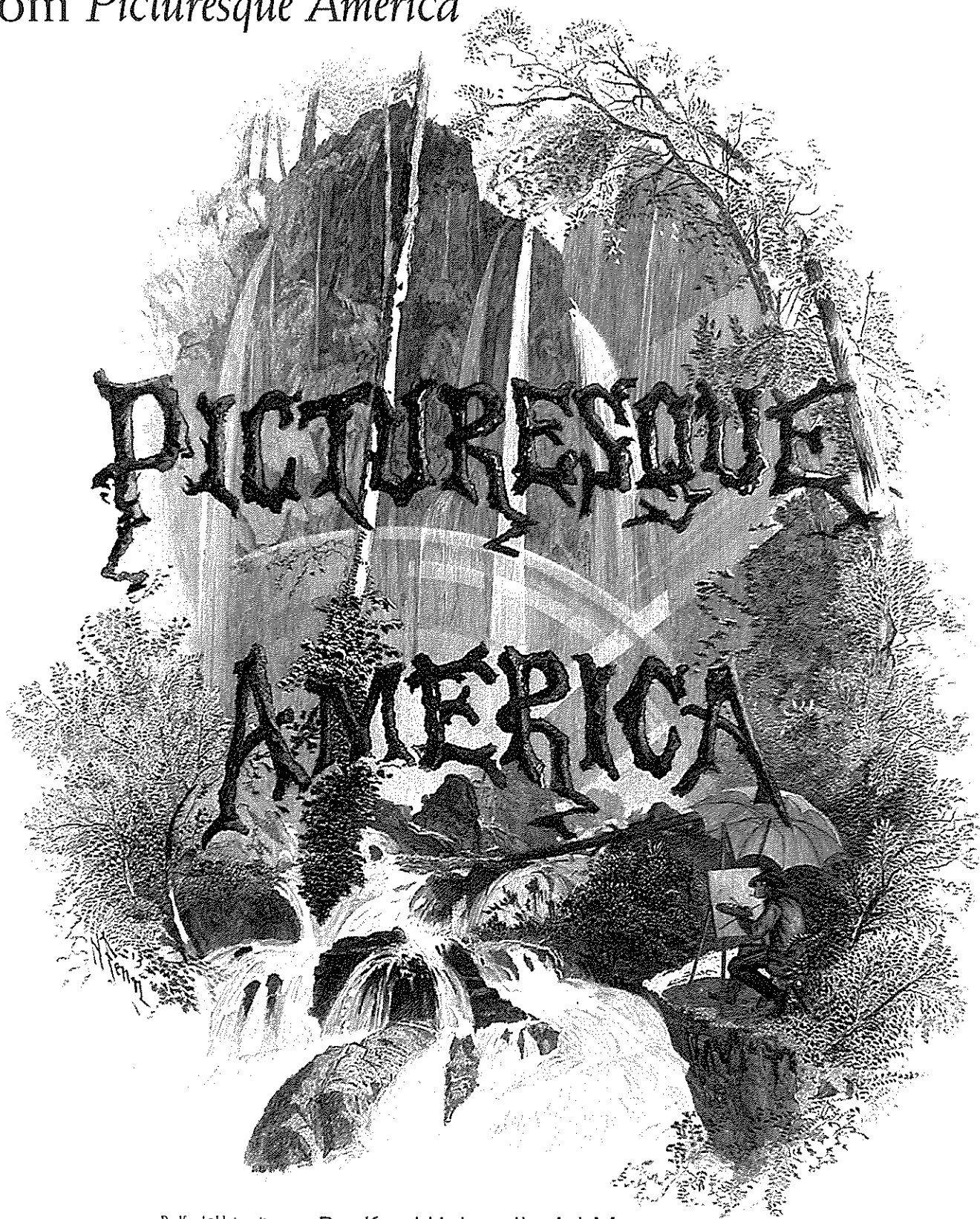


Scenes in Virginia
from *Picturesque America*



Radford University
art
museum

Radford University Art Museum
February 13–March 28, 2003
Gallery 205



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Box 6916, Radford, VA 24142
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Cover

Cascade in Virginia, Harry Fenn
Steel engraving, 9 x 6¹⁵/₁₆ (engraved by R. Hinshelwood)
Picturesque America, vol.1, 1872, title page

Acknowledgments

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Photography: Steve Arbury
Special thanks to Arthur F. Jones for editorial suggestions.

Exhibition preparators: Matt Dowdy, Kevin Carobine, Somiah Muslimani,
Elisabeth Arena, and Lori Sears

Partial funding provided by the Luisa Kolla Memorial Fund.

Radford University Art Museum, Radford, Virginia 24142

Scenes in Virginia from *Picturesque America*

Dottie Mercer

Picturesque America, or, The Land We Live In is a two-volume set of books published in 1872 by D. Appleton & Co. of New York. It was edited by William Cullen Bryant and featured views and descriptions of "mountains, rivers, lakes, forests, water-falls, shores, canyons, valleys, cities, and other picturesque features of our country" by several distinguished American artists, engravers,¹ and writers. The publisher advertised it as "the most magnificent illustrated work ever produced in America." In addition to numerous wood engravings, *Picturesque America* contains steel engravings on heavy rag paper. *Appleton's Journal* sent teams of writers and artists into the field to find and record scenic views from New York to California and points between, including Virginia. The engravings in this exhibition are from volume one of *Picturesque America*. Illustrations from the four chapters featuring locations in Virginia are reproduced here with excerpts from the writers' comments and annotations. An illustration in another chapter of the Cumberland Gap viewed from the Virginia side is included as well.

One of the authors of *Picturesque America*, George Bagby, wrote, "Picturesque America may be said to find almost an epitome of itself in the State of Virginia. Her scenery – infinitely varied, beautiful exceedingly, and sometimes truly grand – repeats in her own boundaries features which would have to be sought in places widely separated."²

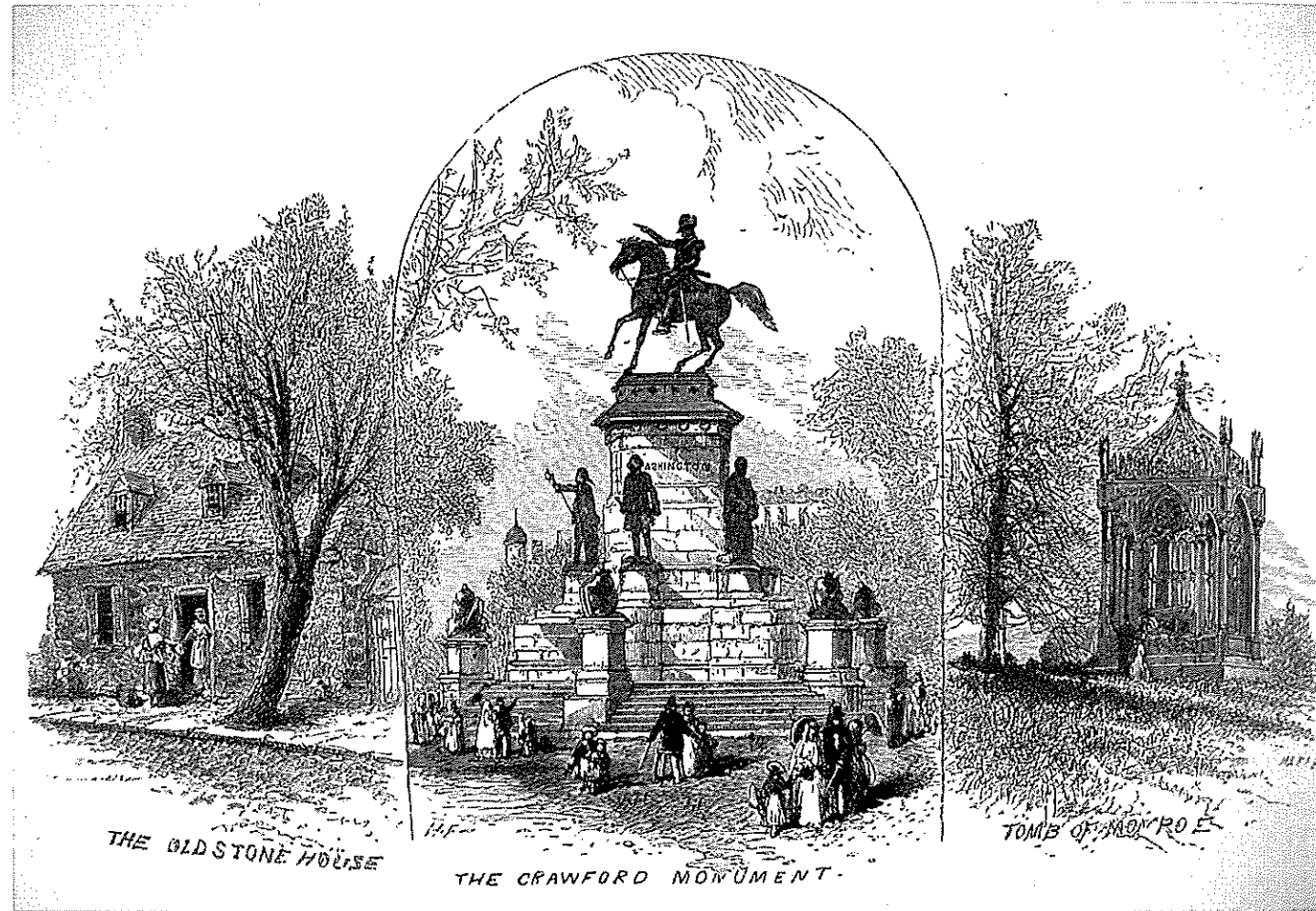
Following the scenes in Virginia, a steel engraving, *The Upper Falls of the Yellowstone*, by Thomas Moran, also in *Picturesque America*, is included in this exhibition as an example of the interest in American landscape beyond the D. Appleton & Co. project. Moran accompanied the government-sponsored Hayden expedition to the Far West.

The English tradition of picturesque landscape strongly influenced the concept and publication of *Picturesque America*. A brief background for this type of literature and art in England is illustrated with an etching by Thomas Rowlandson satirizing the eighteenth-century tour guides by William Gilpin. In addition, three engravings by J. M. W. Turner from *The Turner Gallery* (1879), also published by D. Appleton & Co., are included. They are examples of Turner's picturesque landscape art that he intended to be engraved for various publications. It was from this English tradition that the idea for *Picturesque America* derived.

¹For the wood engravings the artists' drawings were transferred to boxwood blocks and engraved by professional engravers who were sometimes the artists themselves. The blocks were locked into place with the type for each page and printed in the letterpress process.

²George Bagby, "Scenes in Virginia", *Picturesque America*, New York: D. Appleton & Co., vol. 1, 1872, p. 337.

Richmond, Scenic and Historic



[*Historic Sites in Richmond*], Harry Fenn
Wood engraving, 4 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 6 $\frac{7}{8}$ (engraved by the artist)
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, p. 70

Writer J. R. Thompson and artist Harry Fenn were assigned to Richmond. Thompson focused on the history of the city, while Fenn chose to illustrate it from a distance, emphasizing the picturesque quality of the James River and the outskirts of Richmond.

Harry Fenn (1837-1911) was born in England and was apprenticed to one of England's most prestigious wood engraving firms, Dalziel Brothers, in London before coming to America around 1857. In New York he worked for *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, illustrated many books, and was the first artist for the "Picturesque America" series for *Appleton's Journal* in 1870.³ He illustrated 16 out of 33 parts published in 1872 in volume one of the book version. Fenn also illustrated scenes in Virginia in this exhibition of Natural Bridge, Weyer's Cave, and the Chickahominy River, as well as the Virginia view of the Cumberland Gap.

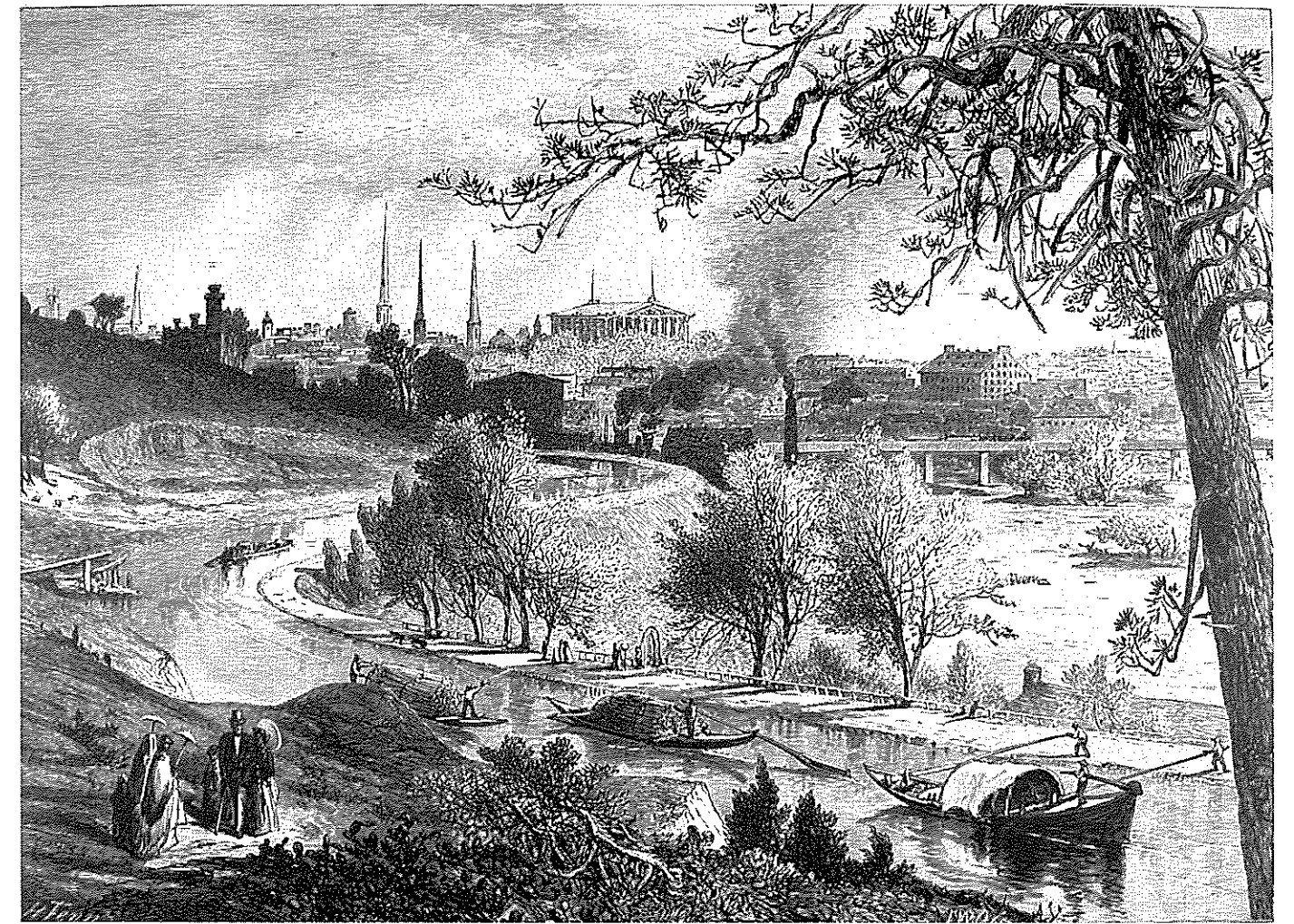
³Biographical information on Harry Fenn is from Sue Rainey, *Creating Picturesque America*, Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1994.

