

WITH ENGRAVINGS BY THE AUTHOR.



FROM a friend and fellow-craftsman, who was the owner and inventor of a camping-car, a small company of wood-engravers had received invitations to a novel camping-out excursion. Hungering for the woods and fields we hurried away, each by himself, as opportunity offered, to seek the unknown regions of Hockanum, near Northampton, Massachusetts.

Night had come before I reached Northampton, and as no one met me at the station, I went no farther that night. But I took the road again at an early hour the next morning, and rode through a mysterious land where the fog hid all but the gray roadway under the feet of our horse, whose head and ears, almost lost in the fog, stretched outward in the distance in an alarming manner.

For fully two miles we sped on across a level sandy road without seeing a solitary object, animate or inanimate, until we came at last to a clump of trees close to the narrow roadway, and then, with a sudden dip down a sandy bank, I found myself on the shore of the Connecticut River. Before me was a rickety-looking gang-plank reaching from the sand to a flat-bottomed and open scow. This was Hockanum ferry. By the roadside and in reach from the carriage was a tin horn, or trumpet, hanging upon a stake, like an extinguisher upon a candle, and a blast upon this instrument is regarded as a peremptory summons by the ferryman.

The ferryman and his assistant soon appeared, and we pushed out upon the mysterious waste. I could see nothing beyond the gray and steam-

ing water, and was glad when we grounded upon the sand. From the ferry it was but a short walk up to the tavern.

Standing for a moment hesitatingly upon the piazza, after repeated knocking at the open doorway, which brought no response, and straining my eyes at the fog beyond, I saw coming out of the dimness the outline of a barn and, taking shape gradually, the ponderous and portly form of a man, who was engaged in greasing the axles of a wagon. The fog so narrowed and circumscribed the visible world that what remained was of immense importance to me, and the presence of mine host, whom I found this man to be, was hailed with pleasure. He explained that my friends were in camp upon the mountain right above us, and he pointed over his shoulder up towards the omnipresent screen of the fog, shutting out mountain and the blue heavens beyond. But he said he was going to the camp soon, and we made our way to the house, where I found a surprisingly good breakfast awaiting me.

After our pleasant repast Edwards was ready to go to the camp, and we went to the doorway. Walking out upon the piazza, another and an entirely different world was before me. I could hardly believe my eyes. Such a revelation—light, brilliancy, sweetness, everywhere. Out of a moving, vapory atmosphere rushed swiftly as a swallow's flight bits of blue sky and fragments of mountain.

The cozy old hotel, sitting calmly and peacefully by the highway, with its well-worn drive to the hospitable entrance; the heavy and



comfortable arm-chairs upon the piazza; the curious watering-trough under an apple tree on the opposite side of the road; the fields stretching away up the slope; and, finally, off towards the East, the thin gray silhouette of Mount Holyoke—all made a beautiful picture. The sun was still behind Holyoke, and its rays reached only a portion of the mountain and the foothills. A point where

lily gracefully raised its golden chalice, opening to catch the early sunbeams.

Nearer the wheelway and upon the outer edges of the public road, where the plowshare never disputes their right to the soil, grew a perfect tangle of wild-flowers, a "ribbon border" which no landscape gardener could match in beauty with all the choice plants which the floriculturists can supply. There rose



THE LILY POND.

the sun touched into life every treetop, and the still fleeing remnants of vapor gave motion, grace, and beauty to every object over which their trembling shadows passed, was a group of trees which came down or projected below the main line of the forest. Silvered by the light in which they were bathed, they seemed to rush joyously out from the dimness of the mist, if not with hand-clapping and laughter, yet with rustle of leaves and song of bird.

Then I thought of Kingsley somewhere up there in his car. I knew he could tell me all about the mysteries of those woods, and I sprang with eagerness into the wagon beside my portly landlord and we were away.

For a few hundred yards we kept the main road through the dewy and fragrant meadow, which stretched away in soft undulations of verdure, flicked and bespangled with myriads of white daisies, to the calm blue river beyond. In gorgeous raiment, the beautiful orange field-

the beautiful milkweed, with great balls of pink bloom, overgrown and fantastically wreathed about with the tendrils of the wild morning-glory, whose pinkish white flowers modestly greeted the light, and there Johns-wort, meadow rue, and, queen of all, the purple Eupatorium, blessed the wayfarer with a smile; and woven among this mazy tangle in countless and astonishing numbers were the delicate and fragile spider-webs, later in the day invisible, but now, when countless drops of dew were strung like pearls upon their silken threads, adding to this charming wealth of beauty the last touch of delicacy and refinement. Countless bees were busy among the blossoms, and dainty humming-birds fearlessly thrust their long and slender tongues into the honeyed depths of the yellow lily as we passed. Turning sharply into a well-worn byway or lane we left the meadowland and began the ascent of the foothills.

