

Toward noon we enter one of the richest coal regions in the world. Huge, grimy coal-breakers rise on every side, vast piles of debris accumulate around the pit-mouths, numerous shafts and tunnels honeycomb the hills, and seemingly interminable coal-trains convey this mineral wealth to ten thousand far-off firesides.

Now our train laboriously climbs a steep grade as the road crosses a spur of the Alleghany mountains, the view every moment becoming wider and grander, and then by a steep and rapid descent it plunges into the Lehigh Valley. The blended wildness and beauty of this romantic gorge it is impossible to describe. A narrow, brawling stream frets its way between precipitous mountain banks. The train swings around the rapid curves, finding unexpected exits through seemingly impassable barriers, by means of some opening portal of the mountains. At Mauch Chunk the grandeur culminates. Here I stayed all night and went over the celebrated "switch-back" railway, being drawn by stationary engines up two steep inclines to a height of over thirteen hundred feet above the river, and running seventeen miles by gravitation. The sunset view from Mount Pisgah, as it is called, was very fine, extending a hundred miles. On the mountain are several coal mines, one of which has been on fire for thirty years. The ground above it has fallen in and is quite hot. Mauch Chunk consists of one narrow street at the base of the cliff and another running up a lateral ravine—quite Swiss-like in its picturesqueness. The Lehigh Gap, a few miles below, where the river forces its way through a cleft in the Blue Mountains, is also very fine.

We now enter an iron region: and mounds of rust-coloured ore, blast furnaces, and immense rolling-mills and manufacturing works abound; but for the most part the works are idle or only very partially employed, the high protective tariff of the United States having stimulated over-production to a disastrous extent. As we approach Philadelphia the country assumes a rich, agricultural character. It is a speedy transition from green fields to the heart of the crowded city. I took refuge, temporarily, in the Atlas Hotel, a huge caravansery having accommodation, of a not very luxurious character, for some four thousand guests. I was soon, however, much more agreeably domiciled in a private family.