# ФРЕДЕРИК МАРРИЕТ

# DIARY IN AMERICA, SERIES TWO

# Фредерик Марриет
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*Diary in America, Series Two:*

# Содержание

# Frederick Marryat
# Diary in America, Series Two

## Volume One—Chapter One

### Travelling

I believe that the remarks of a traveller in any country not his own, let his work be ever so trifling or badly written, will point out some peculiarity which will have escaped the notice of those who were born and reside in that country, unless they happen to be natives of that portion of it in which the circumstance alluded to was observed. It is a fact that no one knows his own country; from assuetude and, perhaps, from the feelings of regard which we naturally have for our native land, we pass over what nevertheless does not escape the eye of a foreigner. Indeed, from the consciousness that we can always see such and such objects of interest whenever we please, we very often procrastinate until we never see them at all. I knew an old gentleman who having always resided in London, every year declared his intention of seeing the Tower of London with its Curiosities. He renewed this declaration every year, put it off until the next, and has since left the world without having ever put his intention into execution.

That the Americans would cavil at portions of the first part of my work, I was fully convinced, and as there are many observations quite new to most of them, they are by them considered to be false; but the United States, as I have before observed, comprehend an immense extent of territory, with a population running from a state of refinement down to one of positive barbarism; and although the Americans travel much, they travel the well beaten paths, in which that which is peculiar is not so likely to meet the eye or even the ear. It does not, therefore, follow that because what I remark is new to many of them, that therefore it is false. The inhabitants of the cities in the United States, (and it is those who principally visit this country), know as little of what is passing in Arkansas and Alabama as a cockney does of the manners and customs of Guernsey, Jersey, and the Isle of Man.

The other day, one American lady observed that, "it was too bad of Captain Marryat to assert that ladies in America carried pigtail in their work-boxes to present to the gentlemen;" adding, "I never heard or saw such a thing in all my life." Very possible; and had I stated that at New York, Philadelphia, Boston, or Charleston, such was the practice, she then might have been justifiably indignant. But I have been very particular in my localities, both in justice to myself and the Americans, and if they will be content to confine their animadversions to the observations upon the State to which they belong, or my general observations upon the country and government, I shall then be

content; if, on the contrary, their natural vanity will not allow any remarks to be made upon the peculiarities of one portion of society without considering them as a reflection upon the whole of the Union, all I can say is that they must, and will be annoyed.

The answer made to the lady who was "wrathy" about the pigtail was, "Captain M has stated it to be a custom in one State. Have you ever been in that State?"

"No, I have not," replied the lady, "but I have never heard of it." So then, on a vast continent, extending almost from the Poles to the Equator, because one individual, one mere mite of creation among the millions (who are but a fraction of the population which the country will support), has not heard of what passes thousands of miles from her abode, therefore it cannot be true! Instead of cavilling, let the American read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest all that I have already said, and all that I intend to say in these volumes; and although the work was not written for them, but for my own countrymen, they will find that I have done them friendly service.

There is much comprehended in the simple word "travelling" which heads this chapter, and it is by no means an unimportant subject, as the degree of civilisation of a country, and many important peculiarities, bearing strongly upon the state of society, are to be gathered from the high road, and the variety of entertainment for man and horse; and I think that my remarks on this subject will throw as much light upon American society as will be found in any chapter which I have written.

In a country abounding as America does with rivers and railroads, and where locomotion by steam, wherever it can be applied, supersedes every other means of conveyance, it is not to be expected that the roads will be remarkably good; they are, however, in consequence of the excellent arrangements of the townships and counties, in the Eastern States, as good, and much better, than could be expected. The great objection to them is that they are not levelled, but follow the undulations of the country, so that you have a variety of short, steep ascents and descents which are very trying to the carriage-springs and very fatiguing to the traveller. Of course in a new country you must expect to fall in with the delightful varieties of *Corduroy*, etcetera, but wherever the country is settled, and the population sufficient to pay the expense, the roads in America may be said to be as good as under circumstances could possibly be expected. There are one or two roads, I believe, not more, which are government roads; but, in general, the expense of the roads is defrayed by the States.

But, before I enter into any remarks upon the various modes of travelling in America, it may be as well to say a few words upon the horses, which are remarkably good in the United States: they appear to be more hardy, and have much better hoofs, than ours in England; throwing a shoe therefore is not of the same consequence as it is with us, for a horse will go twenty miles afterwards with little injury. In Virginia and Kentucky the horses are almost all thorough-bred, and from the best English stock.—The distances run in racing are much longer than ours, and speed

without bottom is useless.

