

**HERE AND THERE IN OUR OWN
COUNTRY. EMBRACING
SKETCHES OF TRAVEL AND
DESCRIPTIONS OF PLACES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649125456

Here and there in our own country. Embracing sketches of travel and descriptions of places by
Various

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

VARIOUS

**HERE AND THERE IN OUR OWN
COUNTRY. EMBRACING
SKETCHES OF TRAVEL AND
DESCRIPTIONS OF PLACES**

HERE AND THERE

IN

OUR OWN COUNTRY.

EMBRACING

SKETCHES OF TRAVEL AND DESCRIPTIONS
OF PLACES, Etc., Etc.

By POPULAR WRITERS.

WITH 127 ILLUSTRATIONS.

PHILADELPHIA:
J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY.

Copyright, 1885, by J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY.



E
168
H42

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
ON THE FRENCH BROAD. EDMUND KIRKE	5
CATSKILL AND THE CATSKILL REGION	34
EKONIAH SCRUB: AMONG FLORIDA LAKES. LOUISE SEYMOUR HOUGHTON	65
STRATFORD-ON-THE-SOUND	79
CANOEING ON THE HIGH MISSISSIPPI. A. H. SIEGFRIED	95
A CHAPTER OF AMERICAN EXPLORATION. WILLIAM H. RIDEING	116
THE RUINS OF THE COLORADO VALLEY. ALFRED TERRY BACON	134
AN HISTORICAL ROCKY-MOUNTAIN OUTPOST. GEORGE REX BUCKMAN	145
LEADVILLE. I. BONNER	162
HOUSEKEEPING IN TEXAS. AMELIA A. BARR	174
A VISIT TO THE SHRINES OF OLD VIRGINIA. DAVID H. STROTHER (<i>Porte Crayon</i>)	189
PARADISE PLANTATION. LOUISE SEYMOUR HOUGHTON	204

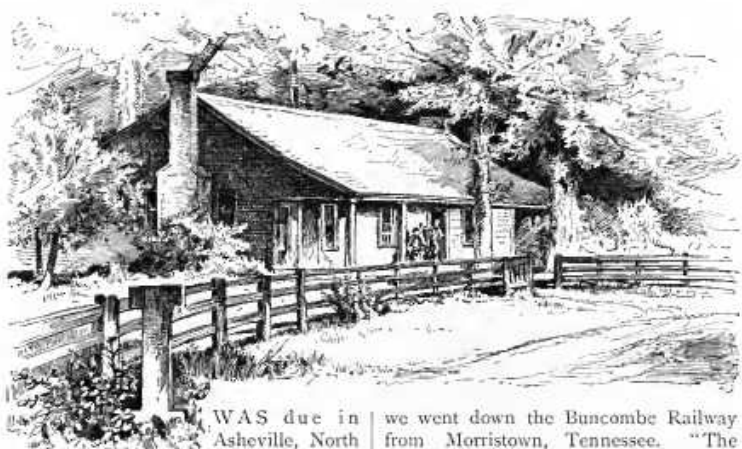
973787

HERE AND THERE

IN

OUR OWN COUNTRY.

ON THE FRENCH BROAD.



WAS due in Asheville, North Carolina, on the first day of January, 1882. If I were not there by or before that date, important interests might suffer: therefore, taking "time by the forelock," I set out several days in advance of the appointed period. I had only a hundred and forty miles to go, but I was somewhat experienced in Southern travel, and knew it was well enough to allow a liberal margin of time, even for short distances.

"You will find Jordan a hard road to travel, sir," said the conductor to me, as

we went down the Buncombe Railway from Morristown, Tennessee. "The trestle at Deep Water is swept away, and the one at Ivy is hanging by only the couplings; but you'll get through somehow, if you're one of the 'saints' and b'lieve in 'perseverance.'"

I was in the wake of a severe storm, which I knew had done some damage to the roads, but I was not aware that it had swept away bridges and raised high havoc generally. However, I had no alternative, so I pushed on, trusting to luck and "perseverance." At Wolf Creek the train halted in a driving snow-

storm. The stage-driver was on the platform, waiting for the mail-bag, and I asked if he had a spare seat.

"Yes, sir," he answered, "one,—on my nigh mare. But I karn't take you no furdur nor Ottinger's; beyant thar you'll have to take to Shank's mares; but 'tain't only two miles to the Spring House."

"Shank's mares?" I asked. "What sort of mares are they?"

"Why, yer legs, stranger; and you'll be lucky if you get through on them, for thar hain't no road; it's all tornd up by the cussed railroad. It's a reg'lar dog in the manger; it don't travil itself nor let no one else travil."

Calling to mind what the train-conductor had said about the "perseverance of the saints," I decided to accept the vacant seat on the "nigh mare," and then hurried to the public house to break a long fast and deposit my luggage, which Shank's mares might find inconveniently heavy to carry.

Every traveller in this part of the world knows this quaint, old-fashioned inn, nestling among the hills, its low roof and wide veranda overhung with broad-branching trees, which yield a grateful shelter from the torrid heat of midsummer. Very pleasant is it to come upon it when the outer world is sweltering in the heated air, and to have the breeze which comes down the mountain-gorge fan your cheek with the cool breath of October. But quite as pleasant is the old inn in the depth of winter, though its attractions are then all indoors,—in a warm fire, a warm welcome, and a bounteous repast, which the kindly landlady sets before you in the low-ceilinged dining room. I was in the midst of such a repast, when the Jehu thrust his head in at the door-way with "Hurry up, hurry up, sir. The mail can't wait. We shan't git thar before midnight."

