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T. H. STOCKTON—EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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her voice also exclaiming with that of David: 'O God, thou art my God! When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches. Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.'"

And now, suffer us to commend this holy book to your affectionate regard. Read it prayerfully, attentively, thoroughly; practice its instructions—and when your parents are laid low in the repose of the grave—when the voices, that now cheer you, are hushed—when the gay hopes of life are departed, and the warm impulses of youth have gone—the light of its truths will fall upon your pathway, and the joys of Heaven will dwell within you. To die will then be *to sleep in Jesus*. Blessed are such dead! Thrice blessed! Of all, who thus *sleep in Jesus*, we may well say with the poet, Montgomery:—

"The storm, that wrecks the wintry sky,
No more disturbs their sweet repose,
Than summer evening's latest sigh,
That shuts the rose."

Montgomery, Alabama, November 24th, 1842.

PICTURESQUE NARRATIVES.

SKETCHING AT RICHMOND.

BY REV. THOMAS BLOOMER BALCH.

IN January, 1839, the writer had occasion to cross the Chickahominy on his way to the city of Richmond. The day was intensely cold. The trees were encumbered with snow, and all things brought to mind the Roman Winter, so briefly sketched by Horace; or Winter in Lapland, as it has been evolved from the imagination of Thomson. A few evergreens were still visible about the tomb of nature, but the whole contour of the scene reminded me of what Gray has written of Lombardy, when its mulberry and olive trees were weighed down by icicles. The Chickahominy is not larger than the Rubicon, and yet like the Rubicon, it sends forward its murmurs into the sea of history. But it was no time to muse on its banks. The day called for action rather than pensive meditation, and buckling round me a surtout tipped with fur, a brisk ride carried me in one hour to Churchhill, from which Richmond lay before the sight in its drapery composed of snowy wreaths. We should have preferred seeing it in a vernal dress, and the invocation of Thomson darted into remembrance:

"Come, gentle spring—ethereal mildness come.

Churchhill is a part of the city, but divided from it by a ravine deep enough for the machinations of German robbers or Italian banditti. Looking, however, beyond the ravine, the panorama of Richmond is captivating even on a wintry day. My eye was involuntarily turned to the James: but no vessel was perceptible in the river. Manchester lay within the prospect, near which a bridge clasped the banks of the James, which at another season might have brought to mind the celebrated Ivy bridge that

spans one of the brooks of Devonshire. The capitol—the spires of the churches—seats of opulence—parks—villas—lands—rivulets—all mingled among pine and cedar clumps, burst into view; whilst the smoke of numerous chimnies seemed to curl upward in correspondence with all the spiral beauty which lay below. The following lines of Sir Walter Scott, forcibly occurred at the moment:

“The wanderer’s eye could fully view
That winter heaven’s delicious blue;
So wondrous wild—the whole might seem
The scenery of a fairy dream;”

whilst the imagination at the same time handed over *le tout ensemble* to the tints of the spring, or to the radiance of summer. It was easy to see how the beams of June could dance on the river, or take their pastime on such an unrivalled picture of suburbs—avenue—sylvan homesteads, and of vales chained to the feet of regal hills; or of gardens not inferior to those of Herenhausen, and embellished by roses as cornucopian as those of Herat.

It becomes me here to mention the elegant hospitality of Judge Tucker, in whose dwelling the writer found a home during his stay in the romantic city of Richmond. The Judge is a man of highly cultivated taste, and rich in the rarest powers of conversation. He had a high esteem for the talents of Wirt, and he directed my attention to some points of scenery with graphic minuteness. The writer had often read the *British Spy*; but he concluded to read it again, among objects in the midst of which it was written. The descriptions of Wirt are so true to nature, that my pencil can only follow in the wake of his, and we rejoice in being led by him over nothing but verdant slopes, or among curves where nature winds into the interior of her own furtive charms. The *British Spy* has remarked on the total absence of a mountain prospect to the people of Richmond, and indeed the deficiency is very obvious to a careless beholder, as well as to the connoisseur in scenery. We should not care so much about the color of the mountain. It might be white, like the one of marble which rises in Ross-shire, Scotland; or like those mentioned by Pennant in the Isle of Skye that “glow in fiery red;” or it might be composed of materials as green as the stone of Noxos; or it might be as brown as some highland range; but we should prefer one drawn out in the distance, surmounted by an upland line of blue, and filled even to abundance with grey, and ruby, and dun-colored deer; or one like the Arcadian Mœnalus, covered with sheep; the shade and echo of which have been celebrated on many sylvan reeds. Then might Richmond become the Florence of our country, embosomed amid elevations covered with purple vines, whilst its hills and vallies might respond to the lowing of brindled herds. We should at least be forcibly reminded of Pope’s description of Windsor Forest;

“Here in full light the russet plains extend—
There wrapt in clouds the bluish hills ascend.”

