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## **Picturesque America; or, the land we live in**

a delineation by pen and pencil of the mountains, rivers, lakes, forests, water-falls, shores, cañons, valleys, cities, and other picturesque features of our country ; with illustrations on steel and wood, by eminent American artists

**Bryant, William Cullen**

**New York, 1874**

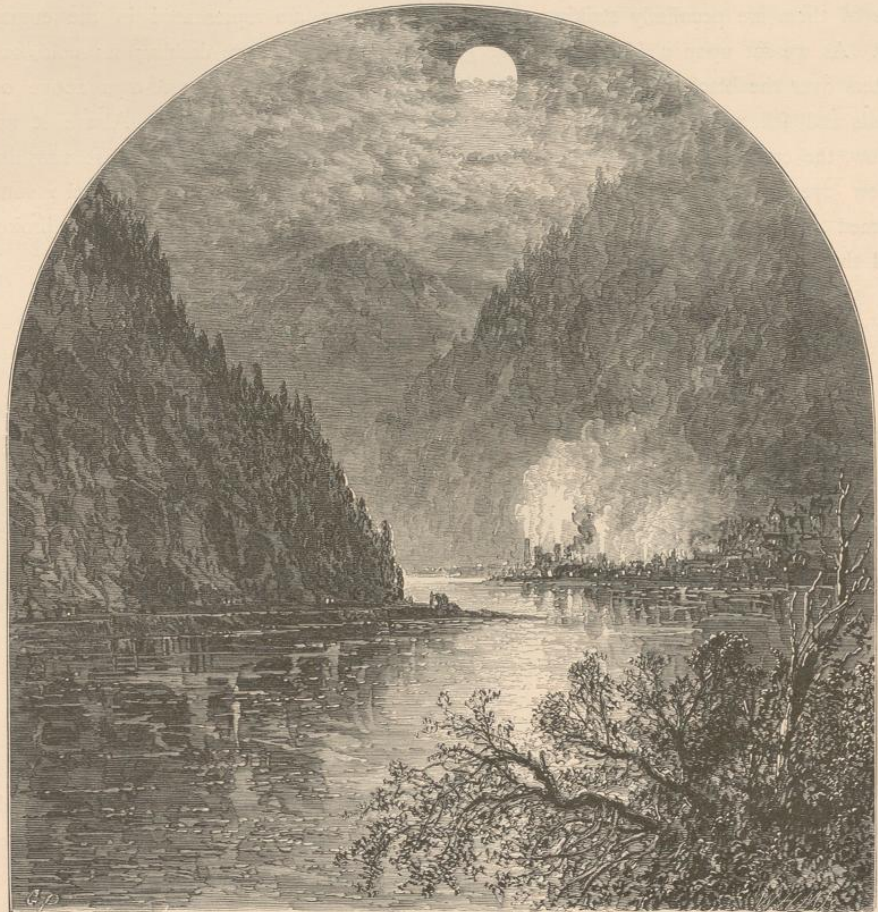
The Juniata.

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## THE JUNIATA.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY GRANVILLE PERKINS.

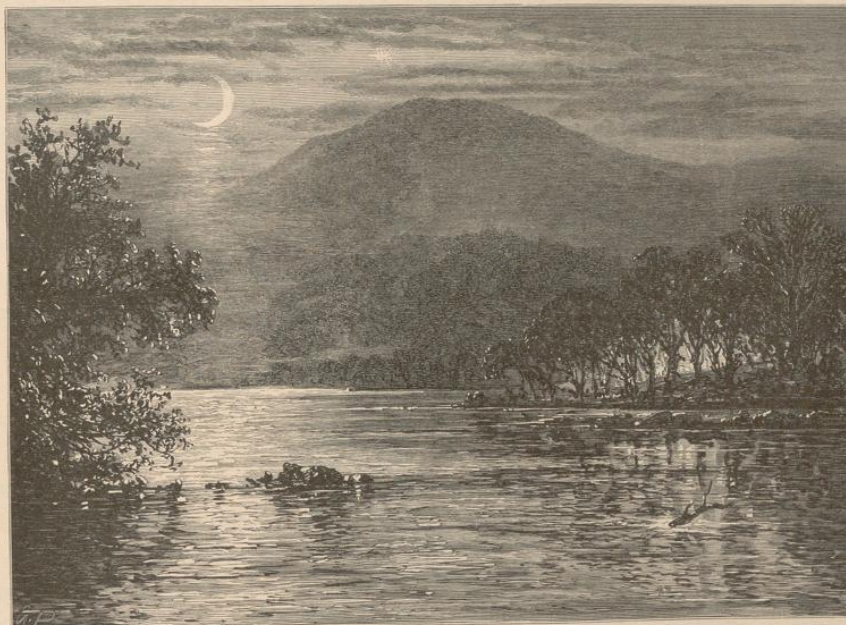


Duncannon, Mouth of the Juniata.