The Americans are very fond of fast trotting horses; I do not refer to rackers, as they term horses that trot before and gallop behind, but fair trotters, and they certainly have a description of horse that we could not easily match in England. At New York, the Third Avenue, as they term it, is the general rendezvous, I once went out there mounted upon Paul Pry, who was once considered the fastest horse in America; at his full speed he performed a mile in two minutes and thirty seconds, equal to twenty-four miles per hour. He took me at this devil of a pace as far as Hell Gate; not wishing "to intrude," I pulled up there, and went home again. A pair of horses in harness were pointed out to me who could perform the mile in two minutes fifty seconds. They use here light four-wheeled vehicles which they call wagons, with a seat in the front for two persons and room for your luggage behind; and in these wagons, with a pair of horses, they think nothing of trotting them seventy or eighty miles in a day, at the speed of twelve miles an hour; I have seen the horses come in, and they did not appear to suffer from the fatigue. You seldom see a horse bent forward, but they are all daisy cutters.

The gentlemen of New York give very high prices for fast horses; 1,000 dollars is not by any means an uncommon price. In a country where time is every thing, they put a proportionate value upon speed. Paul Pry is a tall grey horse (now thirteen years old); to look at, he would not fetch 10 pounds,—the English omnibuses would refuse him.

Talking about omnibuses, those of New York, and the other cities in America, are as good and as well regulated as those of Paris; the larger ones have four horses. Not only their omnibuses, but their hackney coaches are very superior to those in London; the latter are as clean as private carriages; and with the former there is no swearing, no dislocating the arms of poor females, hauling them from one omnibus to the other,—but civility without servility.

The American stage-coaches are such as experience has found out to be most suitable to the American roads, and you have not ridden in them five miles before you long for the delightful springing of four horses upon the level roads of England. They are something between an English stage[1] and a French diligence,

[1] Miss Martineau in her work speaks of that most *delightful* of all conveyances—an American stage-coach; but Miss M is so very peculiar in her ideas, that I am surprised at nothing that she says. I will, however, quote the Reverend Mr Reid against her:—"I had no sooner begun to enter the coach than splash went my foot in mud and water. I exclaimed with surprise. 'Soon be dry, sir,' was the reply; while he withdrew the light; that I might not explore the cause of complaint. The fact was, that the vehicle, like the hotel and steam-boat, was not water-tight, and the rain had found an entrance. There was, indeed, in this coach, as in most others, a provision in the bottom, of holes, to let off both water and dirt; but here the dirt had become mud, and thickened about the orifices, so as to prevent escape. I found I was the only passenger; the morning was damp and chilly; the state of the coach added to the sensation; and I eagerly looked about for some means of protection. I drew up the wooden windows; out of five small panes of glass in the sashes three were broken. I endeavoured to secure the curtains; two of them had most of the ties broken, and flapped in one's face. There was no help in the coach, so I looked to myself. I made the best use I could of my garments, and put myself as snugly as I could in the corner of a stage meant to accommodate nine persons. My situation just then was not among the most cheerful. I could see nothing;

built with all the panels open, on account of the excessive heat of the summer months. In wet weather these panels are covered with leather aprons, which are fixed on with battons, a very insufficient protection in the winter, as the wind blows through the intermediate spaces, whistling into your ears, and rendering it more piercing than if all was open. Moreover, they are no protection against the rain or snow, both of which find their way in to you. The coach has three seats, to receive nine passengers; those on the middle seat leaning back upon a strong and broad leather brace, which runs across. This is very disagreeable, as the centre passengers, when the panels are closed, deprive the others of the light and air from the windows. But the most disagreeable feeling arises from the body of the coach not being upon springs, but hung upon leather braces running under it and supporting it on each side; and when the roads are bad, or you ascend or rapidly descend the pitches (as they term short hills) the motion is very similar to that of being tossed in a blanket, often throwing you up to the top of the coach, so as to flatten your hat—if not your head.

The drivers are very skilful, although they are generally young men—indeed often mere boys—for they soon better themselves as they advance in life. Very often they drive six in hand; and if you are upset, it is generally more the fault of the road than of the

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every where I could feel the wind drawn in upon me; and as for sounds I had the calls of the driver, the screeching of the wheels, and the song of the bull-frog for my entertainment."—Rev. Mr Reid's Tour, vol. I, page 100.—Very delightful, indeed!

driver. I was upset twice in one half hour when I was travelling in the winter time; but the snow was very deep at the time, and no one thinks anything of an upset in America. More serious accidents do, however, sometimes happen. When I was in New Hampshire, a neglected bridge broke down, and precipitated coach, horses, and passengers into a torrent which flowed into the Connecticut river. Some of the passengers were drowned. Those who were saved, sued the township and recovered damages; but these mischances must be expected in a new country. The great annoyance of these public conveyances is, that neither the proprietor or driver consider themselves the servants of the public; a stage-coach is a speculation by which as much money is to be made as possible by the proprietors; and as the driver never expects or demands a fee from the passengers, they or their comforts are no concern of his. The proprietors do not consider that they are bound to keep faith with the public, nor do they care about any complaints.

