

ring the day, but at night, when Victoria was about to withdraw, she said, "To-morrow morning, my lord, at any hour you please—as early as seven, if you like—we will look into the papers." "I can not think," was the reply, "of intruding upon your majesty at so early an hour; nine o'clock will be quite early enough." "No, no, my lord; as the papers are of importance, I wish them to be attended to very early. However, if you wish it to be nine, be it so." At nine o'clock the next morning the queen was seated at her table, ready to receive the nobleman and his papers.

#### TWO SCENES IN VIRGINIA.

The Natural Bridge and Wier's Cave.

BY REV. JOHN TODD.

On a lovely morning toward the close of spring, I found myself in a very beautiful part of the Great Valley of Virginia. Spurred on by impatience, I beheld the sun rising in splendour and changing the blue tints on the tops of the lofty Alleghany mountains into streaks of purest gold, and nature seemed to smile in the freshness of beauty. A ride of about fifteen miles, and a pleasant woodland ramble of about two, brought myself and my companion to the great Natural Bridge.

Although I had been anxiously looking forward to this time, and my mind had been considerably excited by expectation, yet I was not altogether prepared for this visit. This great work of nature is considered by many as the second great curiosity in our country, Niagara Falls being the first. I do not expect to convey a very correct idea of this bridge, for no description can do this.

The Natural Bridge is entirely the work of God. It is of solid limestone, and connects two huge mountains together, by a most beautiful arch, over which there is a great waggon road. Its length from one mountain to the other is nearly eighty feet, its width about thirty-five, its thickness forty-five, and its perpendicular height above the water is not far from two hundred and twenty feet. A few bushes grow on its top, by which the traveller may hold himself as he looks over. On each side of the stream, and near the bridge, are rocks projecting ten or fifteen feet over the water, and from two hundred to three hundred feet from its surface, all of limestone. The visiter cannot give so good a description of the bridge, as he can of his feelings at the time. He softly creeps out on a shaggy projecting rock, and looking down a chasm from forty to sixty feet wide, he sees, nearly three hundred feet below, a wild stream foaming and dashing against the rocks beneath, as if terrified at the rocks above. This stream is called Cedar Creek. He sees under the arch, trees whose height is seventy feet; and yet, as he looks down upon them, they appear like small bushes of perhaps two or three feet in height. I saw several birds fly under the arch, and they looked like insects. I threw down a stone, and counted thirty-four before it reached the water. All hear of heights and of depths, but they here see what is high, and they tremble, and feel it to be deep. The awful rocks present their everlasting butments, the water murmurs and foams far below, and the two mountains rear their proud heads on each side, separated by a channel of sublimity. Those who view the sun, the moon, and the stars, and allow that none but God could make them, will here be impressed that none but an Almighty God could build a bridge like this.

The view of the bridge from below, is as pleasing as the top view is awful—the arch from beneath would seem to be about two feet in thickness. Some idea of the distance from the top to the bottom may be formed, from the fact, that as I stood on the bridge and my companion beneath, neither of us could speak sufficiently loud to be heard by the other. A man from either view does not appear more than four or five inches in height.

As we stood under this beautiful arch, we saw the place where visitors have often taken the pains to engrave their names upon the rock. Here Washington climbed up twenty-five feet and carved his own name, where it still remains. Some wishing to

immortalise their name, have engraven them deep and large, while others have tried to climb up and insert their high in this book of fame.

A few years since, a young man, being ambitious to place his name above all others, came very near losing his life in the attempt. After much fatigue he climbed up as high as possible, but found that the person who had before occupied his place was taller than himself, and consequently had placed his name above his reach. But he was not thus to be discouraged. He opened a large jack-knife, and in the soft limestone began to cut places for his hands and feet. With much patience and industry he worked his way upwards, and succeeded in carving his name higher than the most ambitious had done before him. He could now triumph; but his triumph was short, for he was placed in such a situation that it was impossible to descend, unless he fell upon the rugged rocks beneath him. There was no house near, from whence his companions could get assistance. He could not long remain in that condition, and, what was worse, his friends were too much frightened to do anything for his relief. They looked down upon him as already dead, expecting every moment to see him precipitated on the rocks below and dashed to pieces. Not so with himself. He determined to ascend. Accordingly he plies the rock, with his knife, cutting places for his hands and feet, and gradually ascended with incredible labor. He exerts every muscle. His life was at stake, and all the terrors of death rose before him. He dared not look downwards, lest his head should become dizzy; and perhaps on this circumstance his life depended. His companions stood at the top of the rock exhorting and encouraging him. His strength was almost exhausted; but a bare possibility of saving his life still remained, and hope, the last friend of the distressed, had not yet forsaken him. His course upwards was rather oblique than perpendicular. His most critical moment had now arrived. He had ascended considerably more than two hundred feet, and had still farther to rise, when he felt himself fast growing weak. He thought of his friends, and all his earthly joys, and he could not leave them. He thought of the grave, and dared not meet it. He now made his last effort, and succeeded. He had cut his way not far from two hundred and fifty feet from the water, in a course almost perpendicular; and in a little less than two hours, his anxious companions reached him a pole from the top, and drew him up. They received him with shouts of joy, but he himself was completely exhausted. He immediately fainted on reaching the top, and it was some time before he could be recovered!

It was interesting to see the path up these awful rocks, and to follow in imagination this bold youth as he thus saved his life. His name stands far above all the rest, a monument of hardihood, of rashness, and of folly.

We lingered around this seat of grandeur about four hours; but from my own feelings I should not have supposed it over half an hour. There is a little cottage near, lately built; here were desired to write our names as visitors of the bridge, in a large book kept for this purpose. Two large volumes were nearly filled in this manner already. Having immortalised our names by enrolling them in this book, we slowly and silently returned to our horses, wondering at this great work of nature; and we could not but be filled with astonishment at the amazing power of Him, who can clothe Himself in wonder and terror, or throw around His works a mantle of sublimity.

About three days' ride from the Natural Bridge brought us to a place called Port Republic, about twenty miles from the town of Staunton. Here we prepared ourselves to visit another curiosity. The shower was now over that had wet us to the skin—the sun was pouring down his most scorching rays—the heavy thunder had gone by: we threw around our delighted eyes, and beheld near us the lofty Alleghany rearing his shaggy head. The south branch of the Shenandoah river, with its banks covered with beautiful trees, was murmuring at our feet—a lovely plain stretched below us as far as the eye could reach; and we, with our guide, were now standing about half way up a hill nearly two hundred feet high, and so steep that a biscuit may be thrown from its top into the river at its foot—we were standing at the