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(For Baldwin's Monthly.)

OLD CRAWFORD.

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I often hear people tell of being born too soon, meaning, I suppose, that their thoughts have anticipated the age in which they live. I am not one of these. I am thankful I was born just when I was, partly because I can say I have seen Old Crawford, and talked with him and marveled at the size and strength of this King of the Mountains. Moreover, I was born in time to go twice to the tip-top of Mount Washington, and once through the "Notch" to the Crawford House, before they were desecrated with railroads and modern hotels. It was something in my day to do this—a feat not devoid of peril, and refreshing to mind and body. But I am to tell about seeing Old Crawford, as he was familiarly called. It was in this wise and in the day of slow coaches and in the day of masculine supremacy, when men took their wives' journeys, in their own way, quietly. My husband had our snug chaise and steady horse tackled; we took a lunch-basket, and started off early in the dewy morning for the White Hills, which had loomed upon my vision from childhood up, when the nurse used to relate marvelous stories of the great Carbuncle of the mountains, which my childish eyes discerned at the distance of ninety miles, glittering

"Like a lump of ice in the pale, cold moon."

My husband had a keen enjoyment of the beauties of nature, and had traveled much at home and over the sea, but was naturally taciturn. I, on the contrary, had been little about, and was weighed by the wild beauty of hill and valley, as they opened upon my vision, like a spell to witch the senses. We started from Portland, up through the fruitful and picturesque towns bordering the Saco—through Conway and Bartlet, crossing and recrossing the winding of the river, over rickety bridges, guiltless of any railings, and sometimes fording the stream when the water was high and rapid, threatening to carry us away, and I curled my feet up on the seat to keep out of the wet. The roads were exceedingly rough and little traveled; indeed, they were mostly used in Winter when the heavy snows afforded a safe passage for the farmers of Vermont and New Hampshire through "The Notch," carrying the rich products of their farms to a good market in Portland.

The season was the last of July; we were mere idlers, and stayed on our way to gather the gorgeous wild flowers of the region, or to follow up the hills some beautiful Undine as she dashed her silvery foam and spray from rock to rock. We lunched amid overhanging crags, enshrined in mosses, by the music of some pretty cascade, bordered with blooms, all

"Wasting their sweetness in the desert air."

As we mounted higher and higher amid the hills, my enthusiasm was succeeded by a sense of desolate grandeur, which has haunted me from that day to this. Often, in some moment charged with the stress of the battle of life, that grand, Promethean arena has loomed up to the chambers of memory, and hushed any spirit of discontent with a calm repose, that said: "For this cause came I into the world." It is a great thing to have curbed ourselves, and brooded in the dear heart of Nature amid her silent and desolate haunts.

At length all appearance of civilization was left behind us, and we traveled miles on miles through a stunted vegetation, over masses of stone and the *débris* of many a mountain avalanche. Mount Washington and the brotherhood of lofty peaks loomed above us, enshrouded in their shifting drapery of clouds, like the ghosts of Ossian gliding to their misty halls. The Saco was shrunken to a silvery thread, nearly hidden by dis-

rupted pines and a wilderness of rocks. All seemed the desolation of desolation. A slight turn revealed to us a low cottage, with a patch of green, and a few gay hollyhocks and marigolds. This rather enhanced than relieved the sad loneliness of the scene, for we knew that the deserted dwelling was known as the Willy house, once the residence of a cheerful, hardy household. While we stayed on our way, silently contemplating the melancholy scene, a tall, athletic man emerged from behind a huge granite boulder, swinging what I supposed was a massive pine club, at least six feet long. With a loud, but not unmusical, voice, he cried out, as he approached us:

"Who is it dares to come here without a pass from Old Crawford; don't you know he is King of the Mountains?"

Saying this he put a heavy foot upon the stirrup of the carriage, which like to have upset us. I now perceived that his club was an iron crow-bar, which he lifted up and struck into the ground with as much ease as I pierced a piece of muslin with a bodkin.

"I am glad to see the King of the Mountains, and ready to pay him homage," said my husband, smiling.

This greatly pleased the handsome giant, who had much to say and much to learn of the busy world from whence we had emerged. He was more than six feet high—nearer seven than six—but so justly proportioned that he neither seemed awkward nor offensively large. Nor did his face have that flat, heavy shape which is apt to belong to large persons. He stood in the broad sunlight, with uncovered head—an Ajax in size, and an Achilles in beauty. He, and all his surroundings, were in keeping. Broad, free, massive, like the everlasting hills which had nurtured him. There was no taint of boorishness. On the contrary, his language was good, his conversation intelligent, and his bearing kingly. A good-humored air of defiance sat well upon him: a natural dominance; an independence of thought and action that suggested heroic times, fitness for emergencies, and a total ignorance of anything mean or unmanly. His dress was a sort of frock linen shirt, and trousers of the same material. Heavy cowhide shoes did not disguise a limber ankle and arched foot. I was very young, and did not talk, being content to study so remarkable a man. At length, however, I ventured to ask him if he would allow me to lift the iron bar, which seemed the "weaver's beam" of an Anak.