There is no lake about Richmond. We could wish there were one as wide, though not so long as Windermere, or Loch Tay. We would compound for some sheet of water even by surrendering Lawers, Shekhallian, and Benimore, and all the proud barriers of the Perthshire Lake, or the soft and picturesque shores of Derwent, or the wild features of Windermere. It would receive a drapery sufficiently rich by being located any where in

the vicinity of Richmond. And why could not something of the kind be artificially created? It might not be so utilitarian, but it would be more ornamental than a canal. It would be a sort of Virginia Water, and though not in juxtaposition to Windsor Castle, nor decorated by Chinese Chateaus—it would sleep by the side of a river more serpentine than the Thames, and its wooded island would be resorted to by birds of bolder wing, and in more speckled flocks. Permit me farther to ask, why the merchants of Richmond could not take some one of the miniature vales which run among the hills of their city, and weave round its neck and feet the chain of an artificial embellishment? But we will not enter by association the Thesalian Temple, or the Florentine Vallambrosa, or the Persian Cashmere, or Keswick in the shire of Cumberland, or Campan, overhung by the Pyrenees, or that vale of Switzerland which is halved by the River Arve—which unfolds its green carpet beneath the snowy crown of Mont Blanc, and in which Coleridge sung his great Chamouni Hymn, just as the sun had started through it on his wheels of gold.

The annual race of the earth seems to be swifter as we indulge among the charms of polished society, and by this time the earth had reached its vernal goal, and had received some of the incipient buds and violets by which it is wont to be anointed, before putting on a more gorgeous crown, composed of triumphant flowers, and crimson robes, and foliage profoundly emerald hue. The revelation of Richmond in its vernal aspect was grateful to my feelings. James River released from its fetters, began to pass in currents and broken eddies over its rocks—the sound of the Falls became audible at night—the white sails of commerce enlivened the view, and the people seemed to have risen from sepulchres which winter had sealed, but which spring had burst open with a hand soft as velvet, but resistless as thunder. How charming did Richmond then appear! It is a city eminently rural. It is true we fear the inroads of utilitarianism, for utilitarianism under Otho of Bavaria has disfigured even the environs of Athens. We are as jealous of the whole platform of Richmond, as was Shenstone of the Leasowes. We could not but compare its scenery with the enchanting premises of Rosetta—or parts of it to the plain of Dadivan, covered with orange trees—or Tivoli, for it has cascades as picturesque—or Fountain-bleau, for it seems located in a forest—or Versailles, for it has noble aqueducts—or Damascus, for it is as copious in murmuring rivulets. But had we power, we would make Richmond, like Oxford, sacred to learning; and whilst there, could we have got the lamp of Aladin, we should have reared a university, either in its centre or on its purlieus.

But the principal charm of Richmond remains to be stated, and upon a careful analysis it will be found to consist in the mental associations which the place inspires. It not only awakens memory, but the associations of taste and memory cannot be suppressed. The mind welcomes all brilliant reminiscences, nor does it eject the pensive spectres of thought, by which it must be haunted. Only two centuries have elapsed since the settlement of James River, and in two hundred years, event has risen over event, like the Steppes of the Alps. Indian, English, Gallic, and American history meet about Richmond and York Town, like the four streets cut out of rock that lead into the interior of Warwick. The reader will excuse me for dwelling a moment on some of these associations. The mind is apt to escape, as on an electric chain, to the banks of the Thames, fringed as it is with objects of national or literary interest. We care but little for the