"The "Old Stone House" is cherished in the affections of the citizens of Richmond as the first dwelling erected within the city limits."

"A few rods distant from the Capitol stands the celebrated equestrian statue of Washington, by [Thomas] Crawford. It consists of a bronze horse and rider of gigantic size, artistically poised upon a pedestal of granite, and surrounded by immense bronze figures of Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, John Marshall, George Mason, Thomas Nelson, and [General] Andrew Lewis. . . . On smaller pedestals are civic and military allegorical illustrations, also in bronze, and, altogether, the monument is perhaps the most imposing in America."

"At the southern extremity [of Hollywood Cemetery on President's Hill] may be seen the monument erected to the memory of President Monroe, whose remains were removed hither from New York under the escort of the Seventh Regiment of that city several years before the war . . ."

J. R. Thompson, pp. 78, 77, & 73



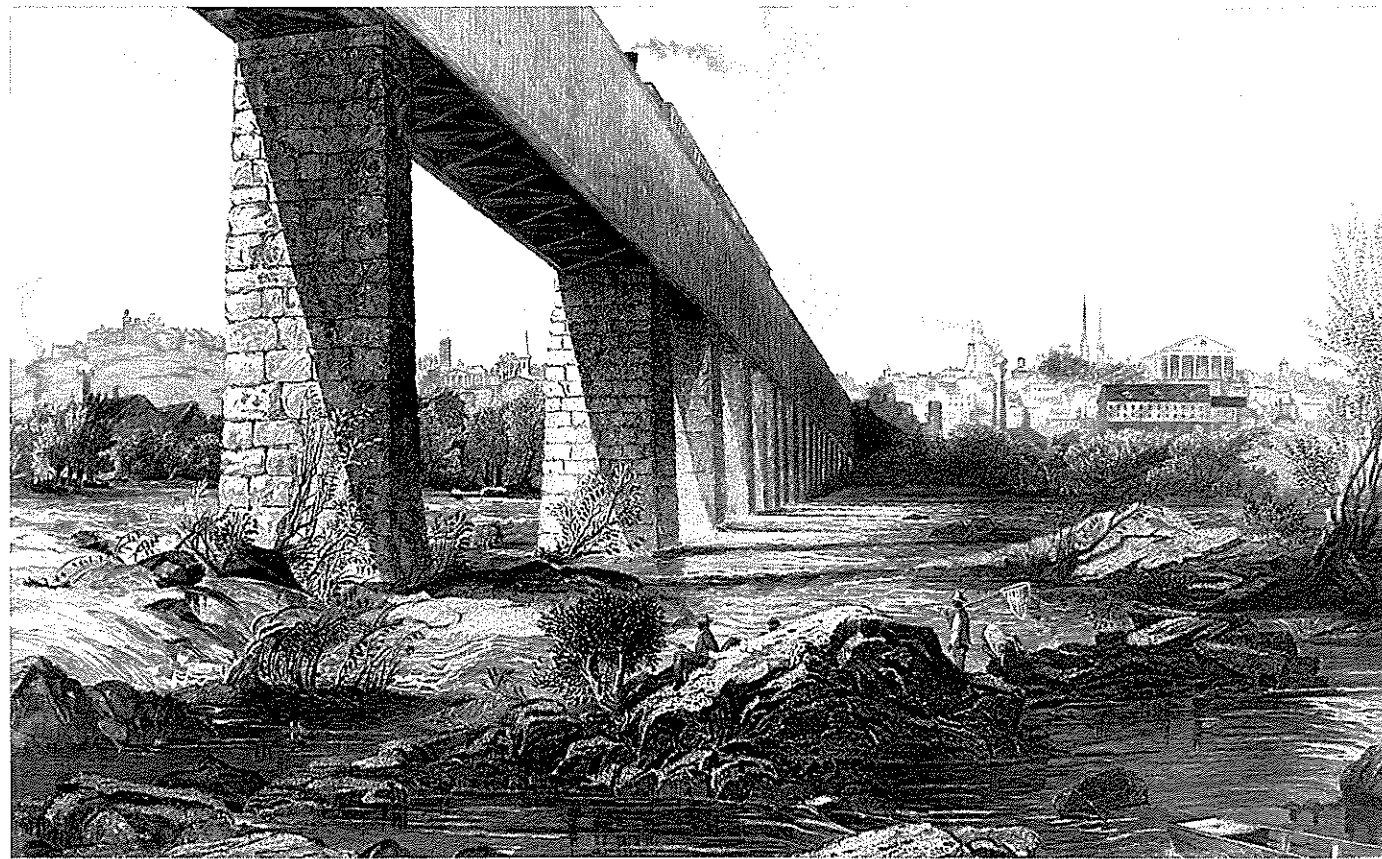
Richmond, from Hollywood, Harry Fenn
Wood engraving, 6 $\frac{7}{16}$ x 8 $\frac{13}{16}$
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, p. 72

"The point from which the most commanding and comprehensive view of Richmond is visible, bears the name of Hollywood Cemetery, a picturesque elevation in the north-western suburbs, where rest the remains of many illustrious men, and of thousands who [died] in the recent struggle. . . ."

In the distance can be seen the Virginia state capitol designed by Thomas Jefferson, who used the Maison Carrée in Nîmes, France, as his model. "For all the purposes of the picturesque, however, the Capitol serves as well in the prospect from Hollywood as if it were the Parthenon restored."

Between the capitol and the river are the smoke stacks of the Tredegar Iron Works and to the right a huge flour mill. "In April, 1865, when the Confederate forces evacuated their positions, nearly one thousand houses . . . were destroyed by fire. Since then, however, Richmond has nearly recovered from her misfortune, and there are now visible but few traces of the great conflagration."

J. R. Thompson, pp. 73-75



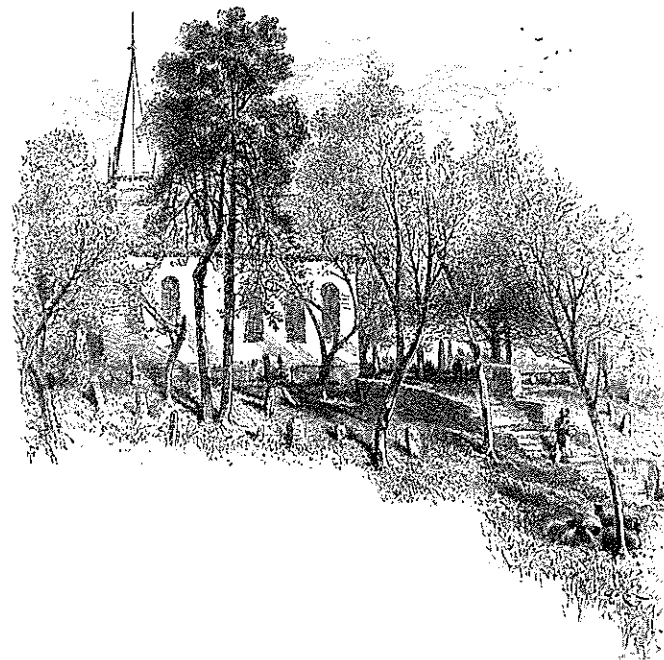
Richmond from the James, Harry Fenn (top)
 Steel engraving, 5³/₈ x 8¹⁵/₁₆ (engraved by R. Hinshelwood)
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, preceding p. 73

St. John's Church, Harry Fenn (right)
 Wood engraving, 5⁷/₈ x 6³/₁₆
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, p. 74

The white spire on the summit of a hill in Richmond from Hollywood is the parish church of St. John's, Henrico, "probably the first building of note that was erected within what are now the limits of the city . . . [T]here are tombs in the burial ground bearing [the] date 1751 . . . Mr. Fenn's beautiful sketch presents it exactly as it now appears, and gives that side which is oldest in construction."

J.R. Thompson, p. 78

THOMPSON POINTS OUT THAT THE ORIGINAL TOWER OF THE CHURCH FELL IN A HIGH WIND DURING THE CIVIL WAR AND WAS REPLACED BY THE SPIRE.



The James above Richmond, Harry Fenn
 Wood engraving, 6¹/₈ x 6³/₈ (engraved by A. Harral)
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, p. 76

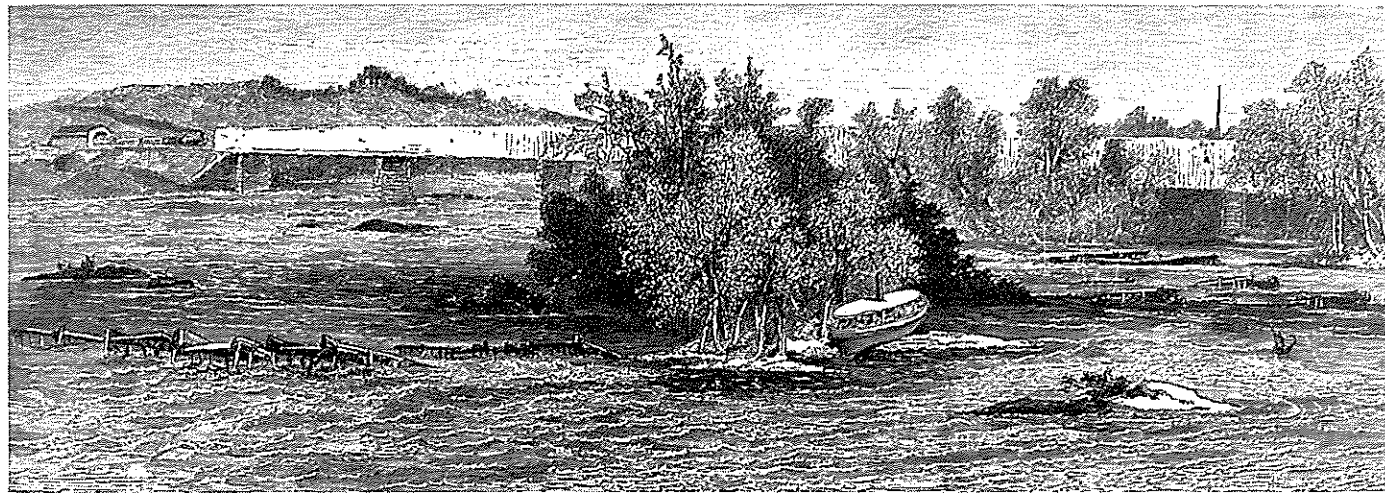
"Above the city . . . we see . . . how art has overcome the obstructions of nature by means of a canal which opens the navigation of the river above the falls."

J. R. Thompson, p. 80

MULES ON THE TOW PATH STRAIN TO PULL THE BARGES ALONG THE CANAL.



The James, from Mayo's Bridge, Harry Fenn
 Wood engraving, 5¹/₂ x 6¹/₄
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, p. 77



Natural Bridge, Virginia

The Natural Bridge, Virginia, Harry Fenn (top)
Wood engraving, 8³/₈ x 6⁵/₁₆
(engraved by Henry Linton)
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, p. 82

Writer John Esten Cooke (1830-1886) and artist Harry Fenn comprised the team assigned to cover Natural Bridge for *Picturesque America*. This view from near the base and the distant view of Natural Bridge first appeared in *Appleton's Journal* on February 11, 1871.

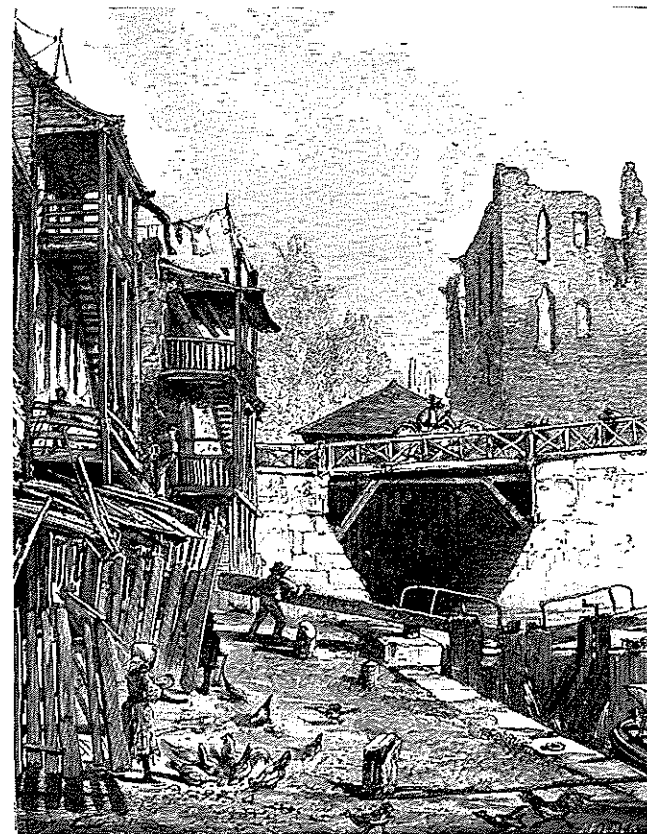
From about the mid-eighteenth century Niagara Falls in the North and Natural Bridge in the South were considered to be the most outstanding natural landscape views in America. John Esten Cooke thoughtfully included travel directions for the nineteenth-century tourist: "The Natural Bridge is in the southeastern corner of Rockbridge County, in the midst of the wild scenery of the Blue-Ridge region . . . It is reached from Lexington, fourteen miles distant, by stage, and from Lynchburg, by canal-boat, thirty-six miles."

John E. Cooke, p. 90

TODAY, WE DRIVE IN OUR OWN CARS ON INTERSTATE 81 AND FOLLOW THE SIGNS TO NATURAL BRIDGE WITH ITS WAX MUSEUM AND REPLICA INDIAN VILLAGE ON EITHER SIDE.



"Above the city, in the rapids which for six miles tumble over a rocky bed, we see whence is derived the water-power that animates the mills . . . The covered bridge, which a train of cars is about entering, seen in the drawing of the rapids, is that of the Richmond and Danville Railroad, and the frames which appear above the water are the fish-traps which are rebuilt every spring to catch the shad as they come over the falls. . . . It may be supposed that the navigation of a river so rapid and so rocky as the James at this point, is difficult, but the negro boatmen have great dexterity in poling and paddling their little skiffs across from island to island, and the small steam-yacht, which lies under the island's bank in the picture, does no more than shoot the torrent into the deeper and smoother water lower down."

