

pared and elaborated with great care, and the conviction forced itself upon my mind that several of our leading public men on both sides of politics would have shone far more brilliantly in the discharge of a similar duty.

Leaving Washington our route now lies over some of the finest scenery in America. If you look at a map, you will see lying to the west of your assumed position the chain of the Alleghany mountains; these mountains at their greatest altitude exceed six thousand feet, and within the memory of persons now living presented such an insurmountable barrier to the transit of merchandise, that persons living on the Atlantic side of the mountains who wished to sell their produce in the country lying to the west, actually went by sea to New Orleans, thence up the Mississippi and Ohio to the market for their goods. They then returned by a road over the Alleghanies which allowed the passage of travellers though it was too rough and precipitous for general traffic. Now a railway, which is one of the boldest efforts of engineering skill in the world carries you at nearly 30 miles an hour over these giddy heights and lands you on the other side in fewer hours than it formerly took weeks. So great is the height surmounted that although the trees at the foot were in full leaf when I crossed it in the month of May, on the summit the buds had not yet begun to burst and the forests looked almost wintry. The road winds its way over sublime heights and spans giddy ravines where you look sheer down for hundreds of feet, and whether you will or not, your thoughts are solemnized by the natural grandeur of the scene.

On this route too, there is another opportunity of witnessing nature in one of her grandest operations. Harper's ferry is passed only too quickly. The inexorable train waited but five short minutes which was far too brief to satisfy the eye or mind. From the chain of the Alleghany mountains a spur or offshoot extends called the Blue Ridge; this Ridge runs

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