At the angle of the roads I saw supported upon the top of a post a small oblong box



with an odd-shaped opening upon the perpendicular side to admit the hand. From its shape, when seen at a distance, it suggested a shrine. In answer to my queries, Mr. Edwards told me that it was a letter-box. There is no post-office in Hockanum, and similar boxes are posted at different points about the place. Whenever the inhabitants go to Hadley or Northampton they consider it their duty to get the Hockanum mail, and on their way home to sort and distribute it to these wayside post-offices. From this point the delivery of the mail becomes very complex and hazardous. Every one who happens along stops to examine the mail and takes along anything "going up his way."

"There it is," said my guide at last, with a sweeping and ponderous gesture; and, sure enough, just up there in the edge of the wood was what seemed a veritable gipsy camp. We continued our way through many wrenchings and twistings of the buggy, over stones and unevennesses which threatened momentarily to upset us. At last we were at the camp. The picturesque car was drawn up amid huge fragments of trap-rock overarched by lordly chestnut trees, interspersed with dark and somber pines.

Here we found Kingsley,—hospitable, cordial, enthusiastic Kingsley,—who had slept the sleep of the just all through that early morning entirely unconscious of wood nymphs or fog.

There stretching out before us lay the beautiful Connecticut, winding its calm and peaceful way towards the sea, with its border of farm-lots distinctly marked in different shades of green and yellow. At the south was Mount Tom, at the north were Sugar-Loaf and Toby, with a ridge of blue hills beyond Northampton binding them together. Old Hadley, Hatfield, and Northampton, with their white painted spires pointing heavenward, lay below us. There was no longer any mystery about the valley, for the sun had sought out every nook and corner, and its hidden secrets stood revealed.

The car was a wonder to me at first, with its snug and well-contrived accommodations for painting or for engraving on wood, and its careful provision for the exigencies of life in camp.

I shall always remember the experience of those happy days, which brought me much nearer to the heart of nature than I had ever been before, and gave a new and sharper edge to my desire to convey to others—not as a mere interpreter, but at first hand, through the medium of my craft—some of the impressions which it was my pleasure to receive from the environments of that place. When the company was fully gathered about our camp-fire at night there was everything that could be