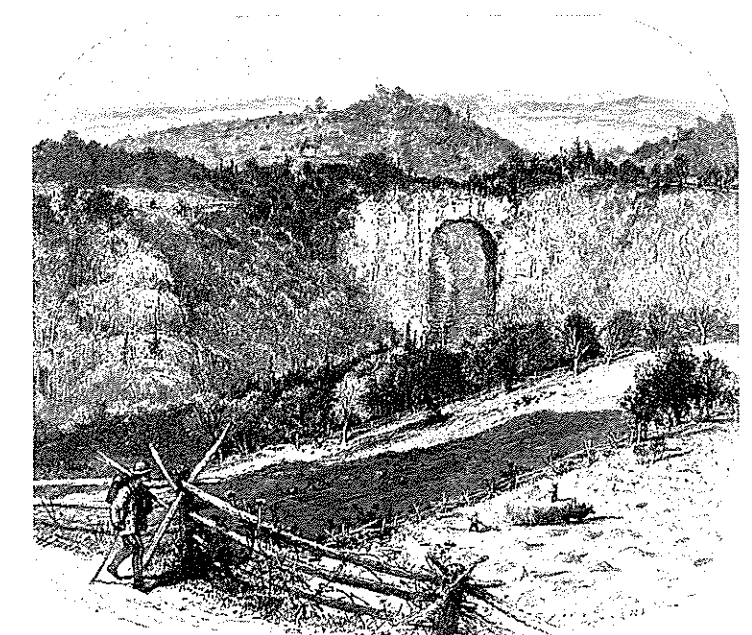


Rapids in the James, Harry Fenn (top)
Reproduction of wood engraving, 3¹/₈ x 9¹/₈
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, p. 79

"The canal . . . is connected with tide-water by a series of locks, with an aggregate lift of ninety-six feet. Two of these locks on the highest level constitute the central part of a sketch which, at first glance, looks as if it were designed to set before us a quaint, old, tumble-down nook or corner of some European city. Upon examination, however, one sees the African element of the population in such force, tending the lock, feeding the poultry, and driving the team across the bridge, as to determine the locality in a Southern town of the United States. One cannot help recognizing in this sketch how much more effective in the hands of the artist is dilapidation than tidiness, and a ruin than a perfect structure. The ramshackle porches of the negro tenements here have a higher effect than would a neat row of white-painted houses with green blinds, in a well-kept New England village, and the broken walls of the warehouse (destroyed by the fire of April, 1865, and never rebuilt) are more picturesque than would be the smooth front of a factory that might give occupation to five hundred operatives."

J. R. Thompson, pp. 80-81

Scene on the Canal, Harry Fenn (bottom)
Wood engraving, 6³/₁₆ x 4¹/₁₆ (engraved by J. Filmer)
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, p. 80



The Natural Bridge and Its Surroundings, Harry Fenn
Wood engraving, 5³/₈ x 6¹/₂ (engraved by J. Augustus Bogert)
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, p. 84

Under the Natural Bridge, Harry Fenn
Wood engraving, 8⁷/₈ x 6¹/₈ (engraved by Augustus Bogert)
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, p. 88

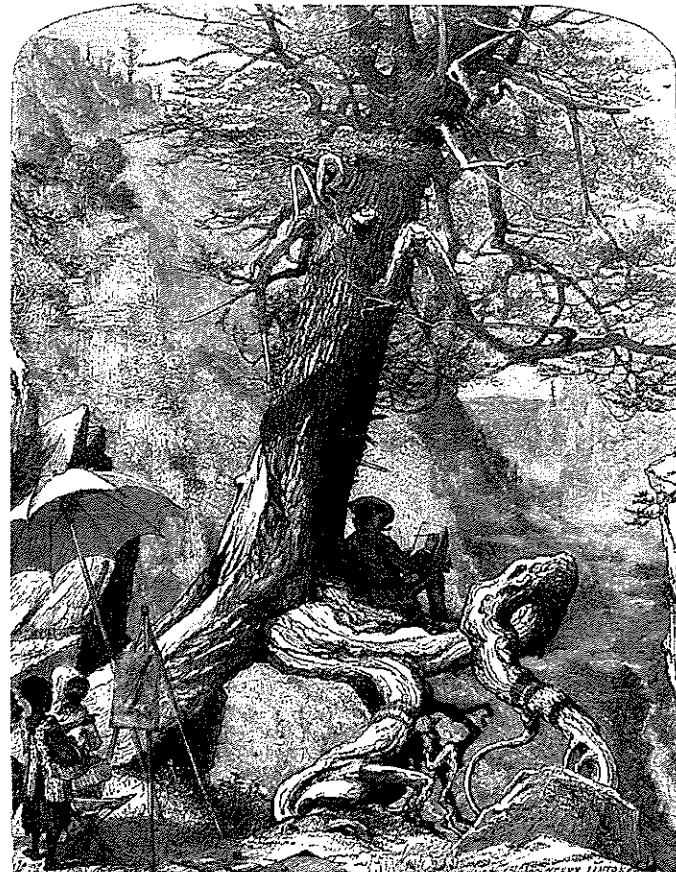
"[I]n the midst of all this exquisite beauty [is] the great soaring arch, with its jutting buttresses and fringes of the evergreen pine . . . From the summit to the surface of the stream below is two hundred and fifteen feet, and thus the Natural Bridge is fifty-five feet higher than Niagara. It remains only, before terminating our brief sketch of this celebrated curiosity, to speak of the hazardous attempts, made by more than one person, to climb the rocky sides of the great arch and reach the summit."

John E. Cooke, p. 87



Above the Natural Bridge, Harry Fenn
Wood engraving, 8¹³/₁₆ x 6³/₈ (engraved by Henry Linton)
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, p. 89

While the writer emphasizes the difficulty and danger of climbing to the top of Natural Bridge, the artist, in contrast, daringly shows himself at work perched in the undermined roots of a gnarled tree extending over a chasm hung with mist above the stream far below. The twisted roots suggest his familiarity with Thomas Cole's trademark blasted trees. Cole also included half-hidden artists in his wild landscape in *The Oxbow* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), but Fenn emphasizes the artist in this close view. His dangerous position shows his interest in *The Sublime*, as well as *The Picturesque*.



Weyer's Cave, Virginia



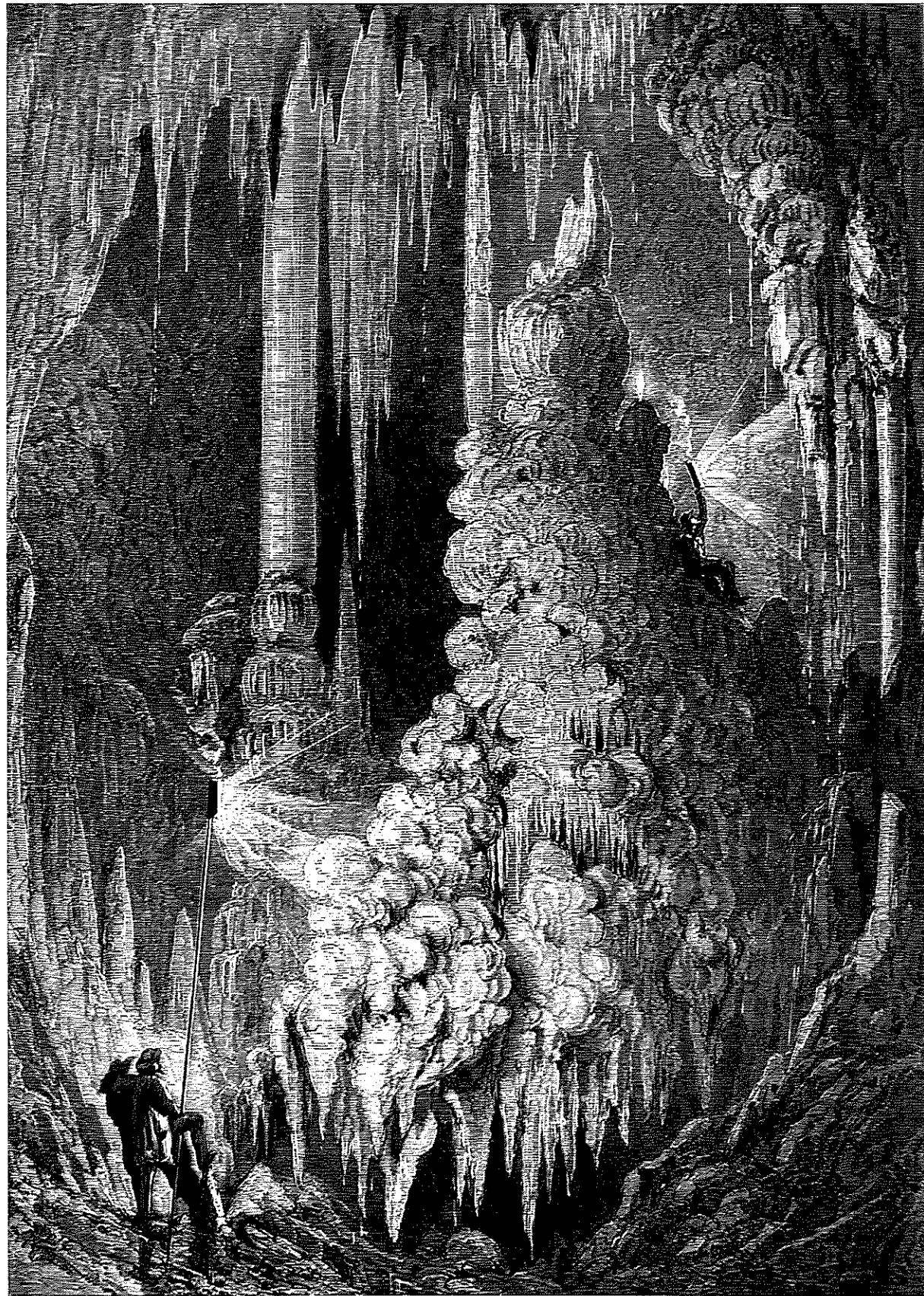
The Entrance, Harry Fenn
Wood engraving, 6¹/₄ x 6¹/₈ (engraved by F. W. Quartley)
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, p. 212

Appleton's Journal commissioned Sallie Brock and Harry Fenn to cover Weyer's Cave in Virginia for the *Picturesque America* project.

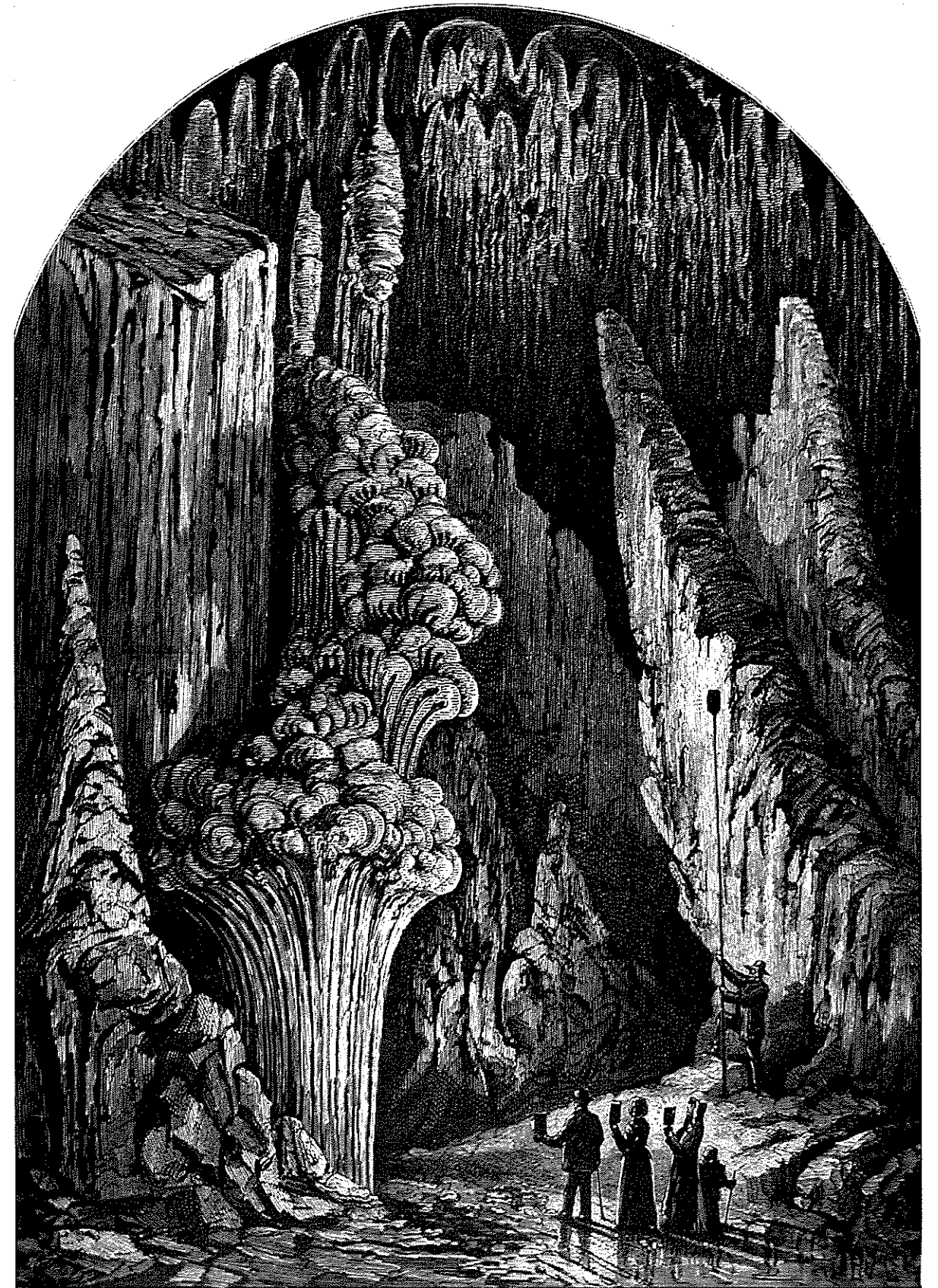
"Weyer's Cave . . . is situated in the northwestern part of Augusta County, about seventeen miles north of Staunton, and a few miles west of the Blue-Ridge Mountains. It is located in a large hill, or rather a spur of a range of small mountains . . . This cavern derives its name from one Bernard Weyer, a dweller in the neighborhood, who discovered it while hunting an opossum . . . It is approached from the rustic inn, half a mile distant, by a broad carriage-road to the foot of the hill, and thence by a zigzag, precipitous foot-path to the opening near the crest of the summit. The entrance, when discovered, was scarcely large enough for Mr. Weyer to enter on his hands and knees . . . Since then the entrance has been enlarged, so as to be about seven feet in height . . ."

Well-dressed tourists make their way up the hill to the entrance. Inside, they carried candle lamps as their guide led them through the darkness of the cave, stopping to skillfully illuminate parts of the interior that had been named for associations evoked by the formations of the stalactites which Sallie Brock describes in picturesque detail. The cave is compared to the better-known wonders of the natural world, such as Natural Bridge and Niagara Falls, as well as the grotto of Antiparos, a Cycladic island in the Aegean whose principal attraction is the stalactite cavern at its southern end.

