees Fahrenheit. Although, unlike the Virginia resorts, the Warm Springs of North Carolina are scarcely known at the North, they are well patronized by the people of Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi, and of the surrounding country. As we drove up to the entrance the long piazza was gay with ladies attired in the bright colors the Southerners love so well. The universal black, so fashionable at the North, is hardly seen at the South except in mourning, and when accepted in a modified form is always lighted up with some sash or knot of gay ribbons.

LAST GLIMPSE OF THE FRENCH BROAD.

"Tropical," said Ermine, alighting.

The Major had ridden by himself during the latter part of the afternoon. Once or twice we saw him, but he seemed lost in thought. As we sat on the piazza in the evening, however, he disburdened himself of his load. "I have finally unearthed the story of Peter's Rock, Miss Stuart," he began, with a careless air. "It seems Peter was a negro, and when Stoneman rode through from Tennessee, he gave them warning with a flaming torch, standing on the top of the rock—"

"Ah!" interrupted Herr Freulig, excitedly; "it e-es too moche. I haf make heem von Indeen, I haf make heem von geologer, I haf make heem a Breetish officer, and now you vants me to make heem a neeg! I can no more."

I burst into an irrepressible fit of laughter as the unhappy Herr concluded the story of his wrongs. The sketch of the "Breetish officer" was accepted and ratified on the spot, and Ermine resolved herself into a consoler-general. The Major's story remains unfinished to this day.

Our river pilgrimage was drawing to a close; four miles to the west ran the Tennessee line, and beyond were the low countries and railroads. Professor Macquoid concluded to try the effect of his rhododendron hat and alpenstock in the neighborhood of Warm Springs for a few days, Ermine remaining singularly blind to their shepherd-like charm. He mentioned that he had discovered a remarkable dip in the neighborhood, which he thought it his duty to measure. (The Professor, it was understood, was engaged upon the composition of a Great Work.) Herr Freulig was of course obliged to remain with his traveling com-

panion; but I overheard Ermine saying something about "next winter," and I thought I caught a glimpse of a sketch in her hand which looked very much like that "fery fine few."

The Major was going as far as Chattanooga, and Philip Romer said he would accompany us to the State line, and then return homeward on his friend's horse.

"But can you?" I asked, remembering the narrow road and the fords.

"The horse knows the way, and all the people about here know me, Miss Martha," said the soldier, smiling. "I am not entirely blind yet; I can see a little."

Then, as we were all silent through our great compassion for him, he turned the tide of talk into another channel. "Do you see that road across the river?" he asked. "It goes to Greenville, twenty-five miles distant. In that little village, on the 4th of September, 1864, died John Morgan the raider, shot through the heart in a garden, his place of refuge having been discovered and pointed out by a woman."

"He was a bold rider," said Ermine, gently.

"I beg your pardon, niece," began Uncle Jack in some heat; "John Morgan was a rebel, and deserved his—" Then remembering Philip Romer, he paused suddenly.

"The fortunes of war, Sir. He took his fate into his own hands; we all did that, and must now bear the consequences," said the Confederate soldier, quietly.

Some distance below Warm Springs we found Paint Rock—a singular cliff marked with streaks of a dark red color, supposed by the imaginative to be Indian picture-writing.

"Are we in the Great Smoky Mountains?" asked Ermine.

"In their very heart, Miss Stuart; all the peaks you see belong to that chain. You are going through with the French Broad, which has cut a pathway for itself to the low countries."

We lingered on the border, but the farewells came at last. "Good-by," we said, and found ourselves strangely saddened by the breaking of this tie of a day. The Major had many a plan for future meetings with his old comrade, and he detailed them all with his hearty cordiality. Philip Romer listened, but I noticed that he did not echo the confident hope.

The Major helped him to mount, and turned the horse's head in the right direction. "Good-by," we said again, and our carriage started westward. At a curve in the road we all looked back. The solitary figure was riding slowly up into the dark cañon of the French Broad; another moment and it was lost in the pine-trees.

Beyond the mountains the river loses its wildness; tranquilly it flows along on its way to the Tennessee, and our last view of it was fair and peaceful. We heard the whistle of the locomotive, and the cars bore us rapidly away; but we watched as long as we could see them the peaks of the Great Smoky, and thought silently of that solitary figure riding back along the bank of the wild French Broad.

THE FOLLOWER.

We have a youngster in the house,
A little man of ten,
Who dearest to his mother is
Of all God's little men.
In-doors and out he clings to her;
He follows up and down;
He steals his slender hand in hers;
He plucks her by the gown.
"Why do you cling to me so, child?
You track me every where;
You never let me be alone."
And he with serious air
Answered, as closer still he drew,
"My feet were made to follow you."

Two years before the boy was born
Another child, of seven,
Whom Heaven had lent to us a while,
Went back again to Heaven.
He came to fill his brother's place,
And bless our failing years;
The good God sent him down in love
To dry our useless tears.
I think so, mother, for I hear
In what the child has said
A meaning that he knows not of,
A message from the dead.
He answered wiser than he knew,
"My feet were made to follow you."

Come here, my child, and sit with me,
Your head upon my breast;
You are the last of all my sons,
And you must be the best.
How much I love you, you may guess,
When, grown a man like me,
You sit as I am sitting now,
Your child upon your knee.
Think of me then, and what I said
(And practiced when I could),
"'Tis something to be wise and great,
'Tis better to be good.
Oh, say to all things good and true,
'My feet were made to follow you!'"

Come here, my wife, and sit by me,
And place your hand in mine
(And yours, my child): while I have you
'Tis wicked to repine.
We've had our share of sorrows, love;
We've had our graves to fill:
But, thank the good God overhead,
We have each other still!
We've nothing in the world besides,
For we are only three:
Mother and child, *my* wife and child,
How dear you are to me!
I know—indeed, I always knew,
My feet were made to follow you!