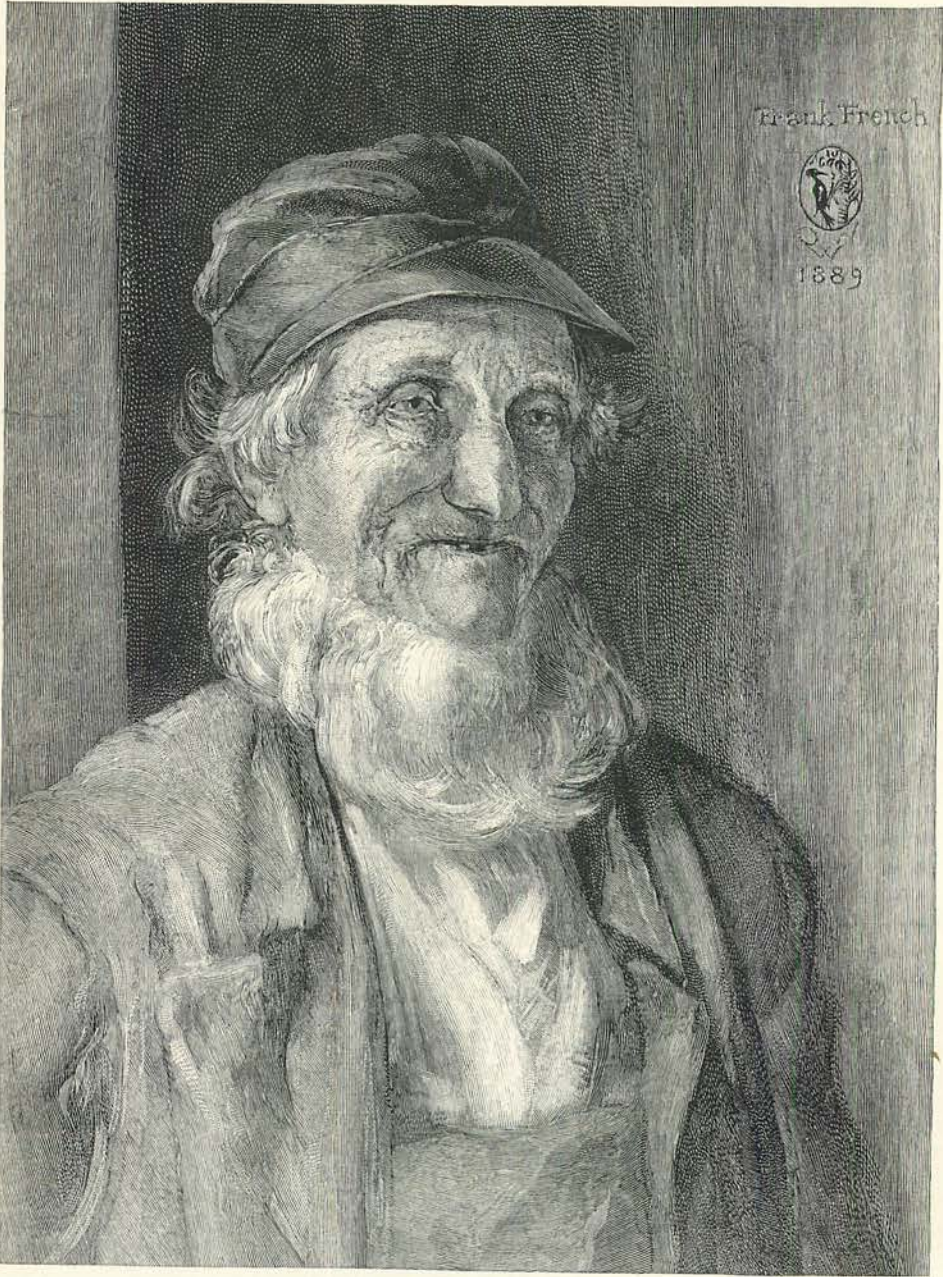
A HOCKANUM WILD-FLOWER.

desired for good-fellowship and friendly and healthful criticism.

At that hour we always related the experiences of the day. Sometimes one of our number would read to us, and while the stars looked down upon our company, and the lights in the farmhouses shone out here and there in the valley below, and the sheen lay upon the river, we welcomed Fra Lippo Lippi, and involuntarily made room for him upon the chestnut log beside us.

One day my wandering footsteps led me to a black, unpainted house standing upon a hillside apart from the highway and somewhat hidden by a gnarly and unkept orchard growth, its own somber hue tending to make it invisible against the dark gray of the mountain beyond. There was a small barn a few paces in the rear, with bare earth about the doorway, a few chickens and a garden patch, and a somewhat uncared-for and forlorn-looking cow grazing in the lot. This was the habitation of the "old residenter." In front of the door stood a wheelbarrow loaded with fresh-cut grass from the roadside, with which the cow's poor picking in the meager home lot was to be eked out; and by it, with bent back and his hands upon his hips in attitude of rheumatic repose, stood the old residenter. He was friendly and courteous enough, but there was a dullness in his manner which I think I understood, for I knew that he had been ambitious in his younger days—had staked all his little wealth in a scheme for making money, and had failed, and was now poor as well as old. It is a simple story and the amount of money involved was comparatively small, but it had been raked together and saved up with much care and hardship and was his all.





THE OLD RESIDENTER.

I tried to draw him out, but he seemed not inclined to talk much except in answer to my questions. He told me that he could remember when wild turkeys were plenty about the mountain, and spoke of the building-bee when the neighbors assembled to aid in the first house-building venture. I asked him if there were many of them there that day, and he replied, "Quite a bunch on 'em."

Upon the wall in his little lonesome cottage was a rude pine shingle with a drawing upon it in red chalk. The old man was proud of the notice I took of this rude picture, and with great pride he told me that a little grandson did it, and related how "the little fellah sat down and took the chalk and drawed it right out of his head." To his mind this was ample evidence of genius,



and he was convinced that the lad's father had made a mistake in making a farmer of the boy, as "he ought to have made *picters* for a livin'."

