

**THROUGH THE SHENANDOAH
VALLEY: THE CHRONICLE
OF A JOURNEY THROUGH
THE UPLANDS OF VIRGINIA**

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Through the Shenandoah Valley: The Chronicle of a Journey Through the Uplands of Virginia
by Ernest Ingersoll

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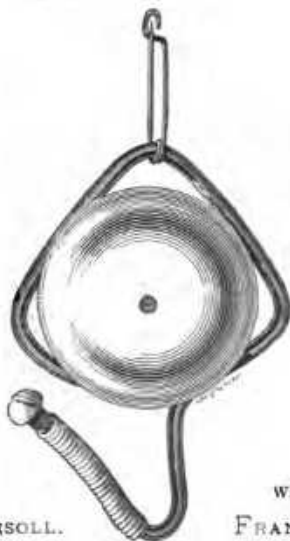
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THROUGH THE
SHENANDOAH VALLEY

THE CHRONICLE OF A LEISURELY JOURNEY

THROUGH THE UPLANDS OF VIRGINIA.

SKETCHING THEIR SCENERY, NOTING THEIR LEGENDS, PORTRAYING
SOCIAL AND MATERIAL PROGRESS, AND
EXPLAINING ROUTES OF TRAVEL.



BY
ERNEST INGERSOLL.

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I.

SHENANDOAH VALLEY—THE ANTIETAM AND
THE POTOMAC.

Prue Criticises the Author.—Dutch Barns.—Ringgold's Manor.—Indian War-paths.—
Battlefield of the Antietam.—Lee's Head-quarters.—The Potomac Surprises
ua.—Shepherdstown.—Recollections of the Bucktails.—Ram-
say's Steamboat.—Pack-horse Ford and the Slaughter-
ter of the Corn Exchange Regiment.

It was a charmingly bright morning when we bade Hagerstown good-bye, and took our places in the train on the Shenandoah Valley Railway bound southward. Passengers had come in on the Western Maryland Railway, and others on the Cumberland Valley, and now appeared after their breakfast at the station with smiling faces. Comparisons are odious, but a better meal than one gets at the railway restaurant in Hagerstown is unnecessary to either health or comfort.



HAGERSTOWN STATION.

"That's a point you're forever thinking about," says Prue, a little spitefully.

"I am, I acknowledge. It's of immense importance. Why is it I always prefer the Santa Fe route across the plains? Because I am sure of good meals. When one is traveling in the West or South, that consideration is doubly worth forethought. The certainty of finding well-cooked and abundant food was one great reason for my choosing this route for our present trip."

"Well, I wouldn't be so particular."

"Why not? It's largely your fault if I am."

"How, pray tell?"

"Because you have educated me to so good living at home!"

That softens the critic. Prue is justly proud of her tidy and accurate house-keeping.

The face of the country roughens somewhat south of Hagerstown, and a gradual but decided change in the appearance of things is noticeable. The special feature of the German farming region is preserved everywhere, however, north of the Potomac—I mean the huge barns. While the houses are generally comfortable and sometimes large, they are inconspicuous in the landscape beside the barns, which are magnificent—no simpler adjective will answer. They are not quite so big as Chicago elevators, but far more spacious than most churches. A few are built of wood upon a stone substructure which serves as a stable; but the majority are of stone with wooden sheds attached. The stone barns, having long slits of windows left for ventilation, resemble forts pierced for musketry; while a few new barns made of brick, secure the needful air by leaving holes, each the size of one brick, arranged in fantastic patterns up and down the gable ends.

The first stop out of Hagerstown is at St. James, a district full of reminiscence which Prue calls to mind at the sight of a group of buildings on the right a little beyond the station. This was "Ringgold's Manor," and Prue tells the story as we pass through the lands once under his sway.

Among the earliest settlers of this part of Maryland were the Ringolds, whose estates amounted to 17,000 acres in one spot here, and much land elsewhere. The manor-house was at Fountain Rock, and was a splendid mansion decorated with stucco-work and carvings executed in good taste. "Many of the doors of the mansion," Prue recounts, "were of solid mahogany, and the outbuildings, appointments, etc., were of the handsomest character. The architect was the distinguished Benjamin H. Latrobe, who was also one of the architects of the national capitol at Washington. It was General Ringgold's practice to drive to Washington in his coach-and-four with outriders, and to bring his political associates home with him. Among his guests were President Monroe and Henry Clay. Mrs. Clay, you know," Prue adds, "was a Hagerstown girl named Lucretia Hartt. But this lavish hospitality and great extravagance finally worked Ringgold's ruin, and when he died his estate went to his creditors."

"Yes," Baily adds, "he had a jolly-dog way of lighting cigars with bank-notes, I have read; and each season would sell a farm to pay the expenses of the preceding congressional term."

The old manor-house was turned into St. James' College many years ago, but now only a grammar school occupies the premises.

The streams hereabout run in deep ravines and give good water-power. At Grimes station, the next stop, there is an old-time stone mill of huge proportions, with gambrel roof, exposed wheel and mossy flume, the whole surrounded by an orchard; near by stands the small, half-ruined stone cottage of the miller, nearly hidden in the trees, making a charming subject for a picture.