**A**MERICANS are but too apt to rank their rivers by their size, and almost refuse to believe that a stream can be exceedingly lovely that does not flow, at the least, a thousand miles or so. Such a work as the present will go far to remove this way of thinking, since the scenes depicted of many rivers will enable the world to compare and contrast them more accurately; and the comparison will assuredly award the palm of loveliness to the smaller streams.



The Juniata is a tributary—a mountain-tributary—of the far-famed Susquehanna; and though its short life begins at a point beyond Clearfield, and ends at Duncannon—a distance of one hundred and fifty miles—yet does it present many scenes of entrancing beauty. It falls into the Susquehanna, about a mile from the last-named place, in a site that deserves certainly to have been the theme of poets' song, and the inspiration of the artist's brush. The village of Duncannon is built at the base of numerous foot-hills which lie crouching beneath the colossal mountain-forms that rise to a height of several thousand feet into the blue air. It is a curious fact that these foot-hills are not from

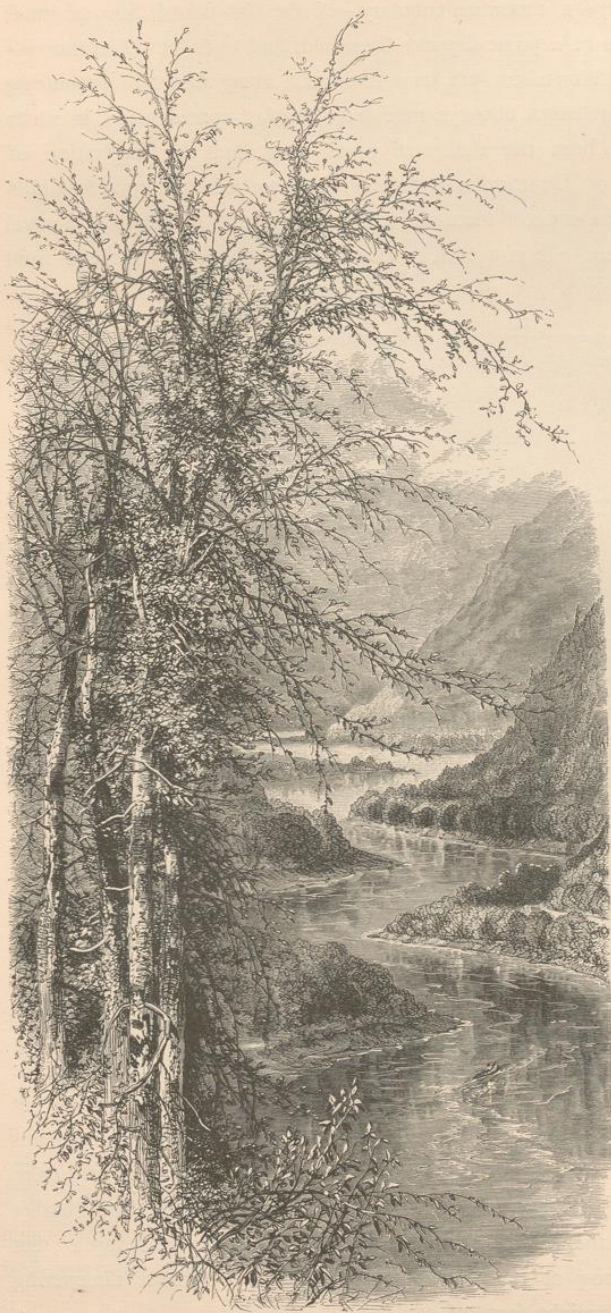


Night-Scene on the Juniata, near Perryville.

the detritus and washing away of the mountains above; for the former have a limestone substance, and the latter are of sandstone. Hence the foot-hills are not only fertile, but singularly adapted for raising wheat, and for the cultivation of the vine. The mountains are covered from base to summit with a luxuriant growth of forest-trees, mostly oaks, chestnuts, hickories, pecans, and other hard woods. As one ascends higher and higher into the mountain-region where the Juniata takes its birth, pines and spruces appear; but at Duncannon one may look long at the masses of superb foliage without discovering the dark-green leafage and the upright form of a pine.

