

**TAGHCONIC: OR LETTERS
AND LEGENDS
ABOUT OUR SUMMER
HOME, PP. 1-225**

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Taghconic: Or Letters and Legends about Our Summer Home, pp. 1-225 by Godfrey Greylock

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GODFREY GREYLOCK

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TAGHCONIC;

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OR

Letters and Legends about our Summer Home.

From the Journal of the Author

BY GODFREY GREYLOCK.

¹¹ Then shall look
Upon the green and rolling forest tops,
And down into the secrets of the glens,
And streams, that with their bordering thickets strive
To hide their windings. Thou shalt gaze at once
Here on white villages and fith and herds,
And swarming roads, and there on solitudes
That only hear the torrent, and the wind,
And eagles shriek.¹²

BRYANT.

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EPISTLE DEDICATORY

To Summer Ramblers on the Berkshire Hills.

FRIENDS:—

From Vermont upon the north to Connecticut upon the south, for fifty miles along the eastern borders of New York, extends Berkshire, the most western county of Massachusetts. It is a region of hills and valleys, of lake and stream, of woodland, farm and field. Its beauty is world renowned; for the pens of Bryant and Miss Sedgwick have made it their favorite theme. Within its limits are Monument Mountain, Tey Glen, the Stockbridge Bowl, Green River, with a thousand other scenes of storied or of unsung loveliness.

In the north rise majestically, six thousand feet into the air, the double peaks of Greylock. Along our western borders lie the dome like summit of the Taconic range. Less graceful in outline, but even more romantic with broken and precipitous ascents, the Hoosacs shut out the world upon the east. Within this mountain walled amphitheatre lies cradled the upland valley of the Housatonic, with all its fertile farms, its mansion homes, and frequent villages. Somebody has called it the Piedmont of America. I do not know

how just the appellation may be, but I do know that if Piedmont can rightly be called the Berkshire of Europe, it must be a very delightful region.

What we most admire in Berkshire scenery is its freshness, boldness, and variety. Our hills boast no astounding grandeur; there is nothing about them of an Alpine character; they possess few scenes which can properly rank with the sublime. The highest mountain tops, the most precipitous cliffs, — sufficient to claim our admiration, wild enough to be the marvel of tourists from the tame coast country, — cannot, for a moment, compare with similar scenes among the White Mountains, or the Alleghanies — not to mention more unapproachable wonders of Nature. Our deepest ravines, often penetrated by smooth, flower bordered roads, are very different things, indeed, from the earthquake rifted chasms of other lands.

If the traveller seek some object for a day's or a week's wonder, some tremendous cataract or "Heaven piercing Cordillera," he must seek it elsewhere. But if he asks for a retreat among wild and picturesque scenery, adorned by much that is pleasant and refined in his city life, but far removed from its heat and turmoil; where he can draw closer the silken cord of social intercourse, and yet throw loose some of its galling chains; where nature ennobles by her greatness but never chills with a frown, he may find it all amid the varied beauty of the Berkshire Hills.

The inexhaustible variety of our vistas is wonderful. It is marvellous in what an endless series of combinations, mountain, valley, lake, stream, rock, field and wood, present themselves. Wherever you go, you

meet a constant succession of changes which at once charm the eye and delight the heart. At every turn

"You stand suddenly astonished,
You are gladdened unaware."

Through the long Summer months you may seek, and not in vain, some new object, daily, of interest and pleasure. But that you will not do; a few spots will become so dear that, while you revisit them again and again, others of perhaps greater merit will remain neglected.

So profusely has Nature scattered her treasures in this fair land, that it is thought by most, superfluous to search out her more choice and hidden gems. Many of the most unique and beautiful of these remained concealed from those who have passed their lives within a rifle shot of them. The traditions which were once attached to almost all these scenes are also rapidly fading away, with the fading years of grey haired men. "There was a story," I have been often told, "Old Deacon Whitehead used to tell, but he is dead and I have forgotten the details."

To make known some of these hidden retreats of beauty, to revive and preserve a few of these half forgotten traditions, was the design with which these brief pages were commenced. It has been a work of greater difficulty than was anticipated, to procure the necessary information, although now, when it is too late to be of service, much new material is offered. It will not be improper, perhaps, to say here, that during our progress, circumstances have occurred which rendered necessary a slight change in the character originally intended,

and the omission of a great deal of matter, of merely local interest, which was already written.

And now to you, whom I have presumed to call my friends, and for whom this little volume was more especially designed, I commend, for your kindness, what is done. Every page was written with a sympathy for your admiration of this pleasant county, which expanded as it warmed, into personal friendship for yourselves. If I shall point any of you to scenes of Nature's gladness, to which you would otherwise have been strangers; if I shall contribute one moment of happiness to your Summer hours; if I shall hereafter recall more vividly to your mind these rural scenes, when they shall be a little faded, I shall be amply repaid; how much more, if I shall add one pleasant thought to mingle with your own, as you gaze upon the grand, the noble, or the beautiful, in our dear mountain valley.

GODFREY GREYLOCK.

Pittsfield, September, 1852.

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