

digs him out of his hole. Near Bartlett I was taken to see the skeleton of a bear that had been lately killed. The farmers told me that the racoons do much damage here, by devouring the Indian corn, but the opossum does not extend so far to the north.

On the second day after leaving Conway we entered a wild and narrow mountain pass, with steep declivities on both sides, where the hills can not be less than 1000 or 1500 feet in vertical height. Here the famous landslip, called the Willey Slide, occurred in August, 1826. The avalanche of earth, stones, and trees occurring after heavy rains, was so sudden, that it overwhelmed all the Willey family, nine in number, who would have escaped had they remained in their humble dwelling; for, just above it, the muddy torrent was divided into two branches by a projecting rock. The day after the catastrophe a candle was found on the table of their deserted room, burnt down to the socket, and the Bible lying open beside it.

I was curious to examine the effects of this and other slides of the same date in the White Mountains, to ascertain what effect the passage of mud and heavy stones might have had in furrowing the hard surfaces of bared rocks over which they had passed; it having been a matter of controversy among geologists, how far those straight rectilinear grooves and scratches before alluded to,\* might have been the result of glacial action, or whether they can be accounted for by assuming that deluges of mud and heavy stones have swept over the dry land. A finer opportunity of testing the adequacy of the cause last mentioned can not be conceived than is afforded by these hills; for, in consequence, apparently, of the jointed structure of the rocks and their decomposition produced by great variations of temperature (for they are subjected to intense summer heat and winter's cold in the course of the year), there is always a considerable mass of superficial detritus ready to be detached during very heavy rains, even where the steep slopes are covered with timber. Such avalanches begin from small points, and, after descending a few hundred yards, cut into the mountain side a deep trench, which becomes rapidly broader and deeper, and they bear down before them the loftiest

\* Ante, p. 18.