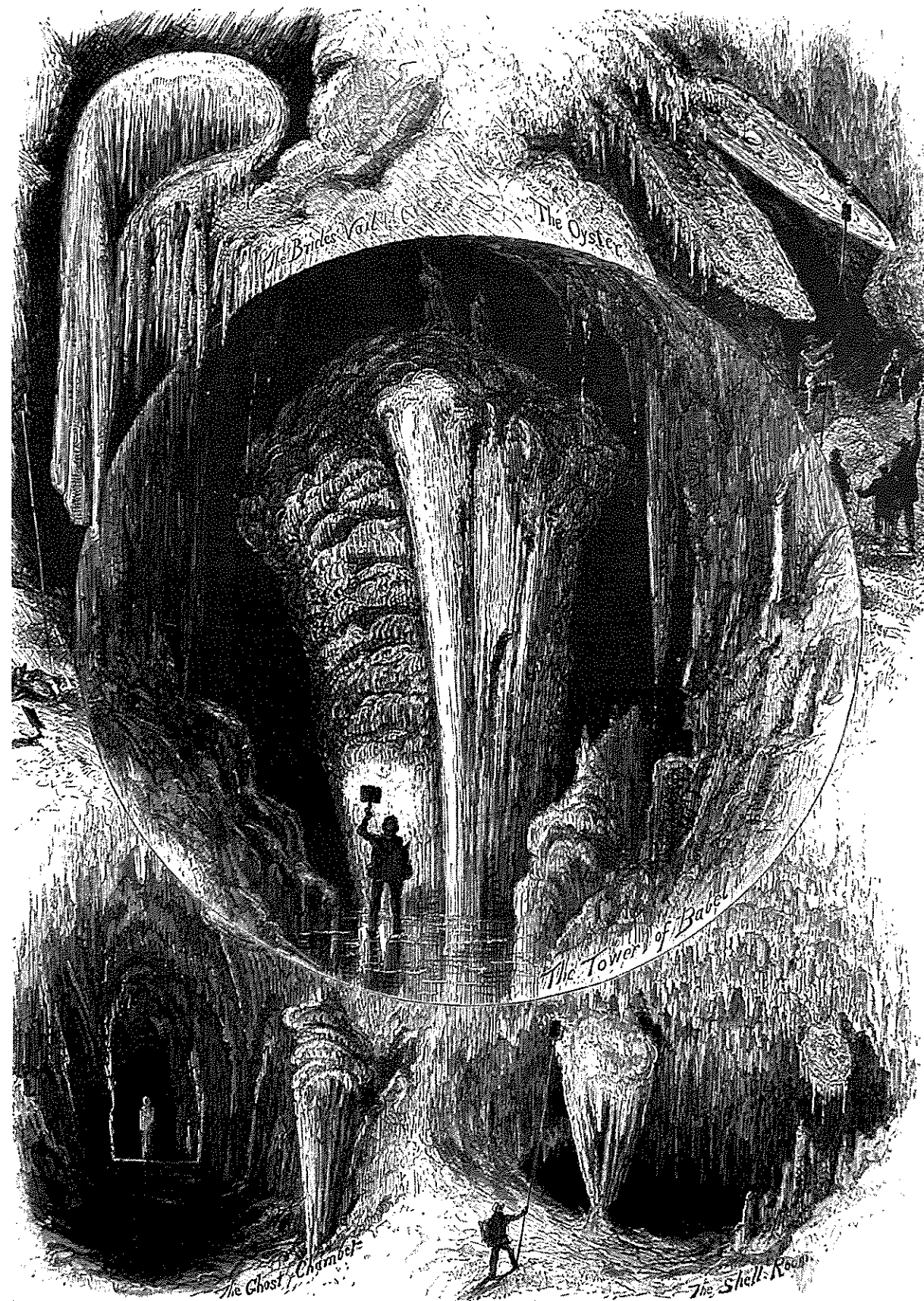
Sallie Brock, pp. 212-213



Cleopatra's Needle and Anthony's Pillar, Harry Fenn
Wood engraving, 9¹/₁₆ x 6¹/₄
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, p. 214

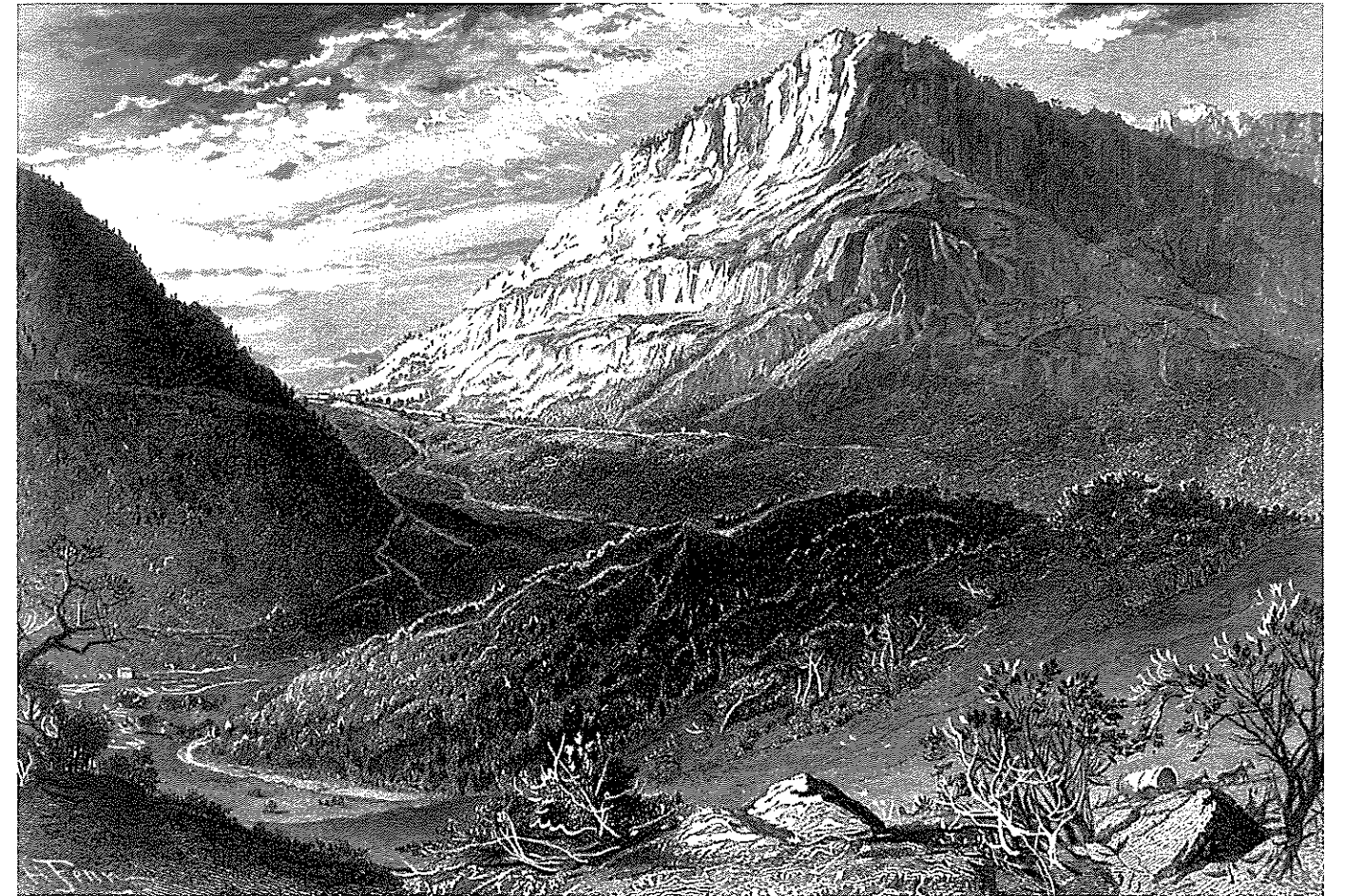


The Geyser, Harry Fenn
Wood engraving, 8¹³/₁₆ x 6¹/₈ (engraved by J. Filmer)
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, p. 216



Scenes in Weyer's Cave, Harry Fenn
Wood engraving, 9 1/8 x 6 1/4
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, p. 218

The Cumberland Gap



Cumberland Gap, Harry Fenn
Steel engraving 8 x 5 1/16 (engraved by S. V. Hunt)
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, preceding p. 233

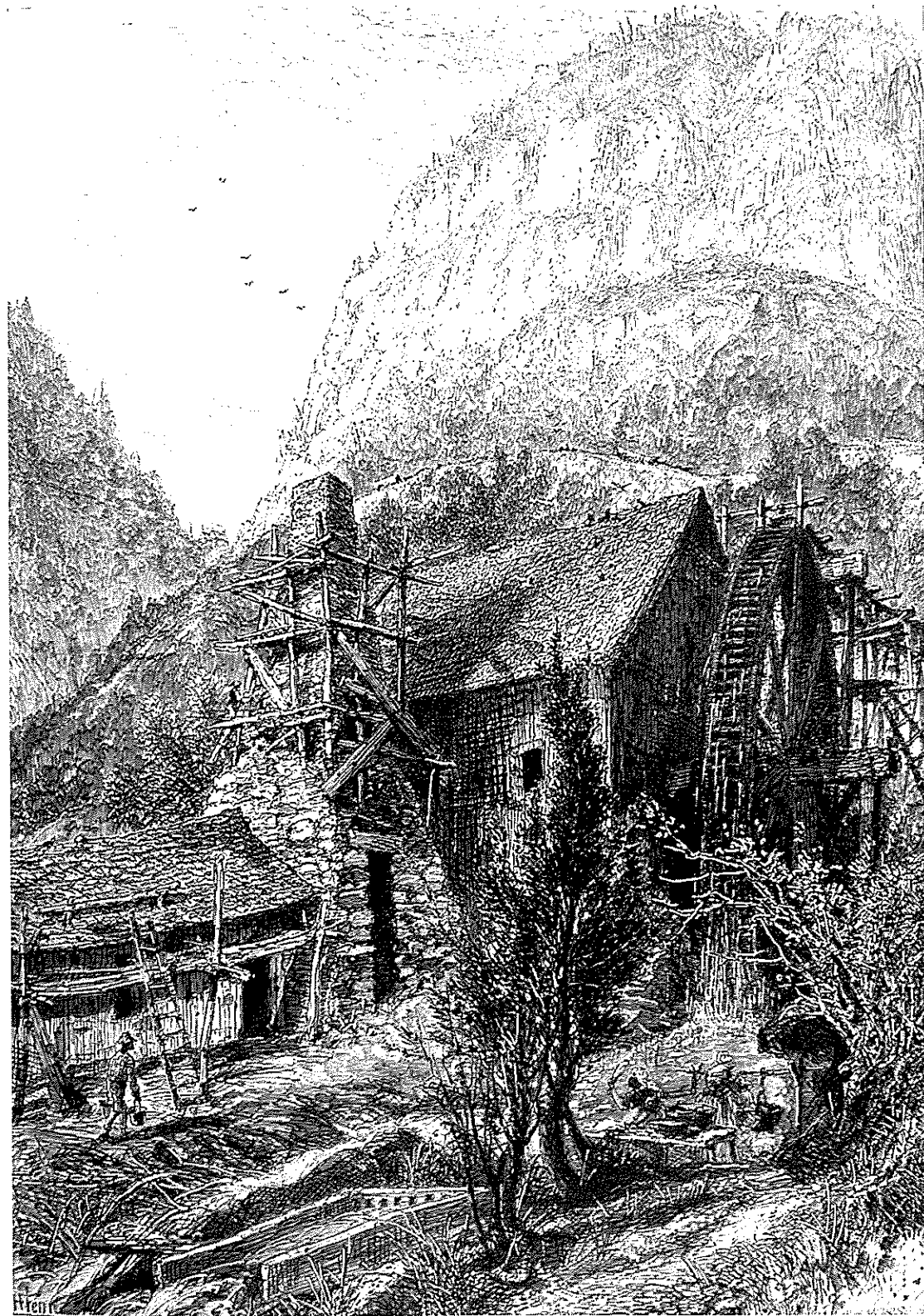
D. Appleton & Co. paired Harry Fenn with F. G. de Fontaine for the chapter on The Cumberland Gap. This panoramic view is from the east, the Virginia side of the Gap. Bushes in the lower right corner frame the top of a covered wagon. It has come a long way through the valley in the shadows and will double back as it climbs the rough road toward the light on the sheer cliffs in the distance. Light on the horizon had long been a popular sign of hope for a new and better life in the West in American art, romanticizing the move West and the ideals of Manifest Destiny.

"The gap delineated in the accompanying sketches is a great highway between Southwestern Virginia and her sister States adjoining. Hence, during the late war, the position was early deemed important, and was occupied and strongly fortified by the Confederate Government. Cannon bristled from the neighboring heights, and a comparatively small force held the pass for many months, defending in that secluded mountain-recess the railroad connections between Richmond,

North Alabama, Mississippi, Nashville, and Memphis, on the integrity of which so much depended. The approach to the range from the northeast side, after leaving Abingdon, Virginia, is over a rough, broken country, and the only compensation to the traveller, as he saunters along on horseback, is in the enjoyment of bits of scenery wherein rocks and running streams, mountain-ferries, quaint old-fashioned mills, farm-houses and cabins perched like birds among the clefts of hills, lovely perspectives, wild-flowers and waving grain, and a homely but hospitable people, combine in charming confusion to keep the attention ever on the alert."

"The gap depicted by our artist is about six miles in length, but so narrow in many places that there is scarcely room for the roadway. It is five hundred feet in depth. The mountains on either side rise to an altitude of twelve hundred feet, and when . . . the tourist . . . stands upon the summit, the view . . . is one of the most beautiful in America."

F. G. de Fontaine, pp. 235 & 233



Cumberland Gap, from the East, Harry Fenn
Wood engraving, 8³/₁₆ x 6³/₁₆ (engraved by W. H. Morse)
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, p. 234

The Cumberland Gap is a natural passage through the Cumberland Mountains near the point where Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee meet. It was the gateway to the West through which hundreds of settlers passed. However, Fenn chose to focus on the picturesque old waterwheel and activities of the people butchering a hog and reinforcing a stone furnace far below the wagon road in the middle ground. The covered wagons moving through the Gap are almost invisible.

