

These things, you will admit, are singular, and to a person of susceptible nerves, rather unpleasant than otherwise. But to atone for all this, you may turn anywhere and in a few moments bathe your eyes in almost unrivalled beauty. You may look at the swelling woodland, the luxuriant orchards, the verdant dyke-lands, and the soft river winding like 'Yarrow,' 'through the pomp of cultivated nature,' without leaving the level ground; but you will do better to climb some neighbouring eminence and gaze till your heart is filled with delight upon the valley below.

"The valley below—where quaint homesteads gray,
Peep out from the flowering locust's spray;
Or shadowy lie in the beautiful gloom
Of old elm-branches and orchard bloom."

Worthy, indeed, of better songs than ours, is this nook of sweet garden land.

In this region also, you may drive at leisure past fertile meadows, sunny upland, tasteful cottage, and stately mansion, and asking successively 'to whom does this belong,' receive the invariable answer that will cause you to imagine yourself a fellow traveller of 'Puss in boots,' journeying through the domains of as extensive a landed proprietor as the famous 'Marquis of Carabas.'

A day or two later we turned our horses heads, and got by some inexplicable route among the eastern counties. We travelled many a mile through lonely lovely wilderness, and when the hares and partridges crossed almost under the horse's feet, which they did frequently, I discovered myself to be a skilful driver, while my companion, who had his gun with him, sprang out to shoot the beautiful woodlanders. I was not quite reconciled to that part of our proceedings, but am nevertheless compelled to acknowledge that my remorse was afterwards mingled with pride at finding that we two alone, of all our party, returned with trophies of war, which we might triumphantly display, fearless of game-law penalties.

Adversity came upon us once, however, in the course of our wanderings. A heavy storm overtook us, and we rested in disquiet through one unspeakably dismal day and night at a village famous for the beauty of its surroundings. The grey lowering sky and gusty rain swept all the charm from green grass, majestic trees, and bright running water. We knew that these things, in exquisite and almost unequalled combination, abounded in our vicinity, but were reluctantly forced to confess that we beheld their great and indisputable loveliness, as the unsuccessful sportsman saw the birds he had intended to shoot, with the eye of faith.

All our misfortunes came together, for after our dreary arrival upon that stormy evening, we, being persons of lively imaginations, had comforted ourselves with the expectation of that balm of Gilead to weary womankind, a cup of the fragrant herb; but alas, for the frailty of our hopes—literally, the materials for a feast of good things soon covered the table, but we of the weaker vessel, who languished for tea, might sup with the Barmecides. There