It was an hour before nightfall when we mounted to the "top of the stage" and rode off into the snow-storm. The flakes were falling fast, and the cold wind from the near mountains drove them in blinding gusts into our faces, frosting our hair till our locks were as

venerably white as those of Old Time in the primer. The "nigh mare" was not the horse which won the last race at Nashville, but a slower animal; and she stumbled along over the frozen road with a persistent disregard of a direct course and a steadfast footing. It required about all my attention to watch her unsteady gyrations; but I did now and then give a glance at the country through which we were passing.

Most of it was covered with magnificent timber,—oak, pine, and poplar,—straight as the mast of a ship, and towering a hundred feet into the air. The land, I was told, could be bought for a dollar an acre, and there were evidently ten of such trees upon every acre; so it seemed only necessary to put an axe into that timber to realize a fortune. This was my first opinion; but as I rode on in the dim light of the half-blinding storm I soon came to a different conclusion. I discovered that the larger portion of the land was set up edgewise, and too near the perpendicular to be trodden by the foot of man until he has invented some new mode of locomotion.

It soon became dark, and the storm increased with the night; but we rode on, now wading some stream breast-high to the horses, and then again floundering over the icy ground, my only guide the steady tattoo beat by the heels of the "off horse," as he kept just one length ahead of me on the frozen road.

"I say, stranger," shouted the Jehu out of the darkness, "a man is a gold-darned fool as drives stage in this weatber."

"And what is the man who doesn't drive a stage?"

"He's a gold-donar; and that's what I think of you, sir."

I was conscious of meriting this encomium, but I answered nothing, and, cold, benumbed, and half frozen in hands and feet, I pulled my hat down over my eyes to keep out the thick-falling snow, and pushed on into the darkness. We had ridden on in silence for another hour, when the driver turned suddenly to me again, this time shouting,

"Glory hallelujah! Thar it are—the light—off yonder."

It was Ottinger's, and in another five minutes I had alighted from the "top of the stage" and staggered—for I was too cold and stiff to walk—into the sitting-room. A bright wood fire was blazing on the hearth, shedding a cheerful glow around the cosy but spacious apartment. In one of the chimney-corners sat two men, evidently travellers; in the other, a cheery, pleasant-faced woman, a little past middle age, who, looking up with a cheerful smile, accosted me as follows: "I knowed you'd come. I've been looking for you."

"Indeed! Looking for me?"

"Yes; for I knowed that an old fool like you would be sure to come out on a night like this."

"Old, madam? You call me old? Wait till I take off my hat and get the snow out of my hair and beard."

I suited the action to the word, and then she said, with another cheery laugh, "Well, you're not so very old, but you're a fool all the same,—any one is to travil sech a night as this on the back of a broken-down stage-horse. But never mind; here, take my seat—you must be cold: you need something hot: what shall it be? hot coffee or hot toddy?"

"Coffee, if you please, madam. I'm a temperance man."

"Well, I shouldn't wonder if you was," scanning me closely; "per'aps a Methodist parson; and you did look like a saint when you come in,—like one of 'em in white robes, just ready to go up to glory. But, saint or sinner, you shan't freeze to death here, not so long as I kin make the kettle boil." And with another cheery laugh she bustled out of the apartment.

When I had begun to thaw out, I made acquaintance with my fellow-guests at this comfortable hostelry. One was a commercial traveller on his way to Asheville with about a thousand pounds of luggage. He was waiting, like the man in the fable, for the river to run dry; and if he kept to his intention he is waiting yet. The other guest was a country shoemaker, who had just come

afoot over the route I should be obliged to travel. His report was much like that of the spies to Joshua. The land was one flowing with milk and sorghum molasses, but to reach it one must cross the French Broad River, and the bridges were down, the river was up, and abreast of Lovers' Leap the water stood six feet deep in the high-road. At other points it was nearly as deep, and farther on estray logs and uprooted trees had drifted in from the stream and so obstructed the road that it was absolutely impassable for any living "critter" except a Buncombe County pony, and one of them could walk a creek, climb a rail fence, or dance a hornpipe on a tight-rope. The only course for a man to get round the obstructed points was to scale the almost inaccessible cliffs which rose on the left of the road a hundred feet and more almost perpendicularly. This the shoemaker had done, but he was sure of foot and steady of nerve; and if a man wasn't all this he would advise him not to attempt the hazardous exploit. However, these mountain-streams went down about as fast as they went up, and the river might be low enough by the morning to allow of my passing Lovers' Leap with dry feet, if my boots were well coated with a solution of beeswax and tallow. This was on the supposition that I travelled afoot, which I did not intend to do if a saddle-horse could be anywhere obtained for the moderate amount of legal currency I had about me.

Soon the landlady appeared at the door, saying, "Now, you temperance gentleman, come this way, and I'll give you something to warm your innards."

I followed her into the dining-room and sat down to a repast fit to "set before a king," and which any king would have enjoyed if blessed with a reasonably good appetite: hot rolls, hot coffee, hot waffles, hot corn-pone, and hot ham and eggs,—everything hot, and all prepared by the chubby hands of my warm-hearted hostess. While pouring out the coffee, she opened a conversation, and it was not long before I had her complete autobiography. It was barren of incident; but, as it illustrates the life of a