I had some difficulty in persuading the old man to wear his cap while posing for me. He thought his "best hat" would be "more scrumptious," and he shuffled off to bring it, in spite of my explanation that I wanted him in his every-day attire. He brought in a very ancient black derby hat with a high crown and flat rim, and about three sizes too small for him. It perched upon the top of his head in a comical fashion, and to me this attempt to look dressed up in his picture was really pathetic.

I have also the pleasure of introducing Aunt Drusilla, a charming old lady of Hockanum, who has seen the snows of more than eighty winters come and go and has had in her life much of hardship and care. She has always lived in this farming community, limited in this world's comforts and knowing nothing of its luxuries—rearing children and ending in widowhood, and yet carrying this weight of years in calmness and peace. Gentle, refined, and lady-like in her manner; tender-hearted, with a ready tear of sympathy; and yet with light-heartedness, always ready to laugh when laughter is in order—a serene old age. There is one odd thing about Aunt Drusilla: she is very, very

of medicine, and said he could cure paralysis. His own life for the last score of years was the best proof of his skill in the treatment of heart disease and various other ailments, for Dr. — had told him just twenty years before that he could not live the year out, as his heart, his spine, his liver, and his kidneys were affected, not to mention his spleen.

He was a good deal of a moralist; but, judging from some of his reminiscences, he had taken up the cause of morality rather late in life. He was a great temperance reformer and lost no opportunity to drop a good temperance lesson, and we freely overlooked his occasional visits to the hotel for a glass of "tonic bitters" which the precarious state of his health rendered necessary, and which his strong temperance views forbade others to indulge in. The tobacco habit was his one acknowledged weakness. But he wished he had never touched it; it had been a curse to that valley; for as soon as the farmers began to raise it they had grown extravagant and reckless with their money, and the weed had sapped the life out of the soil. He discoursed upon the sharp and pithy letters which he was wont to write to such of the local papers as did not find his caustic utterances of truth too strong food for them. When I asked him to pose for me he declined, saying he had no money; but when



IN THE GRAVEYARD AT HATFIELD.

deaf, and yet she can hear music, while harsher and more discordant sounds are inaudible.

One morning there came toiling slowly up the steep ascent, with bent back and with one hand upon his hip and the other grasping a stout stick, the form of an old man. He accosted us with much civility and examined our sketches with intelligent interest. He was decidedly garrulous. He had seen something of the world—had been to the war in the capacity of a hospital nurse, and in the same capacity had served in the Northampton lunatic asylum, and on account of his superior trustworthiness had been the custodian of the key to Dr. —'s wine cellar.

He laid claim to a considerable knowledge

told that I would pay him instead of asking pay he consented, and while he sat and smoked the despised tobacco he entertained me with bits of savory gossip, each incident related pointing a moral. He quoted with great fluency, in support of his theories of religion, politics, morality, and temperance, such great authorities as Theodore Parker, Henry Ward Beecher, and Wendell Phillips, and drew upon Holy Writ with great volubility. In spite of his vagaries I enjoyed the Professor, as they call him, and I hope he will successfully cope with his physical disabilities for many years to come.

One day, as I sat in the old cemetery at Hatfield sketching the gravestones, an old man with a long white beard came and mowed



the scanty and coarse grass which grew among the graves. He was a silent and picturesque figure swinging his scythe, reminding me of the dread Reaper "reaping among the wheat." I desired him to pose for me, but he said he was "too busy." Later in the day he came with Uncle Moses to gather the harvest which "God's acre" had yielded, Uncle Moses furnishing a horse and a hay-rack for the purpose. The headstones, some of which were very old,

and turn abruptly to the right into the road. My heart stood still as Uncle Moses, from his elevated perch on top of the load, chattered to his horse and went with a rush over the bank. The wagon swayed and gave a dangerous lurch as it turned into the highway, and for a second two of the wheels left the ground, the loose hay at the sides and on the top of the load bounded upwards, and so did Uncle Moses for a second; but they came down in the right



AUNT DRUSILLA.

