

---

# SOUTHERN LITERARY MESSENGER.

---

PUBLISHED MONTHLY AT FIVE DOLLARS PER ANNUM—JNO. R. THOMPSON, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

---

VOL. XVI.

RICHMOND, OCTOBER, 1850.

NO. 10.

---

## JUDITH BENSADDI:

### A TALE.

#### CHAPTER V.

#### THE STUDENT'S ACCOUNT OF HIS VISITS TO THE HOUSE MOUNTAIN.

To make my description more intelligible, I shall begin with a general sketch of the Alleghanian region of Virginia.

The Alleghany mountains consist of parallel ridges, casting off short spurs and sometimes long branches, that vary from the general direction; but they always embrace rich valleys watered by clear streams, that either murmur over pebbly beds or dash over rough rocks. To find their mother ocean, they had to break their way through the ridges that run between them and the sea coast. Some of them as the Powhatan or James river, have made several breaches through successive ridges, two thousand feet, more or less, in height.

The line of continued mountain nearest the sea is the Blue Ridge, which beginning in Pennsylvania about the Susquehanna, increases in height, ruggedness and diversity of form, until it stretches its vast length into the Carolinas, where, being joined by the chief Alleghany, it becomes the great father mountain of the system, the huge, wild, prolific source of a thousand rivers, that gather themselves together in the deep valleys, and with their several aggregations of water run brawling and working their ways out in every direction, to seek the common source and depository of all sublunary waters.

Between the Blue Ridge and the North Mountain, lies the Great Valley, my native land, "the loveliest land on the face of the earth." (Here I detected a smile, instantly suppressed, on the faces of my auditors; but not a smile of contempt, I was sure.)

The Valley is full twenty miles wide near the Potomac, but narrows to twelve miles in Rockbridge; where it is infinitely diversified with mountain hill, knoll, slope, vale, dell, ravine, cliff, rift, with every other modification of surface that is named, and that is not named, except plains and lakes, whereof we have none; but we have clear limestone springs, gushing from forest-

crowned hills, and "giving drink to every beast of the field."

Westward of the Great Valley, for many miles the country is composed altogether of high mountains with narrow vales between. But here, and further west, fountains of health flow; a hundred mineral springs of different qualities, with a pure atmosphere, delightful summer weather, shady forests, beauty in the vale and sublimity in the mountain; all combine to invite the invalid for health, and all for pleasure, who love either the charms of nature or the social enjoyments of a watering place. But enough of introduction. Now for the House Mountain.

This short isolated mountain is a conspicuous object in the picturesque landscape of Rockbridge. It stands about six miles west of Lexington, from whose inhabitants it hides the setting sun, and not unfrequently turns the summer showers, that usually come with the west wind. Being separated by deep vales from the North Mountain, and more lofty, it stands like an island of the air, with its huge body and sharp angles to cut the current of the winds asunder. Clouds are often driven against it, cloven in the midst, and carried streaming on to the right and left, with a space of blue sky between, similar in form to the evening shadow of the mountain, when the light of departing day is in like manner cloven. Sometimes, however, a division of the cloud, after passing the town, will come bounding back in a current of air reflected from another mountain. It is not unusual to see a cloud move across the Great Valley in Rockbridge, shedding its contents by the way—strike the Blue Ridge—whirl about, and pursue another course until it is exhausted. The traveller, after the shower is passed, and the clear sunshine has induced him to put away his cloak and umbrella, is surprised by the sudden return of the rain, from the same quarter towards which he had seen it pass away.

What is called the House Mountain, consists in fact of two oblong parallel mountains, connected about midway of their height, and rising upwards of 1500 feet above the surrounding country. The summit ridges are each about a mile long and resemble the roof of a house; the ends terminate in abrupt precipices, and all around huge buttresses, with their bases spread far out into the country, rise up against the sides and taper to points which terminate some hundreds of feet below the summit. These

she fell back on her couch, sobbed a little, and then sank gently to sleep.