Ascending one of the foot-hills, covered with high, waving corn, the spectator obtains





Windings of the Juniata, near Perryville.

a noble view of the Susquehanna and its lovely tributary. The first river is quite broad here, and pours a brown, whelming flood, nearly a mile wide, in the direction of Harrisburg, though the manner in which the mountains put their heads together, as one looks backward, renders its course entirely problematical. Looking opposite from the Duncannon foot-hill, there lies in full outline a superb mountain, at whose base runs the Northern Central Railway of Pennsylvania, and the canal, which formerly belonged to the State, but has since become the property of the Pennsylvania road. This mountain, like the others, is densely wooded; but there are places where its sides are bare, and show a mass of small, broken rocks, approaching shale, which would entirely destroy any beauty in these mountain-forms. The kindly mantle of green foliage which Nature has given them is an absolute necessity as regards the picturesque, though, as a consequence, the eye in vain looks for the sheer descent and the bold, rug-



ged outlines which make mountain scenery sublime. Here, on the contrary, every thing has a gentle slope, and one often sees a succession of wooded terraces mounting upward into the air. The manner in which these enormous masses of tree-coverings arrest and detain the blue particles of air has won for them the appellation of Blue Mountains, though geographically they are known as the Kittatinny. Beyond this mountain rises up another of still grander majesty; and just between them is the bridge over which the teams of the canal-boats cross from the Susquehanna to accompany the Juniata. At this point, therefore, the waters meet. The mouth of the Juniata is not very broad, and seems quite narrow when compared with the flood of her big sister; but her stream is much deeper, and her waters of a deep blue. The poets of the locality love to write about the blue Juniata, and speak of it as the gently-gliding stream. In summer-time, no doubt, this name is appropriate; but from the hill of observation above Duncannon one can see the remains of four stone piers—all that is left of the bridge that spanned the Juniata at this point. Regularly every spring, when the snows melt and the ice piles up in masses, the Juniata sweeps away her bridges as if they were feathers, and comes rushing into the Susquehanna with a wealth of blue water that materially changes the color of the big, brown stream. At Harrisburg they know, by the color of the stream that rushes past, when the waters come from the Juniata; and they mutter about lively times down Huntingdon way. There is a broad, bold curve of land on the left bank of the Juniata, which hides all but its mouth from observation; but the Susquehanna can be seen wandering among the foot-hills, and swelling out like a lake in various places.

Following the bank of the blue Juniata, side by side with the canal, one is for a few miles, at first, in a level country. The stream is not broad, but tolerably deep, and abounding in fish, which rise every moment at the flies that hover over the placid surface. Between here and Perryville the river is full of beautiful islands, covered with trees whose branches sweep down to the ground and often hide the bank. With the branches are interlaced wild-vines, with huge leaves; and between them the golden-rod, and the big yellow daisy, and the large-leaved fern, make their appearance. In the low parts of these islands there are beautiful mosses, and a species of water-grass which becomes a deep orange in circular patches. Some of these islands are quite large, comparatively speaking; and one can spy, through the crossed and entangled branches, the glimmer of white dresses, and the glancing of fair faces, belonging to a picnicking party, or perhaps to folks going a-berrying, who, having filled their baskets, have been romantic enough to eat their lunch on the Moss Islands.

Approaching Perryville, the foot-hills disappear, and the bright glimpse of champaign country vanishes. The mountains are once more upon us, looming up into the clear sky like giants. They are on both sides, and in front likewise. On the right there is one huge, solid wall, with hardly an irregularity or a break along the crest, which is





Moss Islands, in the Juniata.

