

FOOTING IT IN FRANCONIA

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Footing it in Franconia by Bradford Torrey

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BRADFORD TORREY

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FOOTING IT IN FRANCONIA

BY
BRADFORD TORREY

"And now each man bestride his hobby, and
dust away his bells to what tune he pleases."

CHARLES LAMB.



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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
AUTUMN	1
SPRING	79
A DAY IN JUNE	120
BERRY-TIME FELICITIES	147
RED LEAF DAYS	177
AMERICAN SKYLARKS	195
A QUIET MORNING	208
IN THE LANDAFF VALLEY	217
A VISIT TO MOUNT AGASSIZ	228

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714

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FOOTING IT IN FRANCONIA

AUTUMN

“There did they dwell,
As happy spirits as were ever seen ;
If but a bird, to keep them company,
Or butterfly safe down, they were, I ween,
As pleased as if the same had been a Maiden-queen.”

WORDSWORTH.

FIVE or six hours of pleasant railway travel, up the course of one river valley after another, — the Merrimac, the Penigewasset, the Baker, the Connecticut, and finally the Ammonoosuc, — not to forget the best hour of all, on the shores of Lake Winnipisaukee, the spacious blue water now lying full in the sun, now half concealed by a fringe of woods, with mountains and hills, Chocorua, Paugus, and the rest, shifting their places beyond it, appearing and disappearing as the train follows the winding track, — five

or six hours of this delightful panoramic journey, and we leave the cars at Littleton. Then a few miles in a carriage up a long, steep hill through a glorious autumn-scented forest, the horses pausing for breath as one water-bar after another is surmounted, and we are at the height of land, where two or three highland farmers have cleared some rocky acres, built houses and painted them, and planted gardens and orchards. As we reach this happy clearing all the mountains stand facing us on the horizon, and below, between us and Lafayette, lies the valley of Franconia, toward which, again through stretches of forest, we rapidly descend. At the bottom of the way Gale River comes dancing to meet us, babbling among its boulders,—more boulders than water at this end of the summer heats,—in its cheerful uphill progress. Its uphill progress, I say, and repeat it; and if any reader disputes the word, then he has never been there and seen the water for himself, or else he is an unfortunate who has lost his child's heart (without which there is no kingdom of heaven for a man), and no longer lives by faith in