"Certainly," he replied. The reply was not much, but the sort of protective tenderness of tone and look were such as a lion might extend to a weakling lamb, or an eagle to a "sucking dove." Lifting up the iron, he placed it warily in my two hands, but did not take away his own large, well-shaped ones. Foreseeing a difficulty, he placed one end on the ground. I am ashamed to say I could not lift it; whereat he laughed, a merry, approving laugh, and actually gave me a light pat on the shoulder, as if I had been a baby.

Presently he glanced at the cottage, and related the sorrowful story of the destruction of a whole family upon a fearful night in June. With simple pathos he told the tale, and stepping reverently aside, said:

"Here they lie, eight feet beneath us. Poor souls! not one of them escaped. This road is eight feet higher now than before that slide from the mountain."

Bidding adieu to this right kingly man, we proceeded through the Notch a distance of three miles, to the then Crawford House, an unpretending two-story dwelling, at that time kept by Tom Crawford, son of the King of the Mountains. Winding through this vast cleft, where ages ago a deluge of water must have roared and eddied, breaking its way through the granite of countless centuries, we found it now collapsed into a narrow channel, hardly perceptible at times through the mas-

sive boulders and broken and distorted pines. At one spot the road was built up round a shoulder of the mountain which rose abruptly on one side, while on the other the Saco roared and gurgled below a pent-up monster ready to break forth under the melting snows of the Spring season. As our carriage wound slowly through this pass a huge snake wriggled beside the wheels, and at length plunged into the chasm below.

Arriving at "Tom Crawford's," for thus was the house designated in those days, we found a good fire, clean beds, and an abundant and most tempting table.

People who travel in a crowd, and only for excitement, lose all the epicureanism of journeying. They vulgarize and debauch the mind. The rage for sight-seeing is an epidemic appearing since my time. I visited the ancient haunts of Pan and the Hamadryades while as yet they were undesecrated. That moonlight night, in those dim solitudes, is an everlasting memory. How weird and still the silver light stole through the old pines, and peered downward into the valley! I had just yielded to the mystic questionings which extended themselves to other scenes, and the intimations of other worlds, when a low bugle note awoke the silence; soft, tender, unearthly, it floated away in the distance, till glen and hill arrested the sound and gave it back in a thousand entrancing echoes. Clearer, louder arose the melody—louder came back the response from the myriad of echoes, as if Manabozzoo and all his train of Puckwudgies were out careering in the moonlight. Then another voice took up the notes, and in a strange, sepulchral cadence kept time in a voice half howl, half hyena-laugh. It was a wizard spell—a Walpurgis Carnival freezing the nerves. It ceased with a few cheery good-night bugle notes, and silence descended upon the lone valley.

Nothing could be more unique than this serenade amid the hills, nor was the musician the least interesting part of it, given, as it was, by "Tom Crawford," worthy scion of the King of the Mountains. He stood uncovered, where the moonlight fell upon his thick, waving hair—tall, graceful—an Apollo of the hills. By his side was a capital foil, a huge wolf, perfectly tame, which, with ear intent, and vigilant eye, watched every movement of his master, and joined him in those lugubrious howls, which would have been hideous but for a certain ludicrous zeal that showed the beast was doing his best.

For years Tom Crawford and his wolf divided interest with Old Crawford, when people went to the White Mountains by way of the Notch.

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DON'T look over one's shoulder when he is reading or writing.

●●●
SAY, I thank you—not "Thanks"—when you wish to be polite.

●●●
THE following bit of dialogue is reported to have occurred between a Briton recently arrived in our home of freedom, and one of those sterling citizens of the Washoe region, who have such an airy and winning grace of manner:

"Deah me, this is disgusting"—(holding up his knife and gazing fixedly at its point.) "This is either the second or the third hair—I think it's the third—that I've found in this butthah!"

"You've not been in 'Merica long, I judge."

"No, Sir; I arrived here yesterday morning."

"I thought so; otherwise you would not have complained of hairs in the butter."

"Not complain of hairs in the butthah! You supprise me, Sir. How could I do otherwise?"

"Those hairs, Sir, are natural to Washoe butter; in Washoe the white sage creates hair. In a country where all the cows feed on the white sage, do you think it likely that the butter will be bald-headed? Would you like to try a box—ten dollars? You are rather weak on the north pole."