Scenes in Virginia



Interior of Natural Bridge Tunnel, William L. Sheppard
Reproduction of wood engraving, 4¹/₂ x 6³/₁₆
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, p. 337

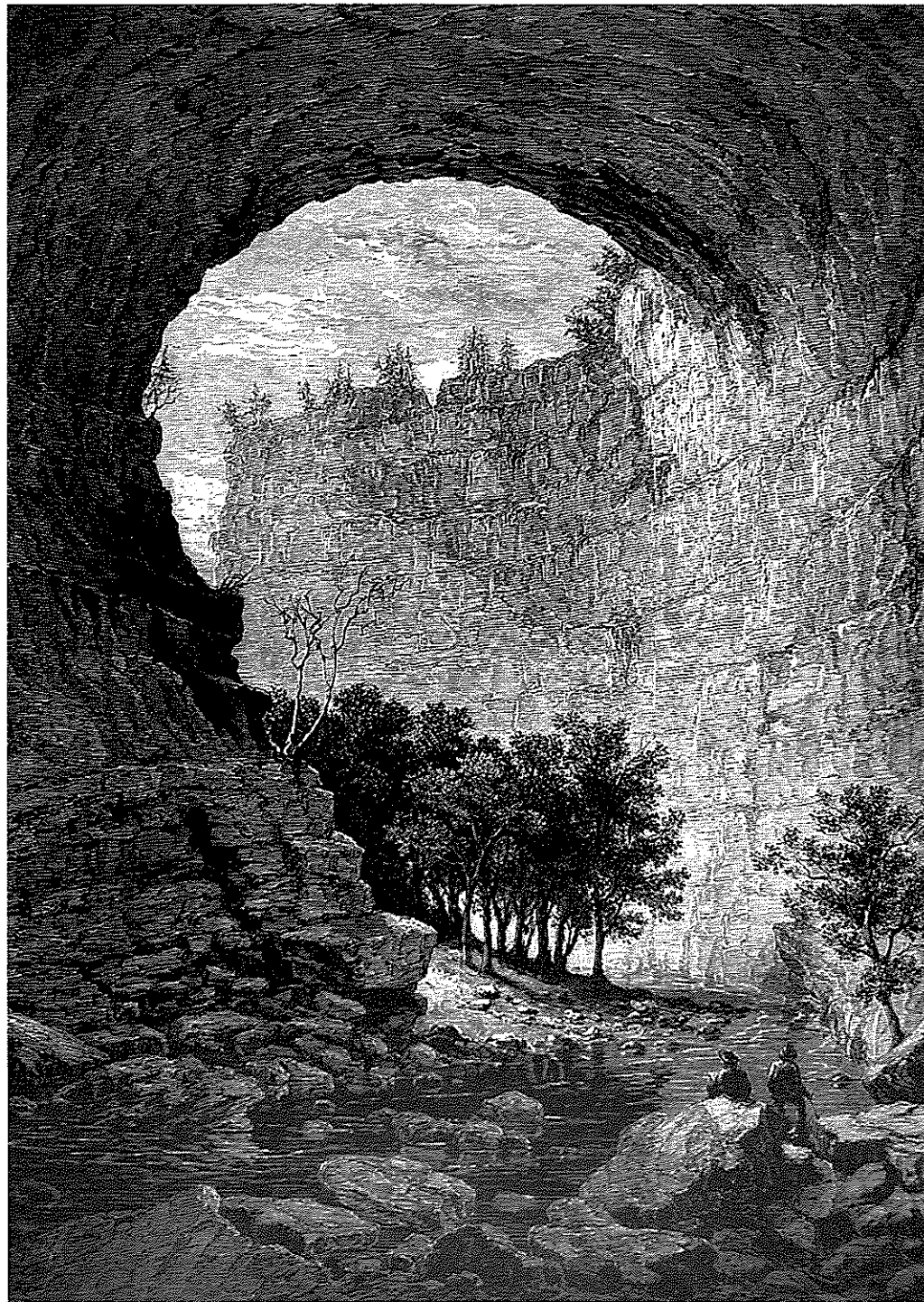
One of the teams commissioned by *Appleton's Journal* in 1871 consisted of Richmond artist William L. Sheppard (1833-1912) and writer George W. Bagby (1828-1883). In the early 1860s, George Bagby was editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger*. William Sheppard served as a Second Lieutenant in the Richmond Howitzers during the Civil War and was assigned to the Topographical Department of the Army of Northern Virginia – good background for his work for *Picturesque America*. After the War, his illustrations were published in popular magazines and books. He also designed the Howitzers Monument and the Soldiers and Sailors Monument in Richmond.⁴

Bagby's first-hand, day-by-day account of what they saw and did accompanies Sheppard's engravings. Much of their journey was along the New River. Perhaps for the first time the public outside the far southwestern part of Virginia became aware of the natural beauty of this side of the state. There were engravings of the springs in Virginia, and artists like Frederic

Edwin Church and Edward Hicks had painted the famous Natural Bridge earlier in the century. The New River and surrounding area and Weyer's Cave presented new scenes in Virginia to satisfy America's thirst for picturesque landscape views.

Sheppard's illustrations in this exhibition appeared first in *Appleton's Journal* as part of a series on American landscape and then in "Scenes of Virginia" in volume one of *Picturesque America* in 1872.

⁴Biographical information for George W. Bagby and William L. Sheppard is from Sue Rainey, *Creating Picturesque America*, Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1994.

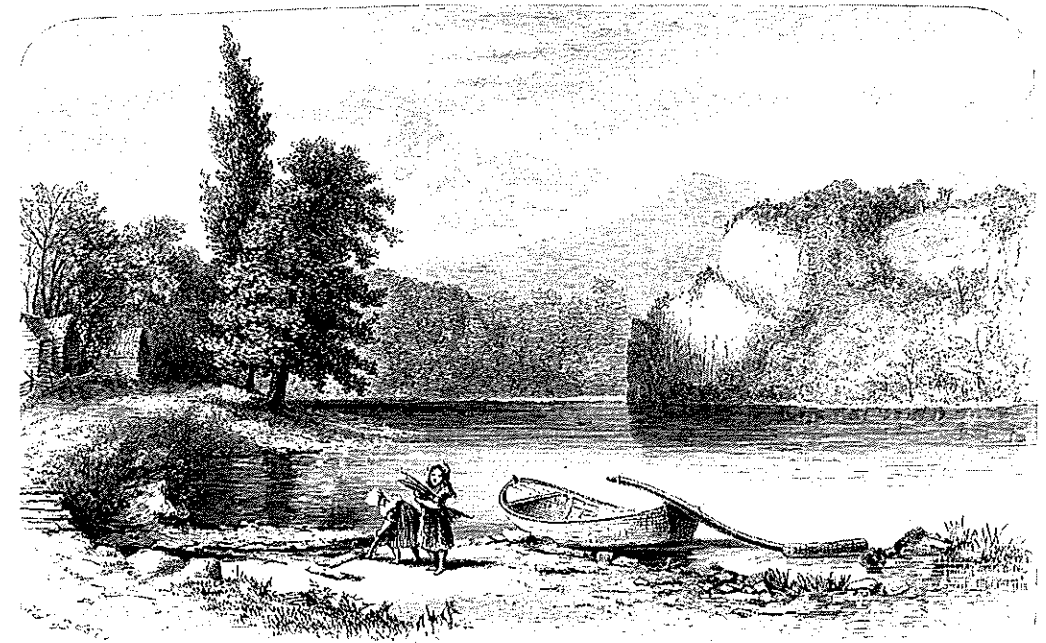


Natural Bridge Tunnel, William L. Sheppard
Wood engraving, 8¹⁵/₁₆ x 6³/₁₆
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, p. 338

George Bagby and William Sheppard began their Virginia journey in "the farthest southwest corner of the State in Scott County." They traveled on horseback over poor roads to the Natural Tunnel, a similar formation to Natural Bridge, but longer and not as tall. Bagby described the tunnel as straight for a short distance and then crooked for a longer stretch. At one curve no sunlight could reach the interior, and the darkness gave him a "feeling of genuine horror" until the light reappeared.

"Stock Creek, a tributary of the Clinch . . . has forced or found a passage through the ridge . . . In truth it is a curiosity of Nature – unique, if not sublime. . . . Leaving the Tunnel, which, after the Natural Bridge, is undoubtedly the most imposing [natural formation] east of the Mississippi River, we retrace our way along the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad."

George Bagby, p. 339



New River, William L. Sheppard (top)
Wood engraving, 4³/₈ x 6¹/₄ (engraved by Richardson)
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, p. 340

Sycamore on New River, William L. Sheppard (bottom)
Wood engraving, 4³/₈ x 6³/₁₆ (engraved by Richardson)
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, p. 340

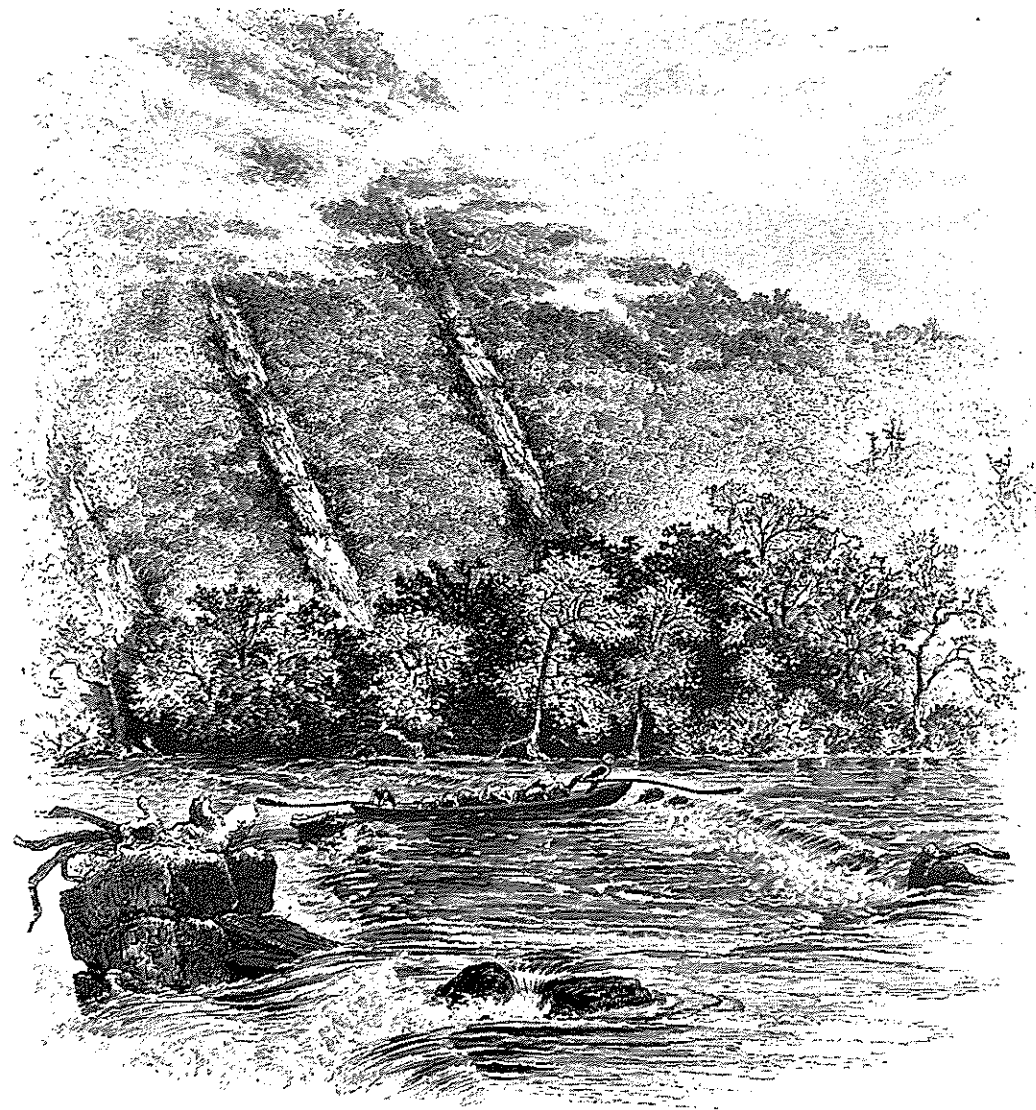
Sheppard and Bagby began their trip on horseback along the New River in Radford, known at that time as Central Depot, and went as far as Clifton Forge. As they followed the path further along the New River, they felt that they had left civilization behind. With mountains towering above

them, they passed by water that appeared more like a lake, "still as death, enchanted and asleep."

"The river flows silently here, but with a subtle [sic] sort of force, between banks lined with sycamores, which trail their branches in the water in many instances."

George Bagby, pp. 342 & 344

THE NEW RIVER IS ONE OF 14 AMERICAN HERITAGE RIVERS DESIGNATED BY PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON IN 1998. IT BEGINS IN NORTH CAROLINA AND FLOWS NORTH 360 MILES THROUGH SOUTHWESTERN VIRGINIA INTO WEST VIRGINIA WHERE IT JOINS THE GAULEY RIVER TO BECOME THE KANAWHA, WHICH FLOWS INTO THE OHIO.



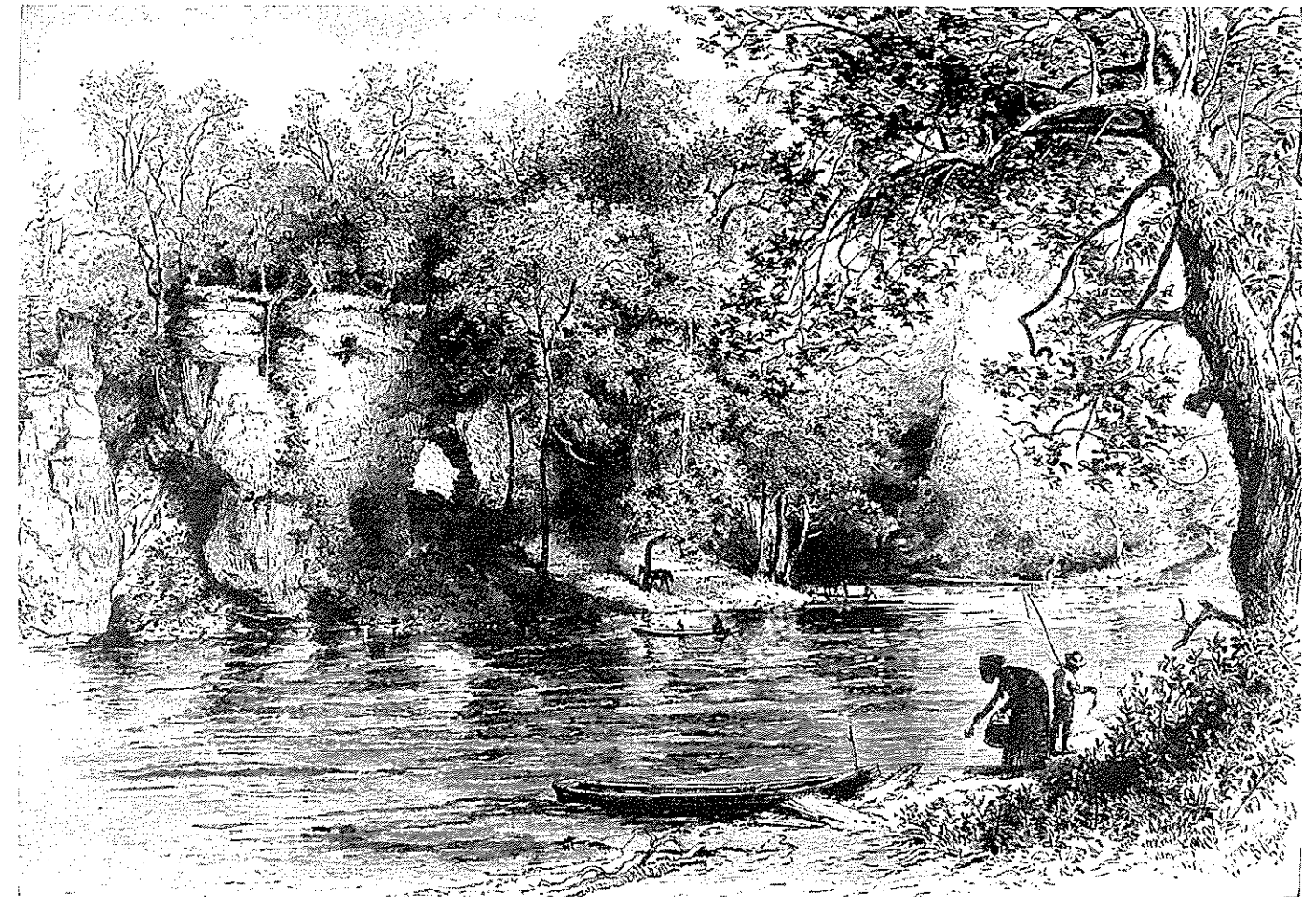
Great Falls, New River, William L. Sheppard
 Wood engraving, 6³/₁₆ x 5¹³/₁₆
Picturesque America vol. 1, 1872, p. 341

"We push on. A murmur is heard; it becomes a roar; we turn a corner, and behold—the Great Falls! The river, half a mile or more in width, foams and dashes over the ledges formed by the peculiar stratification, well shown on the mountain-side in the engraving, with great but not unmusical violence in some places; while in others it slides between the huge rocks with a swift, treacherous look, which fascinates the viewer."