castle of Windsor, or Hampton Court, or the old palace of Kew, for they have been the abodes of vulgar greatness. We care not so much for the Tower, where so many Queens, and Dukes, and Earls have sighed at the midnight hour. The mind is not charged with the fleets of the Nore, or even with the tubes of Greenwich, or with stars unseen before which have there rushed into the field of vision from the pavilion of distance. When at Richmond, Lambeth, Fulham, Eton, St. Paul's, Buckingham House, the Waterloo Bridge, the chambers of Parliament, the grey tints of Westminster, are not the objects which engage reflection. Nor is the mind perhaps principally taken up with Richmond Hill, the abode of monarchs; and what is better, the home of Thompson—nor with Twickenham, where Pope refined our language—nor with Strawberry Hill, where Lady Montague planted the superb flowers of Constantinople—nor Hampstead and Highgate, where Coleridge evolved the fruits of philosophy—nor with Stoke, where Gray followed after the windings of the Thames—nor St. Anne's, where Fox pondered the weal or woe of nations. What then? Does the reader propound that question? An answer is ready, and it shall be given in an insulated paragraph.

Gravesend is a port on the Thames, and it holds the ashes of Pochahontas, a Princess of blessed memory. She must ever be the presiding genius of Richmond. A mile below the city stood one of the Wigwams of Powhatan her father—the other being on York River in the County of Gloucester. James River once bore his name, but it was changed as an act of adulation to a pedantic King, and on its beach the old chief was buried. In 1607, when the English arrived, he was the king of thirty tribes. He was doubtless inimical to the whites, and except for his daughter, they would, speaking after the manner of men, have been extirpated. Smith was taken prisoner by Opechancanough in an attempt to explore the Chicahominy, and carried over to the wigwam of Powhatan on York River. Powhatan speedily resolved to put his prisoner to death. We can readily imagine the exultation of the Wigwam, and the wild dance of the Indians. But among the frantic group there is a child twelve years old, whose heart is wrought into sympathy by a celestial power, who rushes to the rescue, and thus becomes an important link in the chain of causes and effects. Nor was this the only occasion on which she saved the colony, but her deeds are familiar to all. They fill the purest chapter in the volume of history, and the most fretted cell in the grottoes of the memory. She was a kind of tawny Shepherdess to a distant and silvery flock, who had come to stray over her own principality, and she unfolded to them her own green meadows and brilliant savannahs. Finally she is taken prisoner—carried to James Town—is there baptised into the Christian faith, marries Rolfe, and in 1616, embarks with Sir Thomas Dale for England. There she became an object of curiosity in the palace of Windsor, and retires to a town on the river Brent, and about to re-embark for her native land, she dies at Gravesend. Is it then extravagant to say that she fills the imagination when musing over her pathetic story? Is it unnatural to forget the hum of London—the strife of politics—the eloquence of Parliament—the Plantagenets and Tudors of England, to revolve awhile her mysterious destiny? Her image seemed continually present during my stay in Richmond. She seemed to stand at every sylvan gate, and to be reflected in every setting sun. When the imagination unfolded its saloons, she entered as a welcome but pensive guest; and amid all its gay and vernal creations, she seemed to

pluck nothing but cypress leaves, and suspend her wampum belt among its golden willows. Child of the Forest! hadst thou been in Wyoming, that hamlet never would have perished, and the tones of that tragic story would never have echoed among the slopes of Parnassus.

It ought to be stated, to the honor of William Wirt, that he tried to rouse the Virginians to the moral importance of rearing some statue or monument to Pochahontas. He was the champion of her memory, and where he failed, we may well despair of success. We highly appreciate the Letters of the Spy. That work in my opinion would have done honor to the reign of Queen Anne, and its Author would have been a fit associate for Gay, Steele, and Addison. He should have been an insulated man of letters; for the Muses love the grove rather than the forum; and yet Wirt was a distinguished barrister. He figured in the trial of Burr, which took place in Richmond, about 1807. What an eventful Life was Burr's! Descended of illustrious ancestry—full of military fire—a barrister of distinction—a Senator in Congress—a Vice President of the United States—the Duellist of Hoboken—an exile from his country—a wanderer in Europe—unnoticed in the metropolis of England, a beggar on the Seine—how can we forget that he was here imprisoned and arraigned; and that here his daughter arrived from her own palm tree shade, and tested her filial fidelity! On this occasion Wirt appeared for the prosecution. Zeno compared logic to the hand when shut, and rhetoric to the same hand when open; and in the very midst of a dry law argument, Wirt suddenly unfolded the palm of eloquence, and dispersed with liberal profusion all the shrubs and flowers of a Blannerhasset's Island. We were surprised that no one during our stay in Richmond expressed even a wish that his remains should be brought to the city. The English denied Milton a burial in Westminster Abbey, though they permitted his name to be written on its wall. The name of Wirt is not even inscribed on the wall of the Capitol, but it is imperishably enrolled on all the rocks of the James—it sparkles in the beams which play on its waterfalls—and it is securely wrapt up among its tufted woods, and among all the folds of its coy and bewitching scenery. In like manner the remains of Byron were sent off to Hucknall Torkard, near Newstead. The writings of Byron were immoral, but when Wirt went down the inclined plane of death, a man of virtue was lost from the arena of life. And if he were the only prose poet to whom the people of Richmond could point, it would be well for them to be possessed of one grave to which they might lead the stranger. Let him sleep amid scenery he loved so well, that the throng of the city, when relaxing from the cares of the day, may say what Collins said of Thompson—

