

Monument Mountain, Bald-Summit, and old Graylock, shaggy with primeval forests, could see anything to admire in my poor little hill-side, with its growth of frail and insect-eaten locust-trees. Eustace very frankly called the view from my hill-top tame; and so, no doubt, it was, after rough, broken, rugged, head-long Berkshire, and especially the northern parts of the county, with which his college residence had made him familiar. But to me there is a peculiar, quiet charm in these broad meadows and gentle eminences. They are better than mountains, because they do not stamp and stereotype themselves into the brain, and thus grow wearisome with the same strong impression, repeated day after day. A few summer weeks among mountains, a lifetime among green meadows and placid slopes, with outlines forever new, because continually fading out of the memory, — such would be my sober choice.

I doubt whether Eustace did not internally pronounce the whole thing a bore, until I led him to my predecessor's little ruined, rustic summer-house, midway on the hill-side. It is a mere skeleton of slender, decaying tree-trunks, with neither walls nor a roof; nothing but a tracery of branches and twigs, which the next wintry blast will be very likely to scatter in fragments along the terrace. It looks, and is, as evanescent as a dream; and yet, in its rustic net-work of boughs, it has somehow enclosed a hint of spiritual beauty, and has become a true emblem of the subtle and ethereal mind that planned it. I made Eustace Bright sit down on a snow-bank, which had heaped itself over the mossy seat, and gazing through the arched window opposite, he acknowledged that the scene at once grew picturesque.