George Bagby, pp. 342 & 344

Pausing here to sketch, they also observed boats with oars at both ends usually guided by skilled African-American boatmen shooting the rapids. The "New River is justly ranked among the wonders of Virginia. . . ."

George Bagby, p. 348



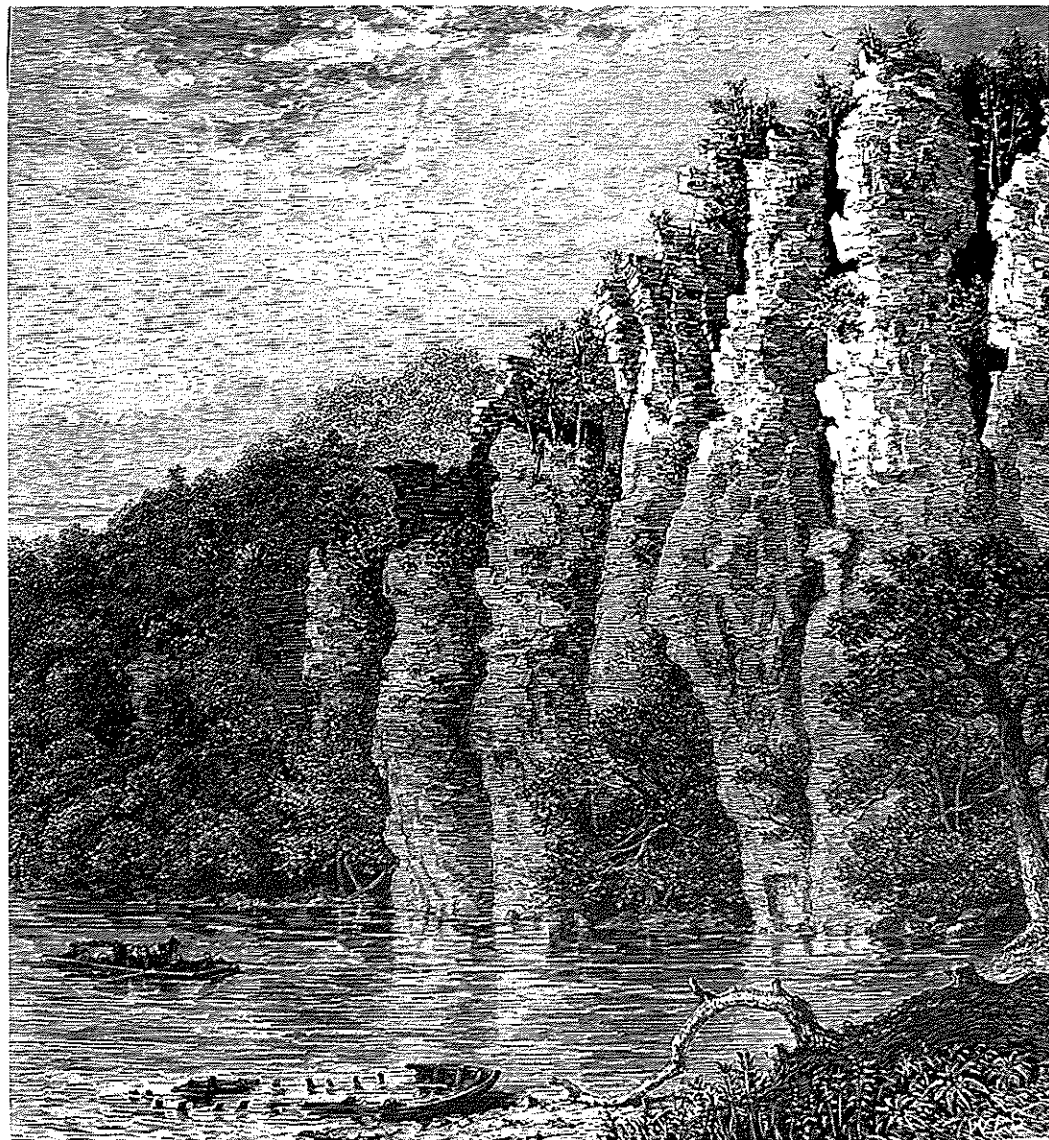
New River at Eggleston's Springs, William L. Sheppard
 Reproduction of wood engraving, 6³/₁₆ x 9¹/₄
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, p. 343

"Descending the winding pathway, under tall, fantastic rocks, we reach Egglestone's [sic] Ferry, and halt in mute admiration of the scene before us . . . [T]he natural arch in the rock and the pinnacle on the left were designated, years ago, respectively Caesar's Arch and Pompey's Pillar. The river being thirty or forty feet deep, a ferry-boat, impelled by huge oars, is brought into play. The banks are lined with trees, mostly sycamores, but

there are also some fine elms. . . . Below the ferry, on the right, looking down the stream, rises the Anvil Cliff. . . ."

George Bagby, p. 346

DUTCH ELM DISEASE DESTROYED MOST OF THE ELM TREES IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY BEGINNING IN THE 1920S.

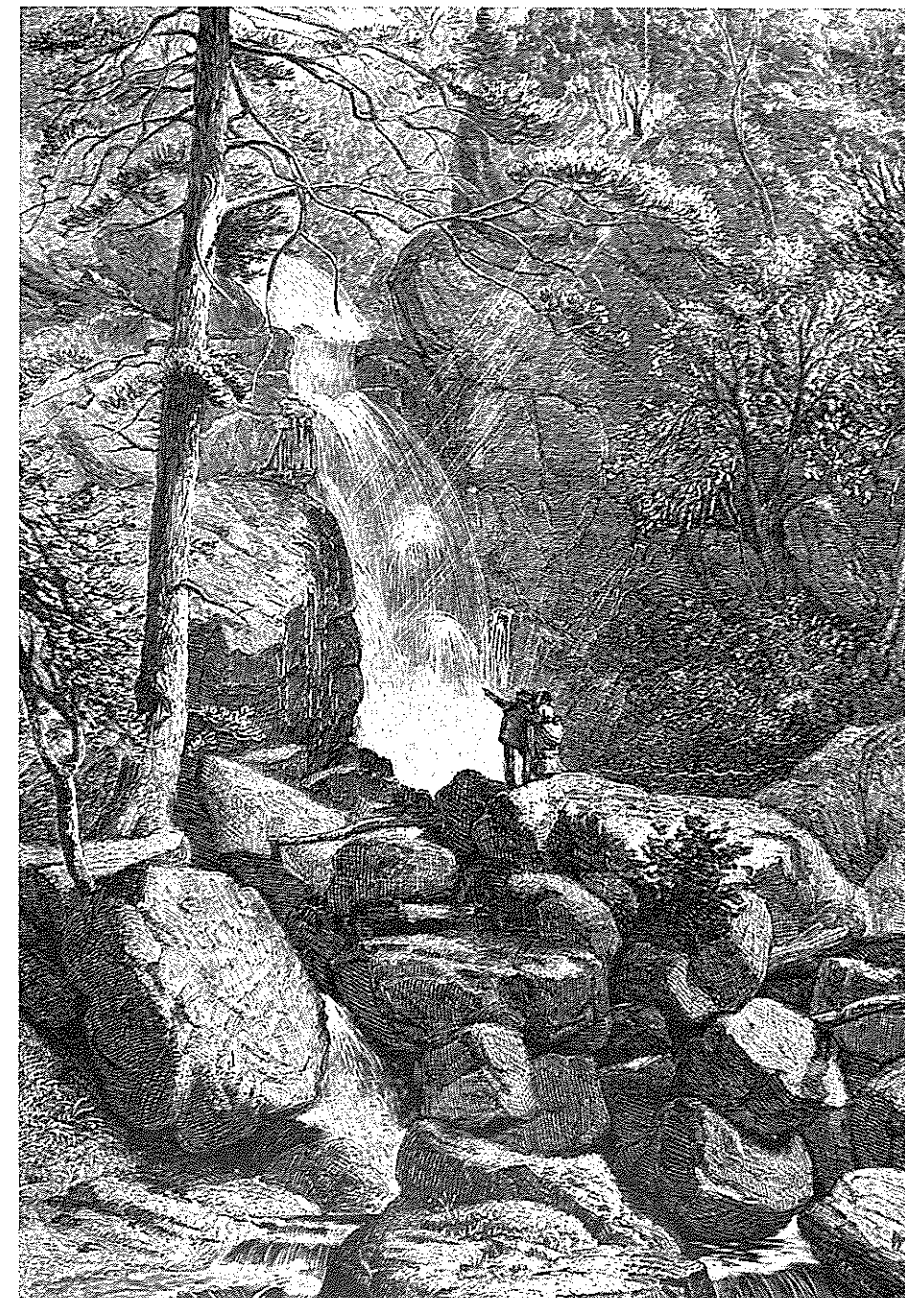


Anvil Cliff, William L. Sheppard
 Wood engraving, 6⁷/₁₆ x 5¹⁵/₁₆
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, p. 344

"[L]ooking down the stream, rises the Anvil Cliff, the height of which, ascertained by triangulation, is stated to be two hundred and ninety-six feet – an over-estimate, probably. . . . [T]he general aspect of the scene is savage and Dantesque. At sunset, the tops of the cliffs are illumined with brilliant gold or bathed in vivid red, as the character of the evening may be, while all below is enveloped in cool, purplish shadow – a noble and

exquisite scene, worthy in form and coloring of the best master [painter] in the land. . . . [T]he "Anvil," which gives the name to this stately pile of rocks, is, nevertheless, much larger than it appears to the eye, being four by nine feet in actual dimensions."

George Bagby, pp. 346-347



Purgatory Falls, Head-Waters of the Roanoke, William L. Sheppard
 Wood engraving, 8¹/₂ x 5¹¹/₁₆ (engraved by A. Herral)
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, p. 345

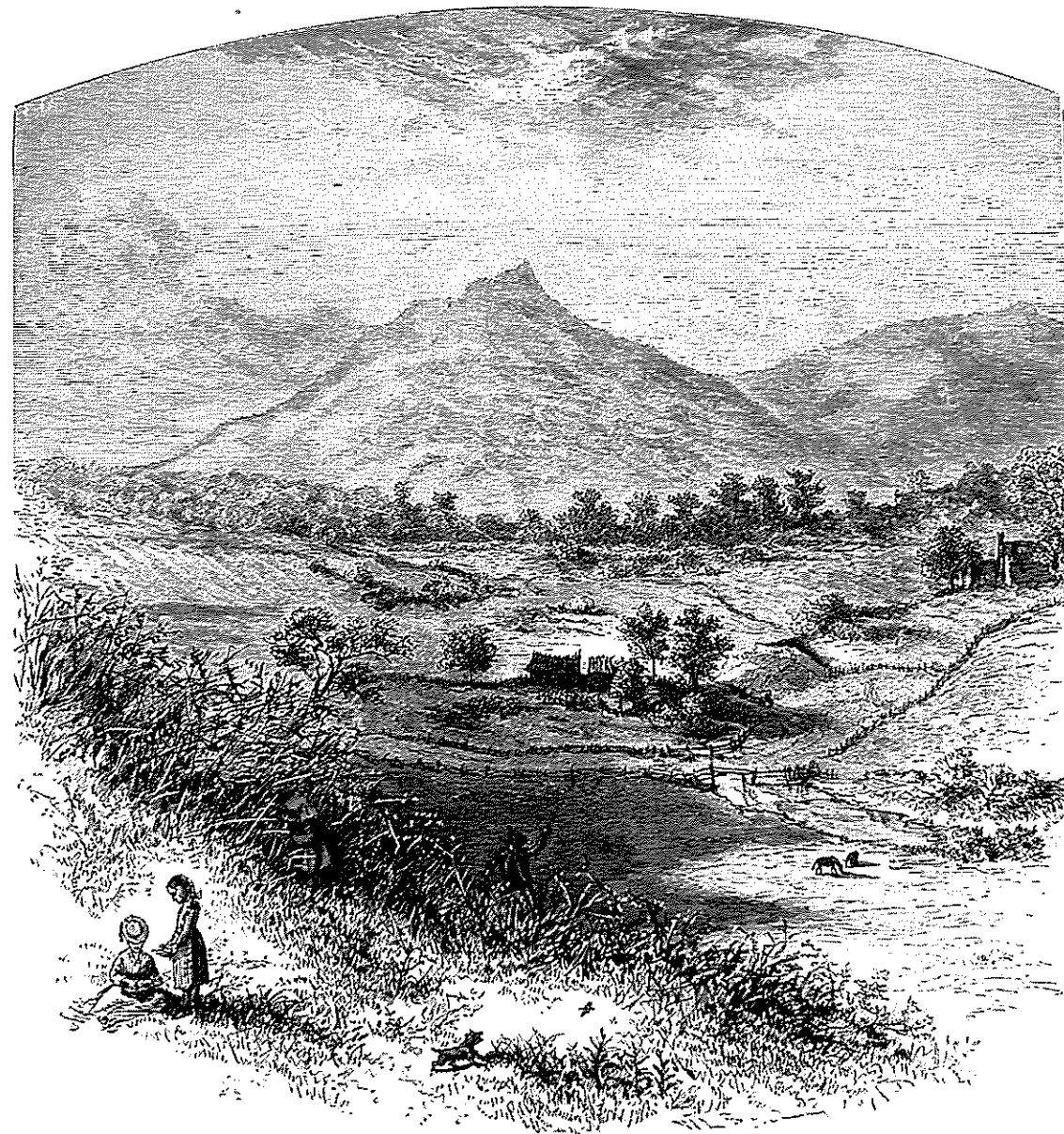
From White Sulphur Springs, George Bagby and William Sheppard traveled by wagon and rail to Alleghany Station where they crossed the meandering Roanoke River five times before they reached Alleghany Springs.

"[F]ive miles from . . . one of the streams which form the head-waters of the Roanoke, precipitating itself over a steep ledge, makes what is known as Purgatory Falls. . . . The detached masses of rock which impede and divide the stream are of enormous size, and out of all proportion to the volume of water, though that is by no means small. . . . The place has a very "snaky" look.