As the native vivacity of Judith's feelings made the first tempest of her grief irresistibly violent, so it caused the tempest sooner to spend its force, and to settle down into a comparative calm. Never had I seen such agonizing distress—nay, such frantic desperation of grief as seized her, when the lightning stroke of bereavement fell so terribly upon her. By the morning of the third day, however, she could take some nourishment, and converse with less frequent spasms of anguish. But the effect on her person of the mental suffering and corporeal exhaustion of the last two days, struck a deep impression of sadness upon my heart, whenever I looked at her. Grief had in this short time driven the rosy flush of health from her cheeks, the sparkling radiance from her eyes, the buoyant elasticity from her members, and had left her faded and withered, like a scorched blossom of the desert.

What were my feelings, when I had leisure to reflect that this lovely drooping flower was now under my sole care! And by what a surprising stroke had Divine Providence driven her for shelter to my honor and benevolence! In herself to me the loveliest, she was made by these affecting circumstances, the dearest by far of all earthly beings. My passion, heretofore uncherished in the bud, was thus nourished, expanded, matured, and at the same time refined into the tenderest and most unselfish feeling of fraternal affection. If ever my breast was visited by the pure sentiment and seraphic glow of an angel's love, it was now, when I looked on that countenance, pale with sorrow—remembering how lately it shone with the light of joyous innocence; and comparing its expression then with its present look, so humbly submissive, yet so keenly sorrowful; so smitten, yet so patient and so holy.

On the evening of this day she began to express regret for the inconvenience and trouble that she would cause me to experience. I replied, that if ever in future life I could reflect with unalloyed satisfaction on any of my actions, it would be upon that of restoring her to her friends, whatever it might cost me. How feelingly did she look at me and say—

"The mourner's gratitude will be a poor reward; but the mourner's Heavenly Friend, in whom you have taught me to trust, will not forget such kindness.

I embraced the occasion to consult her about ulterior movements, after we should reach the Chesapeake; asking her to tell me, without reserve, which course would be most agreeable to her; whether I should take her to Rockbridge, until I could prepare to go with her to London; or whether I should take her on straight way to

New York or Boston, and thence home, leaving deficiencies in my outfit to be supplied by the way.

She meditated a little and then replied, that she could now, without scruple, accept my services to any extent that might be necessary; but that she was under no necessity of asking me to go all the way to London; that her brother had arranged with a friend of theirs to meet him in Boston, where he had lately settled, and to embark with him there for England; and that she needed, therefore, to ask no more of my kindness than to go with her to Boston, where that friend would release me from further trouble on her account. She added, that as this great extension of my journey would add much to its expense, and none to that which she and her brother would have incurred, that I would not scruple to use their funds—especially as so unexpected and so large an increase of expenditure might not have been provided for.

"But, (said she in conclusion,) though I would not unnecessarily trouble you to go to London, yet if you ever find occasion to visit that city, I claim that you give me and my friends the opportunity of showing that we remember what it is to deal kindly with a stranger in a foreign land."

Whatever vague desire I may have entertained to conduct her on a visit to my native valley, I acquiesced without hesitation in the obvious propriety of the course that she suggested. The same reason that governed her choice of this route, made it proper also to proceed without delay from Norfolk to Baltimore by water, and thence to Boston, through Philadelphia and New York.

(To be continued.)

## THE HAUNTS OF THE STUDENT.

BY MARGARET JUNKIN.

"Where should the scholar live? In solitude or society? In the green stillness of the country where he can hear the heart of Nature beat, or in the dark, grey city, where he can hear and feel the throbbing heart of man!"

HYPERRION.

When the student sits and ponders  
On the wondrous tomes of yore,  
And his mind, dishearten'd, wanders  
Thro' their wilderness of lore;—

When with energies aweary,  
By their tension overstrained,  
Sad he muses, with a dreary  
Sense of what is unattain'd;—

When the fever'd spirit flutters,  
Restless as a captive bird,  
Conscious that it never utters  
Half the thoughts within it stirred,—

Let him close the misty volume,  
Let him lay aside the pen,  
Till the now disturbing column  
Shall have power to please again.