"In yonder grave a Druid lies,
Where slowly winds the stealing wave;
Let Spring's all fragrant buds arise
To deck that Poet's sylvan grave."

Richmond is not famous for antiquities. In the Capitol there is a pistol which belonged to Captain Smith, and a statue of General Washington. The City is rather young for any thing antique. It would aid the imagination were there round about it some castles, as in the Tyrol, overgrown with ivy; or something like Fountain Abbey, near Ripon, in Yorkshire—or Kirkstall, near Leeds—or Waltham, in Essex—or Netley, near Southampton—or Pluscarden, near Elgin—or some Druidical circle, or Egyptian pyramid. The habits of its people are becoming rather too utilitarian for

my taste, and they are beginning to imitate in this respect those who have come among them from New England. Far be it from me, however, to cherish the least prejudice against that part of our country. On the open sea and inland lake, her sons have proudly borne our national standards. They have obtained a foothold on the steeps of science, and have successfully combated the dragon of barbarism, which prevents an ingress to the Hesperian garden of taste. Fisher Ames did not forget his country among the curling shades of death, nor did Ledyard when touching the remotest link in the chain of travel. The harp of Sigourney has been heard among our Western Prairies, and the savannahs of the South. Gurley has toiled from the St. Croix to the St. Mary's, and wears one of the many wreaths which philanthropy has suspended at her goal. In the absence of grey antiquity, the mind takes refuge among a few Indian ruins which are all that remain of Powhatan. He was run down when civilization sounded its horn and began the chase, but still the stag died where he had been first aroused—

Nor did he stain with useless grief
The death-couch of an Indian Chief.

My disappointment was great in not being able to reach James Town during my stay in Richmond. My desire to see it was most intense. It is true we should have seen nothing there but a steeple covered with ivy. The place is given up to the solitary owl. The patriarchs of emigration who first occupied it have long since retired; but the children are rejoicing in vales that rival the ancient Tempe—by rivers better than the Pactolus, and in groves more leafy than Vallambrosa. Education is unfolding its gates—Science its temples—Learning its halls—Agriculture its secrets—Commerce its treasures, and Religion its blessings. With such views the writer left Richmond, cherishing sincere affection for its inhabitants, and respect for all its utilitarian institutions. Of these institutions some account ought to have been given, but they can be reached better by another medium than through the avenue of a sketch intended to be somewhat picturesque. Having ascended Churchhill, my pony wheeled directly round, and thus gave me a last look of Richmond from its centre to the beautiful circle in which it lay as in a state of dreamy and tinted repose.

Ringwood Cottage, Va. March 22, 1843.

SONNET.

A cloud lay cradled near the setting sun,
A gleam of crimson tinged its braided snow;
Long had I watched the glory moving on,
O'er the still radiance of the lake below:
Tranquil its spirit seemed, and floated slow,
E'en in its very motion there was rest,
While every breath of eve that chanced to blow,
Wafted the traveller to the beauteous west.
Emblem, methought, of the departed soul,
To whose white robe the gleam of bliss is given,
And by the breath of mercy made to roll
Right onward to the golden gates of heaven,
Where to the eye of faith it peaceful lies,
And tells to man his glorious destinies.

WILSON.