A chance companion of the artist suggested that if he was a good "snake-fighter," he had better take the lead. Armed with that formidable but mysterious club, the sketching-stool, the artist did lead, but happily no snakes appeared. The water falls about seventy feet. Tall hemlocks and maples keep the gorge in a tender half-light, broken at mid-day by glaring rays, that give a magical charm to the place."

George Bagby, p. 348

TODAY, THE HEMLOCKS ARE THREATENED BY INSECT INFESTATION.



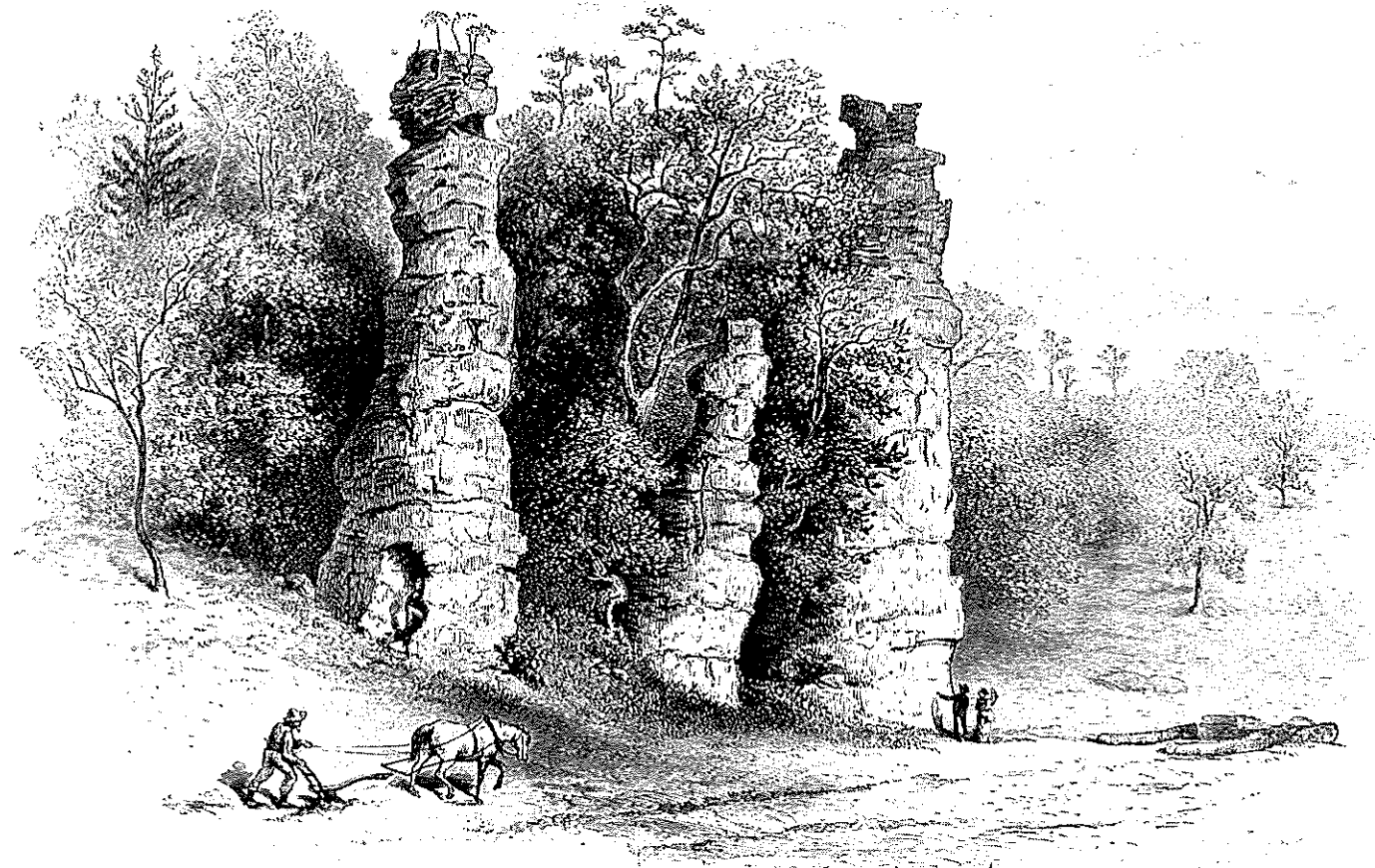
Peaks of Otter, William L. Sheppard
 Wood engraving, 6³/₈ x 5¹⁵/₁₆
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, p. 347

Continuing eastward, Bagby and Sheppard stopped at Liberty in Bedford County to sketch the famous Peaks of Otter.

"The view, taken a short distance from the village, is much more accurate than any heretofore printed. . . . [T]he higher of the two is five thousand three hundred and seven feet above the level of the ocean, and the view from its top is truly magnificent. . . . This grand panorama, once seen, can never be forgotten."

George Bagby, p. 350

THE TWO PEAKS ARE FLAT TOP AND SHARP TOP. FLAT TOP, THE TALLEST PEAK, IS ACTUALLY 4,004 FEET HIGH.



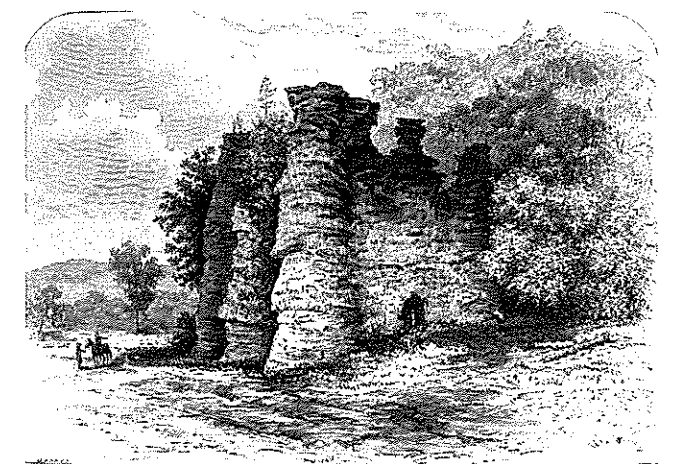
Natural Towers, William L. Sheppard (top)
 Wood engraving, 6¹/₈ x 8³/₄ (probably engraved by John Karst)
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, p. 349

Natural Towers, William L. Sheppard (right)
 Reproduction of wood engraving, 3¹/₁₆ x 5¹¹/₁₆
 (engraved by John Karst)
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, p. 350

This rock formation is in Augusta County. Sheppard and Bagby first caught sight of it across the North River from the road.

"[T]he Towers rise straight up from the cultivated field. The illusion is perfect; any one would mistake them for a ruined work of human hands. No other rocks are visible. . . . The first aspect is that of a large engraving, but, following the road, the observer is brought to the other face, and here the resemblance to a feudal ruin, the curtain-wall, with flanking towers, and low, central archway, is exact."

George Bagby, pp. 351-352



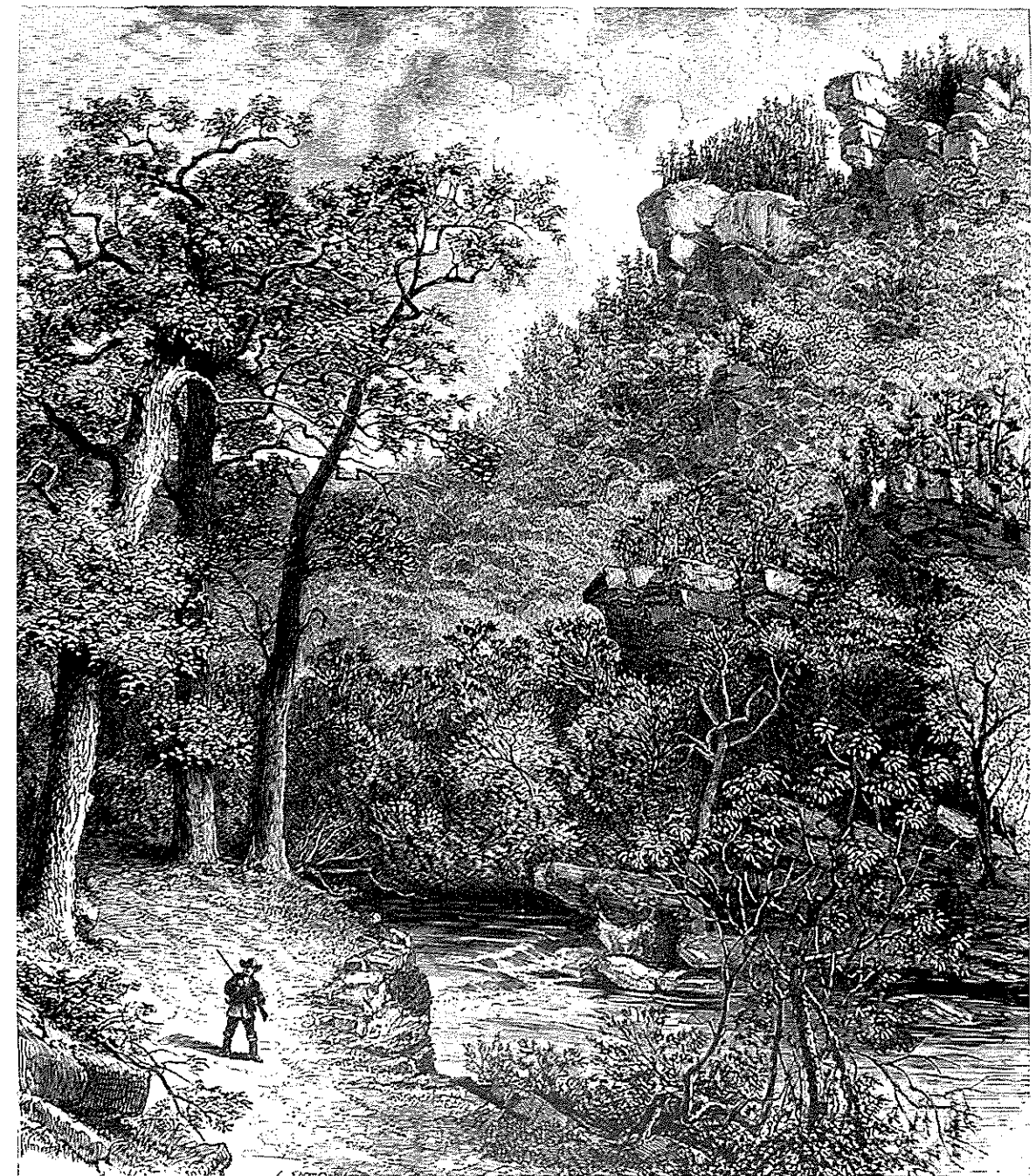


Jump Mountain, William L. Sheppard
 Reproduction of wood engraving, 6¹/₈ x 5⁷/₈
 (engraved by John Karst)
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, p. 351

Early the next morning Sheppard and Bagby traveled from Rockbridge Baths through Goshen Pass to Jump Mountain by buggy. Thunder showers obscured the mountain preventing Sheppard from sketching it the first morning, so they "rummaged an Indian mound" instead. The locals recounted the legend of how Jump Mountain got its name after an Indian maiden jumped to her death when the Indian brave she loved was killed in a great battle below between the Shawnee and Cherokee.

"The western base of the Jump abuts on Goshen Pass, and the ascent on that side is so gradual that even ladies on horseback, during the Springs' season, ride to the edge of the cliff, five hundred feet perpendicular, which abruptly breaks the contour of the mountain."

George Bagby, p. 354



Goshen Pass, William L. Sheppard
 Wood engraving, 7¹/₈ x 6¹/₈ (engraved by Henry Linton)
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, p. 352

From the Peaks of Otter, Sheppard and Bagby proceeded west along the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad to Goshen Pass where they paused to admire the scenery before pressing on to the Rockbridge Baths where they spent the night. It was almost deserted since Sheppard and Bagby were there out of season. After visiting Jump Mountain, they returned through the pass. Bagby described it as "a narrow gorge, the like of which for length and depth is not in all Virginia, for it extends nearly nine miles between its frowning walls! At its southeastern entrance a

spring of sulphur-water gushes out of a rock in the middle of the stream which traverses this Cyclopean gorge." They saw empty summer houses used by the locals in season when they came to avail themselves of "the curative virtues of the nauseous fountain."

George Bagby, p. 354



Clifton Forge, William L. Sheppard
 Wood engraving, 6 1/2 x 5 1/8 (engraved by Henry Linton)
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, p. 353

On the way to Clifton Forge, Sheppard and Bagby saw convicts working along the way and stayed at a tavern that predated the railroad. Bagby wrote, "[W]e are whirled along the new highway to the West, the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, over vast embankments, through yawning tunnels, and all along by delicious bits of scenery."

"Graceful trees drooping over the clear water, an abandoned furnace, and the ruined piers of a long-swept-away bridge, add very much to the natural picturesqueness of the place. The view in the Forge Gap, combining the wreck of rocks and the ruins

of man's handiwork, with foregrounds, middle-distances, and horizon-lines, finely balanced everywhere, is surpassingly beautiful. As you look up at the mountains, or along the stream which falls over the dam (built thirty years ago, when the forge was at work), the grandeur and loveliness of the picture bear an ineffaceable impression."

George Bagby, p. 356



Rainbow Arch, William L. Sheppard
 Wood engraving, 6 1/4 x 9
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, p. 355

"Jackson's River, flowing between the sundered mountains, unites two miles below with the Cow-Pasture [River], to form the historic James. The stratification here is most rare and strange . . . The arch rises two hundred feet above the level of the sea, and is known as the Rainbow Arch."