The stages which run from Cincinnati to the eastward are very much interfered with when the Ohio river is full of water, as the travellers prefer the steam-boats; but the very moment that the water is so low on the Ohio that the steam-boats cannot ascend the river up to Wheeling, double the price is demanded by the proprietors of the coaches. They are quite regardless as to the opinion or good-will of the public; they do not care for either, all they want is their money, and they are perfectly indifferent whether you break your neck or not. The great evil arising from

this state of hostility, as you may almost call it, is the disregard of life which renders travelling so dangerous in America. You are completely at the mercy of the drivers, who are, generally speaking, very good-tempered, but sometimes quite the contrary; and I have often been amused with the scenes which have taken place between them and the passengers. As for myself, when the weather permitted it, I invariably went outside, which the Americans seldom do, and was always very good friends with the drivers. They are full of local information, and often very amusing. There is, however, a great difference in the behaviour of the drivers of the mails, and coaches which are *timed* by the post-office, and others which are not. If beyond his time, the driver is mulcted by the proprietors; and when dollars are in the question, there is an end to all urbanity and civility.

A gentleman of my acquaintance was in a mail which was behind time, and the driver was proceeding at such a furious pace that one jerk threw a lady to the top of the coach, and the teeth of her comb entering her head, she fainted with pain. The passengers called out to the driver to stop. "What for?" "That last jerk has struck the lady, and she has fainted." "Oh, that's all! Well, I reckon I'll give her another jerk, which will bring her to again." Strange to say, he prophesied right; the next jerk was very violent, and the lady recovered her senses.

Mr E, an employé of the American government, was travelling in the state of Indiana—the passengers had slept at an inn, and the coach was ready at the door, but Mr E had not quite finished

his toilet; the driver dispatched the bar-keeper for him, and Mr E sent word he would be down immediately.

"What is he about?" said the driver impatiently to the bar-keeper when he came down again.

"Cleaning his teeth."

"*Cleaning his teeth*!" roared the driver, indignantly; "by the —," and away went the horses at a gallop, leaving Mr E behind.

The other passengers remonstrated, but without avail; they told him that Mr E was charged with government despatches—he didn't care; at last, one of them offered him a dollar if he would go back. They had proceeded more than a mile before the offer was made; the man immediately wheeled his horses round, and returned to the inn.

The Rev. Mr Reid gives an anecdote very characteristic of American stage-coach travelling, and proving how little the convenience of the public is cared for.

"When we stopped at Lowell to change horses, a female wished to secure a place onward. We were already, as the phrase is, more than full; we had nine persons, and two children, which are made to go for nothing, except in the way-bill. Our saucy driver opened the door, and addressing two men, who, with us, would have been outside passengers—'now, I say, I want one of you to ride with me, and let a lady have your seat.' The men felt they were addressed by a superior, but kept their places. 'Come, I say,' he continued, 'you shall have a good buffalo and *umbrel*, and nothing will hurt you.' Still they kept their places, and refused

him. His lordship was offended, and ready to lay hands on one of them; but, checking himself, exclaimed, 'Well, if I can't get you out, hang it if I'll take you on till one of you gets out.' And there we stood for some time; and he gained his point at last, and in civiller terms, by persuading the persons on the middle seat to receive the lady; so that we had now twelve inside."

I once myself was in a stage-coach, and found that the window glasses had been taken out; I mentioned this to the driver, as it rained in very fast—"Well, now," replied he, "I reckon you'd better ax the proprietors; my business is to drive the coach." And that was all the comfort I could procure. As for speaking to them about stopping, or driving slow, it is considered as an unwarrantable interference.

I recollect an Englishman at New York telling me, that when in the Eastern States, he had expressed a wish to go a little faster —"Oh," said the driver, "you do, do you; well, wait a moment, and I'll go faster than you like." The fellow drove very slow where the road was good; but as soon as he came to a bad piece, he put his horses to the gallop, and, as my friend said, they were so tossed and tumbled about, that they hardly knew where they were. "Is that fast enough, Mister," said the driver, leering in at the couch window.

As for stopping, they will stop to talk to any one on the road about the price of the markets, the news, or any thing else; and the same accommodation is cheerfully given to any passenger who has any business to transact on the way. The Americans are

accustomed to it, and the passengers never raise any objections. There is a spirit of accommodation, arising from their natural good temper[2].

I was once in a coach when the driver pulled up, and entered a small house on the road side; after he had been there some time, as it was not an inn, I expressed my wonder what he was about. "I guess I can tell you," said a man who was standing by the coach, and overheard me; "there's a pretty girl in that house, and he's doing a bit of courting, I expect." Such was the fact: the passengers laughed, and waited for him very patiently. He remained about three-quarters of an hour, and then came out. The time was no doubt to him very short; but to us it appeared rather tedious.

