

# A VISIT TO LURAY CAVE AND THE NATURAL BRIDGE IN VIRGINIA.

We left Philadelphia about 8 o'clock in the morning, taking our seats in a parlor car to enjoy the beautiful scenery on the line of the Pennsylvania Railroad, which, for its pleasant accommodations is not excelled in any other section of this splendid State, and I may say, in any other.

The beautiful hills are covered with the richest green, and the farms seem to be in the highest state of cultivation.

The mist of the early morning had given place to the bright sunshine as we sped along—catching a hasty glance at the beautiful stations adorned with flowers at every point.

Thus hill and valley and stream beautify the scene through which we were passing—small patches of tobacco, fields of waving corn, and the cattle upon "a thousand hills," give evidence of the farmer's prosperity. Even the tall sunflowers, with bright, uplifted heads, have followed us all the way from Bayside to the "Natural Bridge" in Virginia, seemingly to give us a welcome. It has been said from time to time that they were a protection against malaria by absorbing the damp moisture from the soil. If that be the case, why then should they not be seen by the poor man's cottage all along the wayside? Our lamented poet has sung of

"The Golden Rod and the Aster in the wood," but none have ventured to praise the sunflower; so I offer this passing tribute to its worth.

We left the Pennsylvania Railroad at Harrisburg, retaining the parlor car, and turned our faces directly south after crossing the Susquehanna, passing through Chambersburg, the northernmost city that was laid in ashes during the war—since built up with handsome residences. Afterward we came to Antietam, and its historic ground, where the greatest battle was fought. We saw the headquarters of Gen. Lee,

and the brick house which he occupied.

And there, too, is the National Cemetery, where the remains of friend and foe lie side by side.

The granite statue of a private soldier standing sentinel, keeping guard over the silent dead, is said to be one of the most striking monuments of the kind found in this country. Not far from here, on Sept. 14, 1862, Gen. D. H. Hill, with a Confederate rear guard of 5,000 men, detained Gen. McClellan on his march to Antietam. Every American must feel an interest in this historic spot.

While here I was forcibly reminded of some lines written during the war:

Alas! Virginia, thou "Mother of the States,"  
hast thou in this dark hour

Upraised thy traitorous hand; but thou shalt  
feel the power

That brings the northern arms upon thy deso-  
lated soil,

And "Afric's sons" will soon behold them  
as they daily toil.

For thou hast bought and sold thy fellowmen,  
and raised them, too, with an unholy  
band!

Thy Washington and Jefferson looked on and  
saw with pain

This evil in their native land which they could  
not restrain;

But yet their prayers ascended to Him who  
reigns supreme above,

That in His own good time, He would the  
unholy cause remove.

Thy Randolph, too, statesman of high renown,  
When on his death-bed weighed his spirit  
down,

"Write on my card Remorse," he quickly  
said,

"It grieves me to the soul while on this dying  
bed,

To think that Afric's injured sons doth toil  
For me and mine, upon my native soil,

Though late I give to them sweet liberty,  
this precious boon,

'Twill ease my spirit ere I sink within the  
tomb."

Thus said the dying statesman! ere he sank  
from earth away;

But at the "eleventh hour" his prayer was  
heard, his sins forgiven,

And after "life's fitful scene" was o'er his  
soul in calmness took its flight, his  
spirit entered heaven.

Far differently do these farms appear,  
from that scene of war and desolation,  
with their fields of waving corn and  
green pastures. Look, too, at the ad-