George Bagby, p. 356



The Chickahominy, William L. Sheppard
 Steel engraving, 8 x 5⁷/₁₆ (engraved by W. Wellstood)
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, preceding p. 357

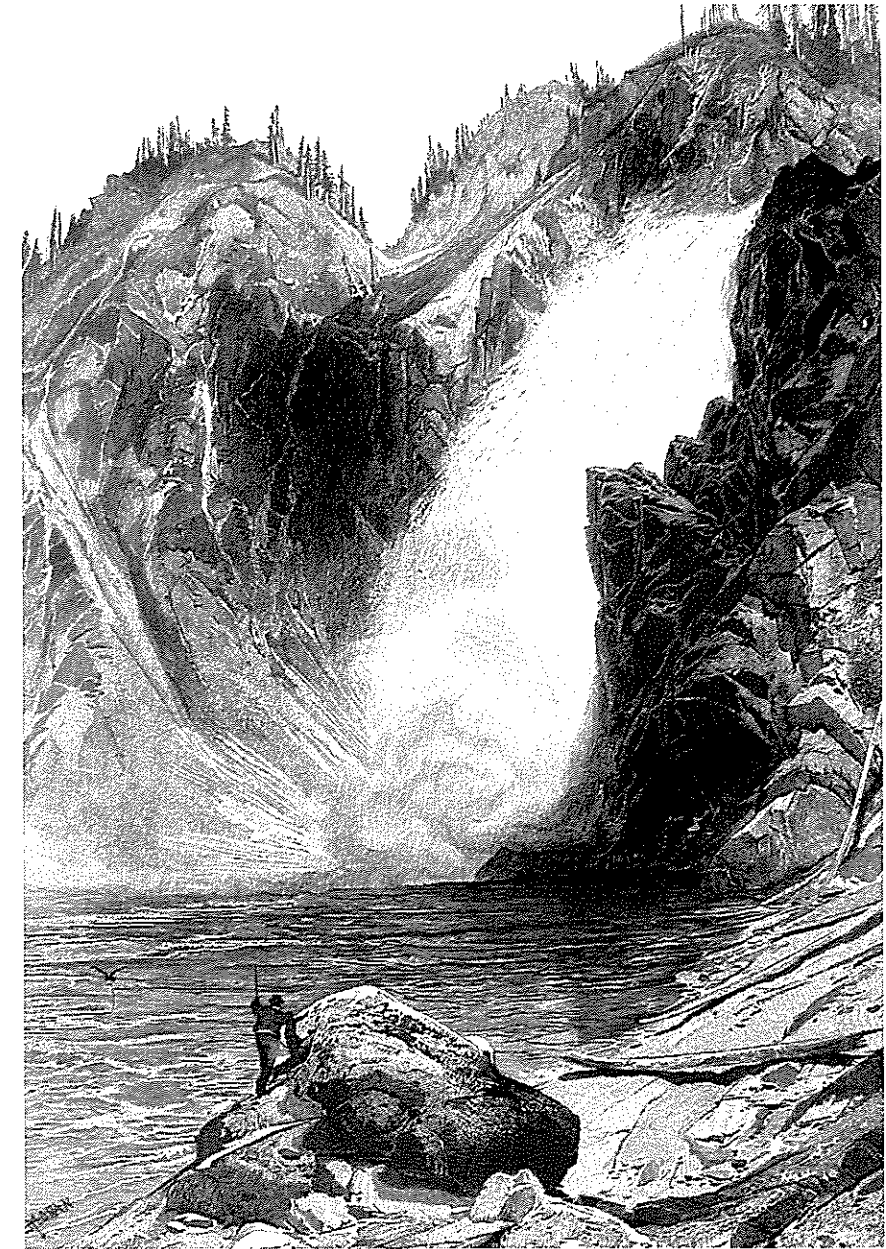
Chickahominy is a Powhatan Indian name. "The [river] is a tributary of the James. Its volume is inconsiderable until it nears Richmond, and it is navigable for some twenty-five or thirty-miles only from its junction. . . . The river contiguous to Richmond is invariably spoken of as the Chickahominy Swamp; and here, in effect, it is a swamp. The main stream, with its coffee-colored water, is well defined, but in many places, for a quarter of a mile on both sides of it, the ground is a slimy ooze In fine, the Chickahominy cannot fail to attract the artist and naturalist; it always would have done this, but now the added interest of historical association brings

hundreds to visit its banks, and the stream which, heretofore, had but scanty mention in the common-school geography will find a place in man's record beside the Rubicon and the Tweed."

George Bagby, p. 357

THERE WAS HEAVY FIGHTING AROUND RICHMOND NEAR THIS RIVER DURING THE CIVIL WAR. IN 49 BC, JULIUS CAESAR'S ARMY CROSSED THE RUBICON, INITIATING THE CIVIL WAR AGAINST POMPEY AND THE ROMAN SENATE. IT WAS ONE OF ANCIENT ITALY'S NORTHERN BORDERS. THE RIVER TWEED BECAME THE ANGLO-SCOTTISH BOUNDARY UNDER THE SCOTS AFTER MALCOLM II DEFEATED THE NORTHUMBRIANS IN THE BATTLE OF CARHAM IN 1016.

Thomas Moran and the Hayden Expedition



The Upper Falls of the Yellowstone, Thomas Moran
 Steel engraving, 8¹/₂ x 5¹¹/₁₆ (engraved by S. V. Hunt)
Picturesque America, vol. 1, 1872, preceding p. 297

Several expeditions to the American West included artists like Albert Bierstadt and Thomas Moran before and after the *Picturesque America* project. The same year that *Appleton's Journal* sent its teams out to record the American landscape for *Picturesque America*, Thomas Moran made the first of his several sketching trips out West. He had illustrated an article for *Scribner's* in May and June of 1871 titled "The Wonders of the Yellowstone" from the writer's description. Inspired to see and paint the scenery himself, he borrowed money from the publisher of *Scribner's* and one of the financiers of the Northern Pacific Railroad to pay his way that

summer to accompany F. V. Hayden's surveying expedition for the Secretary of the Interior. This steel engraving was made from a watercolor sketch (now in the Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK, Blackmore Set, no. 12) by Moran from that trip. After reviewing the Hayden expedition's report and Thomas Moran's art, Congress created Yellowstone National Park shortly before *Picturesque America* was published in 1872. That same year, Congress purchased his monumental painting, *The Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone*. This was the turning point of Thomas Moran's career.

Antecedents for Picturesque America: The English Tradition



Doctor Syntax, Losing His Way, Thomas Rowlandson
Hand-colored etching, 4½ x 7½
The Tour of Doctor Syntax, plate 2
Published 1817 (first publication 1809)
Radford University Art Museum collection

The model for *Picturesque America* was an established tradition of travel literature in England that brought distant scenery to people who could not make the usually arduous journeys to the sites themselves in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The engravings in these books also inspired tourism for those who were able to make the trips. During the age of Romanticism these books catered to the taste for the picturesque in Nature. For example, William Gilpin's tour guides, *The Wye Tour* (1783, but dated 1782), *Tour of the Lakes* (1786), and *Scottish Tour* (1789), dealt seriously with the observation of different kinds of landscape. Gilpin considered The Picturesque in art to be more interesting in contrast to The Beautiful and The Sublime – all terms used to describe the treatment of landscape in art at the end of the eighteenth century. The Picturesque type emphasized visual imagery of the wilder, natural course of Nature. He encouraged artists to paint this type by manipulation, if not from direct observation. *The Tour of Doctor Syntax* illustrated by Thomas Rowlandson is a satire on Gilpin's theory of The Picturesque. Rowlandson toured Cornwall and Devonshire in 1808, the same year that Gilpin's tours were republished.

The three elements that Gilpin considered necessary for a picturesque experience are "art, nature, and a man of sensibility

and culture to link the first two."⁵ For this "man of sensibility" and as a parody of Gilpin himself on his tour of the lakes, Rowlandson created Doctor Syntax, the quintessential absent-minded professor. His "literary" name refers to his study of the terminology used to describe types of landscape. Like Don Quixote, this bumbling old man has many misadventures that are presented humorously by Rowlandson. He lost his way almost immediately after setting out on his tour of the lakes in the first illustration and then met a highwayman who tied him to a tree in the illustrations following this one. He searches in earnest but overlooks the obvious rugged picturesque details which Rowlandson contrasts to smoother, curvilinear, "beautiful" forms in the landscape, such as the rolling hills in this scene. Along with architectural ruins, jagged rocks, gnarled trees and other irregular, time-worn elements of Nature, according to Gilpin's theory, a shaggy mule is preferable to a smooth horse in a picturesque landscape.⁶

In this scene Dr. Syntax stands in his stirrups puzzling over a road sign wondering which direction he should take to find an interesting, rustic landscape when it is right in front of him. He ignores the picturesque mules in the pasture that his horse, Grizzle, obviously recognizes. The loosely-drawn doctor is himself the most picturesque element in most of the illustrations.

⁵Ronald Paulson, *Rowlandson: A New Interpretation*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1972, p. 41.

⁶*Ibid.*

The Turner Gallery



On the Thames, J. M. W. Turner
Steel engraving, 6⅞ x 11 (engraved by R. Wallis)
Private collection, *The Turner Gallery*, D. Appleton & Co., 1879
(originally published 1859-61)

J. M. W. Turner is one of England's best-known Romantic landscape painters. He was also familiar with William Gilpin's books touting picturesque landscape. "In 1787 [at the beginning of his career] he made additions and modifications of [some of] Gilpin's published designs, indicating an active interest in them as model landscape."⁷ He was familiar also with Henry Boswell's 1786 *Description of New and Elegant Picturesque Views of England and Wales* because he colored some of the plates.⁸ A group of engraved landscapes by the seventeenth-century French artist Claude Lorrain in his *Liber Veritatis* (published in England, 1777-1819) inspired Turner's *Liber Studiorum* (1807-1819). *Picturesque America* is heir to both.

Turner began his journeys on the Thames River in 1805, the summer he moved into Syon Ferry House overlooking the river at Isleworth.⁹ He lived on or near the river for the rest of his life. Sometimes he sketched from a boat; sometimes from the bank. In the early nineteenth century he produced sketches in watercolor, pen and ink, pencil, and oil which were engraved for many books, including Cooke's *Rivers of Devon* (c. 1813), *Picturesque Views of England and Wales* (c. 1828-1838), *Rivers of England* (c. 1823-1824), *Rivers of Europe: The Loire* (c. 1826-1830), and *The Seine* (c. 1832).

A series of 60 engravings, known as *The Turner Gallery*, was published in London by J. S. Virtue in 1861, ten years after Turner's death. In 1878, Virtue published *The Turner Gallery* in three volumes with 120 engravings. In 1879, seven years after the publication of *Picturesque America*, D. Appleton & Co. of New York published *The Turner Gallery* with 120 engravings by "the most celebrated and accomplished engravers of Great Britain." It was published in forty parts (two parts issued each month) on Imperial Quarto paper with an accompanying description of each picture by W. Cosmo Monkhouse. The engravings in this exhibition are from that series.

Turner's scene, *On the Thames*, illustrated above, includes baskets used for fishing in the foreground and, closer to the manor house, a woman spreading linen tablecloths or sheets to dry on the grass. The action of the sunlight with the chlorophyll in the grass whitens the fabric and bleaches out stains. This is how white linens were laundered before washing machines and commercial bleach were available.

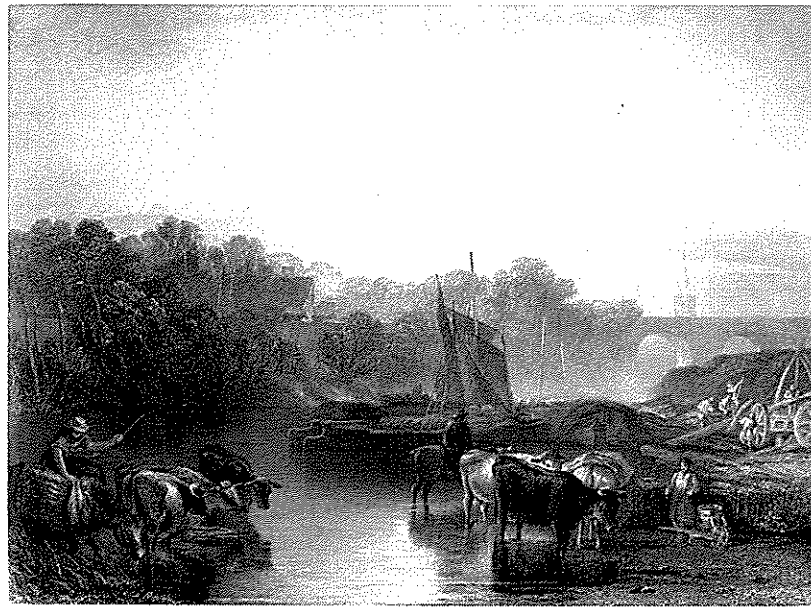
⁷Andrew Wilton, *J. M. W. Turner*, New York: Rizzoli, 1979, p. 23, and note 10.

⁸Patrick Youngblood, "The Stones of Oxford: Turner's Description of Oxonian Architecture 1787-1804 and After," *Turner Studies*, Winter 1984, vol. 2, p. 4. He cites J. Gage, *Colour in Turner*, 1969, p. 22 and Eric Shanes, *Turner's Picturesque Views in England and Wales*, London, 1979, p. 16.

⁹David Hill, *Turner on the Thames*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993, p. ix.

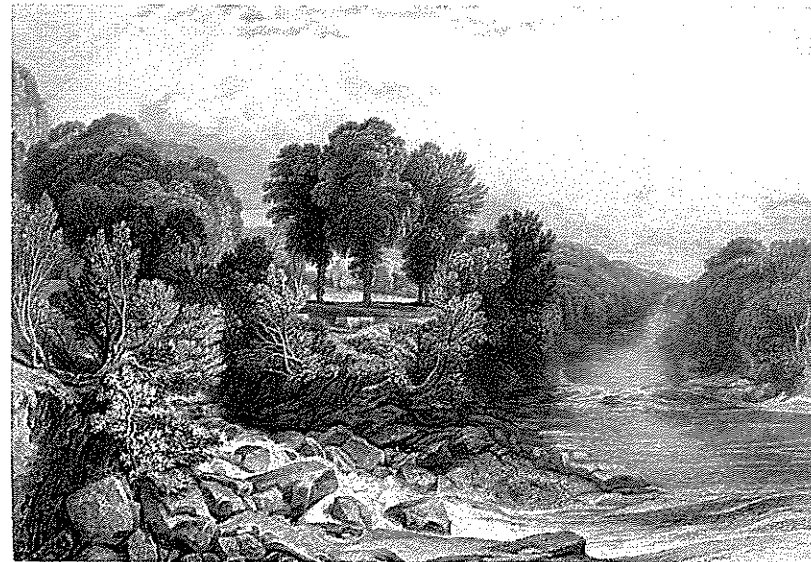
Abingdon, Berkshire, J. M. W. Turner
Private collection
Steel engraving, 7 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 9 $\frac{3}{4}$
(engraved by C. Cousen)
The Turner Gallery, D. Appleton & Co., 1879
(originally published 1859-61)

Abingdon, Virginia, was named for the English town of the same name on the Thames. This scene is based on two pen and ink sketches of Abingdon bridge and church in Turner's *Hesperides* (2) sketchbook of 1805 which records scenes on the upper Thames near Abingdon.¹⁰ The identification of the sketches and their relationship to the scene in the engraving and painting (1806) of the same title settles the question of the title which is sometimes erroneously listed as *Dorchester Mead, Oxfordshire*.¹¹



Junction of the Greta and Tees at Rokeby, J. M. W. Turner
Private collection
Steel engraving, 7 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 10 $\frac{9}{16}$
(engraved by John Pye)
The Turner Gallery, D. Appleton & Co., 1879
(originally published 1819)

The Greta and Tees rivers are in Durham County in Northern England. The source for this engraving is a watercolor over pencil sketch with scratching out from 1816-1818 (*Yorkshire 5* sketchbook, p. 29v, T.B., CXLVIII) made for Whitaker's *History of Richmondshire*, 1819-23.¹² It was once owned by John Ruskin and is now in the collection of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford.



¹⁰ See Hill, fig. 172, p. 115 (Turner Bequest, Tate Gallery, 485).

¹¹ Wilton, p. 264, p107 dated 1810 (12). See Hill, p. 137-139 for an explanation of the resolution of the title.

¹² *Ibid*, p. 365. The rough sketch of this composition was identified by L. Herrmann.

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