

**THE LIFE AND
LETTERS OF MRS.
EMILY C. JUDSON**

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The life and letters of Mrs. Emily C. Judson by A. C. Kendrick

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A. C. KENDRICK

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THE LIFE AND LETTERS

OF

MRS. EMILY C. JUDSON.

BY

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PROFESSOR OF GREEK LITERATURE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF
ROCHESTER.



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Preface.

It is with unfeigned diffidence that the writer commits this work to the public. A man writing the memoir of a woman—a digger among Greek roots writing the life of a sensitive child of genius and song—a not very intimate acquaintance delineating a character to which the most thorough knowledge could hardly do justice—constitutes a triad of difficulties which he can scarcely hope to have overcome. The author undertook the work reluctantly, and he will be abundantly satisfied if it shall make upon the mind of the reader that impression of the rare excellence of its subject which the study of her life and letters has left upon his own.

Mrs Judson was a very voluminous correspondent, and the selection from her letters, often of very nearly equal merit, was a matter of considerable difficulty. Sometimes, doubtless, the selection might have been made more wisely, and many have been omitted which, with larger limits, he would gladly have inserted. The reader should remember that Mrs Judson's letters were written amidst the pressing duties of a very busy life; often from a sick bed; often when her brain was overtasked, and well nigh exhausted, by the drafts for the press; and her letters, therefore, could be hardly expected to be always a fair measure of her intellectual

powers. Still they will not, I think, be found unworthy of her reputation.

The true lover of poetry will not, I trust, complain of the number of her poetical pieces inserted in the memoir, for most of these are such as will always find a welcome, and they will, in fact, enhance very considerably the interest of the volume. My chief apology, however, for inserting them is, that they belong in a pre-eminent degree to her life. They grow directly out of the critical passages of her history, and they at once illustrate her feelings amidst these scenes, and derive from the circumstances under which they were written fresh force and beauty. They come from her heart more than from her intellect; they belong to her life even more than to her works.

In parting with the work, I would express my gratitude to the family and personal friends of Mrs Judson, who have furnished valuable materials. To Rev. Dr Bright, I am under very peculiar obligations for his patient kindness in listening to the reading of my manuscript during the hot month of August, and for the important information and numerous valuable suggestions by which he has improved the work. With this I submit it to the public, earnestly hoping that it may subserve the great cause to which Mrs Judson's life was devoted.

CHAPTER I.

ALDERBROOK.

"The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend:
Nor shall she fail to see,
Even in the motions of the storm,
Grace that shall mould the maiden's form,
By silent sympathy.

"The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place,
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty, born of murmuring sound,
Shall pass into her face."

ABOUT thirty miles south from Utica, in Central New York, on the head waters of the Chenango River, and at the head of the charming valley which follows the windings of that stream in its picturesque course to the Susquehanna, lies Hamilton, one of the most beautiful interior villages of the State, and the seat of the literary and theological institution known as Madison University. Here the parents of Mrs Emily C. Judson spent nearly the last twenty years of their lives; here Mrs Judson was married; and hither she finally came back to die. Bordering Hamilton on the south east, lies the broken and hilly township of Brookfield; to the south west a considerable range of hills separates it from the neat and

thriving village of Eaton, four miles distant. North of this latter place, in the same town, lies the somewhat larger village of Morrisville. North east of Morrisville is the small settlement of Pratt's Hollow, or Prattsville; Smithfield, with its pleasant village of Peterboro', joins it on the north; and about ten miles west, on one of our lovely little inland lakes, is Cazenovia, the seat of a flourishing institution of learning, founded by the Methodists. These, and many other villages lying in Madison county, dot the surface of an elevated and broken, but picturesquely diversified, and not unfruitful region—a region where winter holds a long and rigorous sway, but which blooms into varied and most attractive loveliness under the balmy influence of summer.

About a mile and a half south of Eaton village, the road passes through a sequestered and narrow valley, where nestles in the hill side a small dwelling, known to the readers of Fanny Forester's sketches as Underhill Cottage. The road which now winds at its foot formerly ran above it, so that the roof of the cottage scarcely rose above its level, and you did in truth feel half disposed "to step from the road where you stood to the tip of the chimney," that peeped out from its verdurous shelter. For a description of the cottage as it was and is, I must send the reader to Miss Forester's faithful portraiture. Embosomed in trees and shrubbery, the clematis wreathing itself about the humble portico; the wild vine and the eglantine clambering over the windows and the roof; the myrtle and the roses blending their green and fragrance, it amply justifies her description, and realizes our ideal of a thoroughly rural residence. At some distance below, through the bottom of the valley, wound a small streamlet, fringed with alders, while beyond rises a range

of hills, covered partly with forests, partly with wild briars—the whole forming a scene of romantic loveliness such as might have inspired the pen that portrayed the scenery of the "Lady of the Lake." This spot—the cottage, the brook, the valley, the hills which embosom them—the pen of genius has consecrated to the world as Alderbrook. Some of the accessories to the picture, Emily, with a romancer's license, borrowed from the neighbouring village of Morrisville, and her use of the term stretches over a somewhat fluctuating territory. But all the actual elements of the scene she has delineated with equal spirit and fidelity.

I said the streamlet wound—not winds—through the valley beneath the cottage; for that, within a few years, has become a thing of the past. The ruthless march of improvement has invaded these sacred precincts; the clang of machinery breaks the stillness of the secluded valley; its broad tributary expanse of water now rolls over the little brook and its fringe of green; and Alderbrook, touched by the magic of genius, is "Alderbrook," indeed, still, and for ever—but it is alder-brook no longer. Thus does the remorseless touch of enterprise brush away the golden hues of the ideal. So it is to be; and in an age when omnibuses thunder by the olive garden of Plato, when the steam-whistle startles the hoary centuries that look down from the summits of the Pyramids, and threatens the sacred solitudes of Olivet and Tabor, so humble a bit of romance as Alderbrook may not hope to escape unprofaned. But the true "hallowed ground" of earth is in the human heart; the consecrated spots of genius, driven from the dusty and noontide glare of the actual, live inviolate in the haunted realm, the "dim, religious light" of the imagination.