straight as a piece of masonry. On the left the mountains are strung along like a chain of gigantic agates. Each seems to be triangular, and between each is a ravine, where there are not only tall trees, but also fine slopes of high grass. There are deer in there, and there are black bears on the summit; but, to see them, one must live on a farm on



the mountain-side, and be one of the sons of the mountain. The *feræ naturæ* do not love the scream of the steam-whistle, and abide far away on the long slopes of the sides, which we do not see, for we are now skirting the bases of their triangular fronts. Nine-tenths of those who pass them never dream how far back these mountains extend; and, indeed, it is somewhat difficult for any one to keep in his head the multi-form appearances of the same mountain as viewed from various sides. At night-time, when there is a full moon, the river near Perryville is exceedingly grand—the solemn stillness of the hour; the lapping sound of the gentle water; the whisper of the wind among the trees, that seems more like the falling of a distant cascade than the rustling of leaf on leaf, and the chafing of bough against bough. When the wind rises, then the voices of the mountain speak; and a storm of groans, shrieks, and mutterings, is loosened. Voices of command, of entreaty, threats, muffled or rising high, are borne upon the air; and it seems as if the murky night were being peopled with an invisible creation, with voices that were formless, but had souls that spoke through the endless modulations of sound.

But if the approach to Perryville be most beautiful by night, it is not so beyond. For the great wall sinks behind a line of detached mountains here which come sloping down to the river in long capes and promontories, covered by a profusion of many-hued foliage. On the left bank, the mountains still show their bold fronts, and the stream, forced around the capes on the one side, has worn similar indentations on the other, presenting a most beautiful appearance. The most picturesque part of this lovely region is after we pass the little village of Mexico; and it may be noted here that the nomenclature of the whole place is ridiculous beyond comparison, the pretty names being all cribbed from Ireland, and the others having no meaning or relationship whatever. It is difficult to say whether the river is finer looking forward or looking back. Perhaps looking forward is the best, if one can leave out of the perspective a wretched mountain called Slip Hill, which, having been deprived by the wood-cutters of its forest-mantle, has ever since taken to rolling stones down its great slope, and presents a hideously forlorn appearance. It is covered from apex to base with a mass of small, flat stones, like scales, and about every half-hour there is a movement, and a miniature land-slip goes gliding into the river. As the stones are quite small, the river sends them along, but they have materially changed the bed in places, and made the stream quite shallow. If this unfortunate bit can be hidden, the view is the perfection of the picturesque. It does not amount to sublimity, for the hills are not bold enough for that. But the curves of the stream are so graceful, and the slopes of the mountains covered with green so grand, that the imagination is charmed and the feelings softened.

The next point along the line of the Juniata is one where the river sinks into a very subordinate position, indeed. The hills on both sides, that have hitherto been so amiable, suddenly break off, and the great wall comes into view on the right hand, while





Narrows near Lewistown.

on the left we get the side of a mountain instead of its front. On both banks the hills are remarkably steep, and they approach so closely together as to confine the little river within extremely narrow bounds. For seven miles and a half this imprisonment lasts; and here, perhaps, the mountains show their grandest forms. The bases are often crag-



like, showing huge masses of stone that seem to hang on to the side without any definite support, and threaten momentarily to come down upon one's head. The summits in a few instances have castellated forms, and beguile the eye with momentary impressions of battlements, from which the wild-cherry or the vine flings itself to the breeze like a banner. Unfortunately, these spots are rare, but the general character of the scenery is much bolder than in other places. It is astonishing how the mist clings here, and how resolutely the sun is combated. The bright luminary has to be quite high in the



The Forks of the Juniata, near Huntingdon.

heavens before his rays can surmount the barriers which Nature has planted against the sunlight. Slowly the masses of white mist rise like smoke, clinging to the sides of the hills in great strata. When the sun reaches down to the surface of the river, the mists have disappeared, but there are tiny spirals, like wreaths of smoke, which dance upon the water, and remain for many minutes. At length all is clear, and the blue firmament smiles down upon us, the golden clouds sail over us, and the sun beams beneficently down. In the twinkling of an eye the mists have marshalled their hosts, and the whole







scene—sky, mountains, and river—is blotted out. Then the battle has to be fought again. Once more the sunbeams triumph, and the beaten vapor clings for protection to the sides of the hills, and the maids of the mist dance upon the waters. But all is not yet over, and the contest often is waged until far in the day, when the sun's triumph becomes lasting. As the entrance into the Narrows was sudden, so the exit is abrupt. One wanders along the tow-path of the canal looking up at the mountains, and wondering how much nearer they intend to come, and whether they are going to act like the iron shroud, and close in and crush us utterly, when, *presto!* the Juniata makes a bold fling to the right, and we find ourselves in Lewistown, with the mountains behind us and a pleasant valley smiling welcome in our front.

