

with the distance, softened and blended its multitudinous forests tints. The white houses which dotted that shore at intervals, seemed in the distance to rise from the water's edge and, being often embowered amid trees, carried the fancy away to scenes of marble villas on the shores of Italian lakes. Prominent among these sparse structures and directly opposite me, there rose, from its gentle knoll jutting out into the Bason, and from the midst of its pretty grove of graceful trees, the dome and columns of the well known "Rotunda," or "Music Temple"—as I believe it was originally called—which dwellers in the vicinity are proud of pointing out to strangers as the last sole relic of the once princely mansion of the father of their Queen.

Turning to the left—to those nearer forest-clad hills and valleys from the toils of which I had just emerged, the charm presented to the eye was, in its way, no less perfect. Who has not heard of, if he has not seen, the glories of North American Autumnal forest scenery? Whoever has seen them must know how utterly futile would be any effort of pen, or pencil, to describe them. I have often thought there is no part of the whole wide continent where the brilliant variety, or the varied brilliancy, of those Autumnal tints are to be found in such exquisite perfection, as on this Atlantic side of Nova Scotia; and this because of the almost innumerable varieties which spontaneous vegetation there presents within the space of any given acre, or square mile. And I certainly, never at any other time, or in any other place, beheld such a gorgeous massing and mingling of those tints, as in the place and at the time I have mentioned. It was a gorgeousness to intoxicate the sense of vision were such a thing possible.

Leisurely and delightedly wending my way in the direction of Dartmouth, I presently encountered a new surprise. Directly before me, in the distance, I caught the glimmer of water through the trees. Could this be a woodland lake? It could not be Bedford Bason; that was away to my right, although now hidden from view by an intervening ridge. Islets, too, and low craggy promontories, reveal themselves on a nearer approach. As I drew on, I was most forcibly reminded of that description from "The Lady of the Lake":—

"Onward, smil the copse 'gan peep
A narrow inlet, still and deep,
Affording scarce such breath of lirin,
As served the wild-sluck's brood to swim.
Lost for a space, through thickets veering,
But broader when again appearing,
Tall rocks and tufted knoives their face
Could on the dark blue water trace;
And farther as the hunter strayed,
Still broader sweep its channels made.
The shaggy mounds no longer stood,
Emerging from entangled wood,
But we encircled, seem'd to float,
Like castles girdled with its moat;
Yet broader floods extending still
Divid'd them from their parent hill,
Till each, retiring, e'alm'd to be
An inlet in an inland sea."

My discovery proved to be not quite an "inland sea" indeed, but a most charming piece of water nevertheless—a deep cove, or inlet, from Bedford Bason, but so cunningly masked and nearly enclosed by a long and partially wooded island across its mouth, that, although I had made frequent trips up and down the Bason itself and its western shore, I had never suspected its existence. It was, with its surroundings, a lovely miniature harbor—a real gem in its way.

My road wound round the head of this cove, just along the very margin of the beach itself and near the level of the tide; and, on the opposite side of the road just at this point, on a low swell of land, a small field had been cleared, but was no longer enclosed. Here my attention and my steps were arrested by another unexpected object.

Ruins, in the Old World sense of the term, may be said to be unknown in most parts of America. One may occasionally see, about the back country, the ruins of a log hut, or shingle house, and a very dreary looking object it is; but even this soon subsides into a mere pile of rotting wood, or disappears altogether. But here, within a few yards of me and separated from the beach by the bare width of the road, was a veritable ruin. It had obviously been a house—a dwellinghouse. The stone walls, of great thickness, were built of the unheun material only too abundant hereabout. The roof, a great part of of which still remained, was of wood—mossed and mouldy, chinked and ragged. Nearly the whole of one gable-end wall,—next the highway—had tumbled out, or been forcibly cast down, whereby the old edifice gaped drearily upon the passer-by. The unsupported ends of joists, with the floors they had once sustained, swung all awry across the opening, suggesting a not very remote resemblance to jagged teeth in the mouth of

a death's head. The chimney had long since, as it appeared, crashed down through all intervening obstacles and now lay, a pile of stones and dust, in the cellar. Of doors and windows, of course there were none; and the orifices where they had been seemed to glare out at one like the open eyes of a corpse. Even the tall clump of wild-rose brambles, with their few scarlet haws like blood-stains, clustered against the outside of one of the walls, had a skeleton look; and it was with an effort one could believe that they had ever borne leaves and flowers.

I had paused, partly resting upon my fowling-piece with its butt resting upon the ground, and gazed long at this desolation, speculating upon what might be its history. Without presuming to apply them in this particular case, I could not but recall the lines:—

"O'er all there hung the shadow of a fear;
A sense of mystery the spirit haunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is haunted!"

I may have inadvertently spoken aloud whilst these ideas were floating through my mind. Or perhaps it was some involuntary motion on my part which startled another of whose propinquity I had not until that moment been aware. At all events, I, too, was startled, and by the sudden apparition of a man springing up before me, at only a few yards distance and between the old ruin upon which I had been gazing and the water side. From his position when I first saw him, he must have been sitting upon a boulder-stone upon the beach, with his back towards me and his face in the direction of the cove. My leisurely footsteps upon the smooth sward along the road side, previous to my stopping to gaze at the ruin, had of course been unheard by him; whilst he had escaped my observation owing to my eyes having been steadily turned in the opposite direction.

I have said that I was startled; and the abruptness of this man's movements as he sprung to his feet and faced round towards me, and the wildness, if not even fierceness, depicted in his countenance at the moment, were such that I instinctively caught up my gun with both hands in that position which is next preparatory to bringing it to the shoulder. During the second, or two, before either spoke, I was enabled to make out, at all events, *what* the man