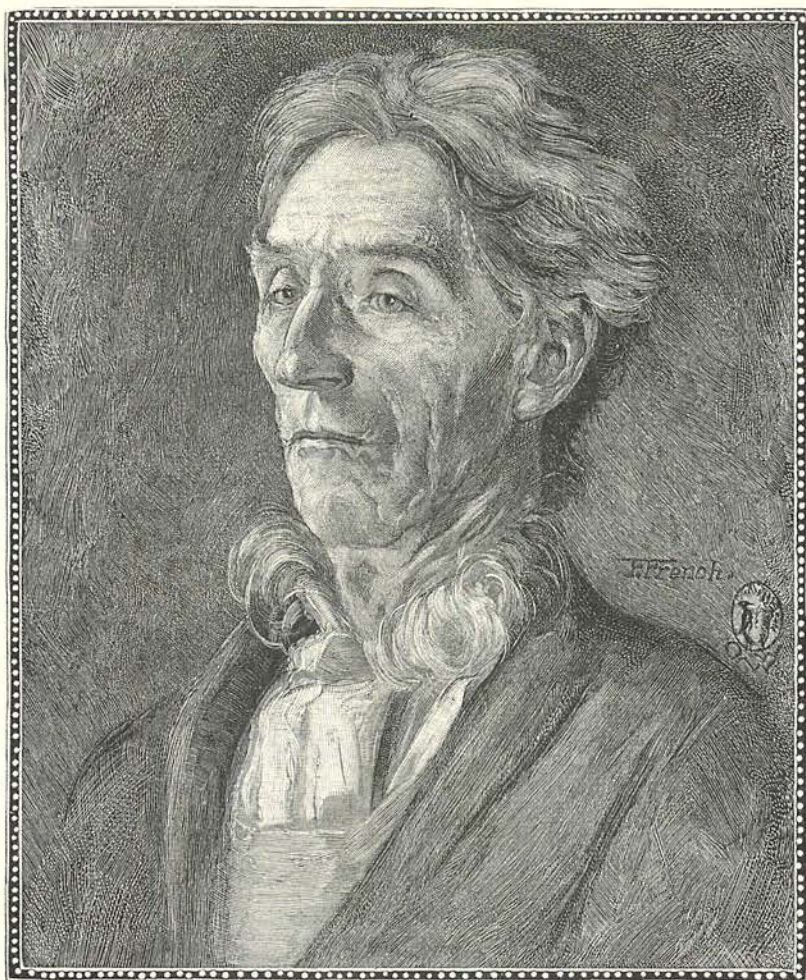
were scattered at irregular intervals about the ground, sometimes very near together and sometimes quite widely separated, and it was interesting to watch these two old men as they calculated the space through which to drive and the possibility of turning around in order to get out again. The mower went ahead and reported the prospect, but always in a guarded manner, as if not wishing to take the responsibility. Uncle Moses, of course, was on the hay in the cart, and used his head independently as to turning this way or that, and with many soothing words to Dolly.

The cart was successfully worked around among the headstones, but the most difficult feat was to come, for in getting out of the yard it was necessary to plunge down a bank

place, and I drew a long breath of relief when Uncle Moses was once more safely outside that cemetery.

As a result of the happy days passed in the engravers' camp, and under the helpful influence of mutual sympathy and aims, we decided to form ourselves into a little clique, or guild, with a device or sign manual to mark our original work; and it seemed a happy thought when Kingsley proposed the woodpecker. The woodpecker was over our heads in a chestnut tree engraving upon the wood his own designs, and his presence in camp was looked upon as a good omen. It was decided hereafter to place his likeness with the initials O. W. W. ("Original Workers on Wood") on our original cuts, and it is hoped that our work in this





UNCLE MOSES.

direction shall represent the precious qualities which *ought* to flow from the direct and untrammelled expression of one's own chosen and best-loved themes.

For my own part I have tried to introduce, to such as may care to know them, some of the old and fast-disappearing types of a sturdy race who have lived untrammelled by the mandates of fashion, and who have preserved their independent and original character, both in its inward being and its outward expression. I have done this work without one moment of careless or flippant thoughtlessness; and while I am deeply conscious of the faults of technique, I hope I have atoned for them in some measure by the earnest purpose which has actuated me in the delineation of these faces. The unaffected beauty of the young girl, whose beaming face I can liken only to the

daisies and wild-flowers of her native soil, reminds me of little country maids with whom I used to trudge merrily to school in summer and winter—those glorious New Hampshire winters, when with the snow waist-deep upon the ground, and hiding out of sight the old stone walls, I used to draw the little sleds uphill, and think them never so light as when their fair owners were seated upon them. Not one wrinkle upon the faces of these time-worn veterans has been traced by me without increasing my respect for my rude New England forefathers, for I see in them that which reminds me of dear old friends and neighbors of my boyhood days; and if in these faulty attempts at delineation of character I can awaken in others a corresponding respect for "Old Hayseed," as we sometimes hear him thoughtlessly called, this work will not have been done in vain.

*Frank French.*