Between Lewistown and Huntingdon the scenery is extremely beautiful; but to describe it would be simply a repetition of the phrases applied to Perryville, where the curves of the river are so lovely. But the mountains are decidedly bolder, and the river becomes wilder, and curves in such a multitudinous fashion as to make frequent bridging absolutely necessary. One of the chief charms of this route may perhaps be in the fact that, on the right-hand side, there are two ranges—one always like a Titanic wall, the other a broken line of skirmishers. As one advances higher and higher into the mountain-region, the pines begin to show on the sides of the great cones of sandstone like a shaggy fringe, and the masses of rock are larger and more picturesque. At Huntingdon the hills retire, and leave a pleasant level. Here the Juniata forks, the larger but less picturesque fork striking southward toward Hollidaysburg, and the smaller branch, known as the Little Juniata, going west in the direction of Tyrone. The canal and the Pennsylvania Railroad, which hitherto have faithfully run side by side along the Juniata, now separate also, the canal going with the big branch and the railway with the little one. In consequence of this separation there are many bridges at Huntingdon, and the place looks quite picturesque with its background of mountains and its wandering streams. But henceforth the Juniata ceases to be a river, both branches being just trout-streams, and nothing more. And, what is still more cruel, the Little Juniata loses its beautiful blue color, because it flows through a mining-region, and the miners will persist in washing their ore in its clear wave.

After we leave Huntingdon we are in the mountains altogether. Various creeks join the Little Juniata, which winds so that it has to be bridged every three or four miles. At the junction of Spruce Creek, the mountains on the left, which have been shouldering us for some time back, suddenly hurl a huge barrier over our path in the shape of Tussey's Mountain—a great turtle-backed monster, several thousand feet high. The wall on the right hand closes in at the same time, so that there is no resource left but a tunnel, which, however, is not a very long one. We are now seven miles from Tyrone, the centre of the mountains, and the pines are quite thick. The hills that lie at the base of the mountains show pleasant farm-houses and deep-green-leaved corn. The





SINKING RUN, ABOVE TYRONE.



mountains show us now their fronts and now their bases, but are never out of sight, and at intervals come right up to us. At Tyrone they look as if they had been cleft asunder, for there is a great gap cut between two mountains. This in times past was doubtless the work of the Juniata, and was not so difficult as it looks; for the shaly mountains are very different from the firm limestone, through which the Kanata cuts its way at Trenton Falls. On the right hand, however, the hard sandstone shows for a considerable space, and affords all the stone of which the bridges in the neighborhood are built. Tyrone is built in quite a considerable valley. The mountains open out for some distance to the eastward and to the westward. But north and south they hang on with the persistence of bull-dogs. The river in the olden times must have swelled to a lake here, and cut the gap through the line of mountains that stretch north and south, being aided by countless creeks and nameless streams. Bald-Eagle Creek joins the river here, and, in spring-time, the plain in front of the gap is one stretch of water. The town is built away from the Juniata, and rises in terraces along the Bald-Eagle Creek, the foot-hills being highly cultivated. There is quite a wealth of pine on these mountains, though it is all second growth, every hard-wood tree having been cut down to supply charcoal for the Tyrone forges, which originated the city, though now it is a centre for the mountain railroads. The scenery around is decidedly Alpine in character; and some of the roads made for the lumber business traverse regions of savage beauty. Thunder-storms are of daily occurrence up in these heights, and luckless is the stranger wight who trusts to his umbrella; for the winds will turn it inside out, and will propel it forward, dragging its reluctant owner to the brink of precipices, and, after giving him chills of terror, will at length drag it from his grasp, and leave him umbrellaless, exposed to the pelting storm. The curious thing about these storms is, that one does not last five minutes, and the sun is out and drying one's habiliments long before such a thing could be hoped for. But the clouds whirl about the mountains so furiously that one is sure to be caught several times, and the writer was wetted to the skin three distinct times when descending Sinking-Run Hill, a mountain about six miles from Tyrone. The view presented by the artist is taken from an old road now discontinued for lumber travel, which starts from the side of the mountain, about half-way up, and descends circuitously to the base of the opposite mountain. Wild-cherries and whortle-berries grow in abundance, and the route is shaded by pines and hickories, while an occasional spruce-tree adds variety to the foliage. The waters of the run are agreeable to drink, though impregnated by sand. In the spring of the year the mountains are one blaze of rhododendron blossoms. Then is the time to visit them if one is not afraid of wet feet; for the waters are then out in every direction and tiny runs of water trickle across the road everywhere.