Just beyond we get a small glimpse of a river, deep and powerful,

seen down through a gorge which opens and shuts again as we leap its chasm. A few quaint houses (New Industry) fill the mouth of the gorge, but before we can look twice they are gone. Such is our first sight of the Potomac.

Not far eastward of Grimes is Sharpsburg and the mouth of the Antietam, a district which seems to have been especially populous in prehistoric days, and where an extraordinary number of relics and traces of Indian residence have been found. At Martinsburg lived a great settlement of Tuscaroras, and upon the Opéquon, which empties near there, dwelt a big band of Shawnees. At the mouth of the Antietam (which flows southward parallel with the railroad and two to four miles distant) there occurred in 1735 a memorable battle between the Catawbas and Delawares, for whom the Potomac was a border line, resulting in the defeat of the Delawares.

More thrilling war history than this makes this station memorable, however, for here, on September 17th, 1862, was fought a part of the great battle of the Antietam, the more central struggle of which took place in the plain eastward of the railway. Here at Grimes, however, was the extreme left of the Confederate line, where the trees are still scarred with the bullets, and the cornfields conceal the wasted shot of that fatal day. A short distance beyond is a station called Antietam—the point of departure for Sharpsburg and its stone bridge, two miles distant, which lay at the heart of the hardest fighting. For three miles the railroad runs immediately in rear of the position held by the main command of "Stonewall" Jackson, and every acre of ground was stained by the blood of brave men. In the large brick house seen among the trees a short distance eastward of the station, General Lee had his head-quarters.

The United States soldiers' cemetery, where more than 5,000 of the Federal dead are buried, is near the village, but not in sight from the station; from the crest of the hill it covers, a general view of the whole battle-field can be obtained.


When we come upon the Potomac again it is with startling suddenness. Out of the clover and corn fields the train hides itself in a deep cut, and thence rushes forth upon the lofty bridge which spans the noble river at Shepherdstown.

Shepherdstown lies upon the southern bank and is one of the quaintest of villages. The cliff-like banks of the river are hung with verdure, few buildings skirt the water or nestle in the ravines which extend up to the level of the town, and on the northern side of the stream the famous old Chesapeake and Ohio canal still floats its cumbersome boats. At the head of a ravine stands one of those old stone mills, most temptingly placed for sketching, and the whole presentation of the town, with the green, still river curving grandly out of view beneath it, is one long to be remembered.

Having crossed the Potomac, we are now in the northeastern corner of West Virginia, and, in Shepherdstown, enter its oldest settlement,



EVENING ON THE UPPER POTOMAC.


 founded in 1734 by Thomas Shepherd, whose descendants still live there and own some of the original land. The pioneers were Germans from Pennsylvania chiefly, and the village has more the appearance of a Maryland than a Virginia town. Its settlement was followed closely by a large incoming of Quakers who located themselves at the foot of the North mountain.

This community was active in revolutionary days, and from it sprang the first of those "buck-tail" mountaineers, who, recruiting as they went, hastened on foot to aid Washington, at Boston, in 1775, when he first called for troops. No incident in local history, however, is more important than the experimentation which was carried on here by James Ramsay, in 1785, toward the invention of a steamboat. The plan of the Chesapeake and Ohio canal was then under consideration, and projects for inland navigation were stimulating inventive thoughts. Washington and others became especially interested in what Mr. Ramsay was doing, and aided his experiments. Finally there was produced and tried on the Potomac a steamboat which unquestionably ante-dates the discoveries in this direction of Fulton and perhaps of Fitch. Ramsay's steamer was a flat-boat, "propelled by a steam engine working a vertical pump in the middle of the vessel, by which the water was drawn in at the bow, and expelled through a horizontal trunk at the stern." The impact of this forcible stream against the static water of the river pushed the boat along, just as a cuttle-fish swims. This boat was eighty feet long, and, with a cargo of three tons, attained a speed up the current of four miles an hour. She was soon disabled, however, by the explosion of her boiler. Relics of her machinery are preserved in the National Museum, owing to the forethought of Colonel Boteler, of Shepherdstown.

During the late war Shepherdstown and its environs were the theatre of incessant army operations, and the town itself was shelled more than once by alternate guns. Its position made it an impracticable point for either army to hold, while its neighborhood was desirable to both. Hence, in the evenly-contested campaigns of the earlier years of the war, and the great marches and counter-marches which took place later, Shepherdstown was alternately occupied by both "enemies" to its peace and prosperity.

Walking in the evening to the high bluffs near the end of the fine bridge, and feasting our eyes on the beauty of the river-picture stretching away to Harper's Ferry, we can see, a mile below the town, ripples upon the water, near some large kilns and cement-mills, which betokens a shallow place.

"There," I say to Prue, "is the famous old Pack-horse ford, which got its name in the colonial days when all the mountain paths were simply 'trails,' and the pack-horse the only means of transportation. Here would cross the northern savages when they went on their war expeditions against the southern tribes, and there emigrants and hunters and surveyors found their easiest transit of the river."

"I suppose," says Prue, "this must have been an important point in the late war, if, as you say, all the bridges were destroyed."

"It was. Soldiers were always crossing and re-crossing, but it became of especial use to Lee. By it a part of his army marched to the field of Antietam, and after the battle the whole of his forces re-crossed on the night of September 18, to the Virginia side, at this ford. The main body of the Confederates continued their retreat inland, but a part