In his search for buried treasures,  
He the present overlooks ;  
He hath sometimes need of pleasures  
Which he cannot find in books.

Shall he thread the streets where, crowded,  
Sweep the hurrying masses by,—  
Where so many brows are clouded,  
And eye answers not to eye ?

Faunting wealth with gilded graces,—  
Faces young and faces fair,  
Fashion—moulded, till no traces  
Of sweet nature linger there :—

Care with lines upon its forehead,  
Avarice with its stony gaze,  
Want that stalks unhelp'd and horrid,  
Meet him in the thronging ways.

Ah ! there's nothing here to lessen  
Thought, among these eager men,—  
Nothing glad enough to freshen  
Human feelings up again.

Nay, pale scholar ! seek no dwelling  
'Mid this rolling tide of life ;  
Something in thy heart is telling,  
Thou would'st sicken of the strife.

Go where Nature's shadow'd alleys  
Lure thee to a self-repose,—  
Wander thro' the verdant valleys  
Which the haunting zephyr knows.

Stretch thee where green, mossy ledges  
Overhang some murmuring stream ;  
Gazing on the floating sedges  
Will beget no fever-dream.

'Mid the forest whisperings linger,  
Close to Nature as thou art,—  
Near enough to lay thy finger  
On the pulses of her heart !

What a measur'd, gentle beating !  
Good and ill *there* wage no strife :  
Oh ! how different the meeting  
Ebbs and flows of human life !

Turn then, student, from the lessons  
Taught in crowds so passion-whirl'd ;  
Go where thou shalt breathe the essence  
Of a calmer, purer world !

## LITERARY ENTERPRISE.

Literary Enterprise embraces all those exercises of the mind, which have for their aim to improve the faculties, and make them tributary to our happiness, to extend man's dominion over nature, and multiply the outward sources of human enjoyment. It seeks to place, at our disposal, knowledge with its accompanying power, and cultivated minds with the pleasures that flow from developed energies ; and withal to adorn and elevate the character.

With such lofty purpose, it dispenses its beneficial influence upon all classes in society. It enters the palace of the nobleman, and the halo of its presence rivals the richest furniture which gold can purchase of art. It visits the mansion of the citizen, where the happy blending of the useful with the beautiful, and the manifold evidences of good taste and prosperity bespeak the cultivated mind. Nor does it pass by, with neglect, the cheerful cottage. But gives it some classic name, leaves a few volumes of stories and songs, and makes the inmates *there* all the happier by it.

Not only all classes, but all pursuits, are adorned with graces, and armed with powers, furnished by Literary Enterprise. The teacher gains from the literary department of his vocation the charms to throw around the scientific. He unites the agreeable studies with the severe, the elegant with the useful, and thus makes the acquisition of education a delightful task, as when the Belles Lettres and Mathematics are presented together. The humble advocate, whose fortune is his thoughtful brow, takes with a bold hand the treasures of literary enterprise. He flings across his back the full quiver of its chosen arrows, and suspends the true Damascus blade at his girdle, so that he can fight, terribly, in the cause of injured innocence, fasten his adversary to the earth with the well-driven bolt, and cut his client loose from the fetters of the law. Such a man was William Wirt, not more distinguished for his legal, than his literary, attainments. The minister bows in prayer for success to his mission, but, if he would win the heart, and steal away the affections to the altar where he worships, he must borrow his imagery, as well as his doctrines, from the Scriptures, which is a part of this world's best literature, whose author is the Author of all things. Such a man was the late Dr. Chalmers, a profound divine, and a polished scholar.

Not only all classes and all pursuits thus derive much of their vitality. but it is, likewise, the successful ventures of those who have embarked