Mrs Jamieson, in her last work, says: "One dark night, I remember, as the sleet and rain were falling fast, and our Extra was slowly dragged by wretched brutes of horses through what seemed to me 'Sloughs of Despond,' some package ill stowed on the roof, which in the American stages presents no resting-place for man or box, fell off. The driver alighted to fish it out of the mud. As there was some delay, a gentleman seated opposite to me put his head out of window to inquire the cause; to whom the

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[2] This spirit of accommodation produces what would at first appear to be rudeness, but is not intended for it. When you travel, or indeed when walking the streets in the Western country, if you have a cigar in your mouth, a man will come up—"Beg pardon, stranger," and whips your cigar out of your mouth, lights his own, and then returns yours. I thought it rather cool at first, but as I found it was the practice, I invariably did the same whenever I needed a light.

driver's voice replied, in an angry tone, 'I say, you mister, don't you sit jabbering there; but lend a hand to heave these things aboard!' To my surprise, the gentleman did not appear struck by the insolence of this summons, but immediately jumped out and rendered his assistance. This is merely the *manner* of the people. The driver intended no insolence, nor was it taken as such; and my fellow-travellers could not help laughing at my surprise."

I have mentioned these little anecdotes, as they may amuse the reader; but it must be understood that, generally speaking, the drivers are very good-natured and obliging, and the passengers very accommodating to each other, and submitting with a good grace to what cannot be ameliorated.

# Volume One—Chapter Two

## Travelling

In making my observations upon the rail-road and steam-boat travelling in the United States, I shall point out some facts with which the reader must be made acquainted. The Americans are a restless, locomotive people: whether for business or pleasure, they are ever on the move in their own country, and they move in masses. There is but one conveyance, it may be said, for every class of people, the coach, rail-road, or steam-boat, as well as most of the hotels, being open to all; the consequence is that the society is very much mixed—the millionaire, the well-educated woman of the highest rank, the senator, the member of Congress, the farmer, the emigrant, the swindler, and the pick-pocket, are all liable to meet together in the same vehicle of conveyance. Some conventional rules were therefore necessary, and those rules have been made by public opinion—a power to which all must submit in America. The one most important, and without which it would be impossible to travel in such a gregarious way, is an universal deference and civility shewn to the women, who may in consequence travel without protection all over the United States without the least chance of annoyance or insult. This

deference paid to the sex is highly creditable to the Americans; it exists from one end of the Union to the other; indeed, in the Southern and more lawless States, it is even more chivalric than in the more settled. Let a female be ever so indifferently clad, whatever her appearance may be, still it is sufficient that she is a female; she has the first accommodation, and until she has it, no man will think of himself. But this deference is not only shewn in travelling, but in every instance. An English lady told me, that wishing to be present at the inauguration of Mr Van Buren, by some mistake, she and her daughters alighted from the carriage at the wrong entrance, and in attempting to force their way through a dense crowd were nearly crushed to death. This was perceived, and the word was given—'make room for the ladies.' The whole crowd, as if by one simultaneous effort, compressed itself to the right and left, locking themselves together to meet the enormous pressure, and made a wide lane, through which they passed with ease and comfort. "It reminded me of the Israelites passing through the Red Sea with the wall of waters on each side of them," observed the lady. "In any other country we must have been crushed to death."

When I was on board one of the steam-boats, an American asked one of the ladies to what she would like to be helped. She replied, to some turkey, which was within reach, and off of which a passenger had just cut the wing and transferred it to his own plate. The American who had received the lady's wishes, immediately pounced with his fork upon the wing of the turkey

and carried it off to the young lady's plate; the only explanation given, "a *lady, Sir*!" was immediately admitted as sufficient.

The authority of the captain of a steam-boat is never disputed; if it were, the offender would be landed on the beach. I was on board of a steam-boat when, at tea time, a young man sat down with his hat on.

"*You* are in the company of ladies, sir," observed the captain very civilly, "and I must request you to take your hat off."

"Are you the captain of the boat?" observed the young man, in a sulky tone.

"Yes, sir, I am."

"Well, then, I suppose I must," growled the passenger, as he obeyed.

But if the stewards, who are men of colour, were to attempt to enforce the order, they would meet with such a rebuff as I have myself heard given.

"If it's the captain's orders, let the captain come and give them. I'm not going to obey a *Nigger* like you."

Perhaps it is owing to this deference to the sex that you will observe that the Americans almost invariably put on their best clothes when they travel; such is the case whatever may be the cause; and the ladies in America, travelling or not, are always well, if not expensively dressed. They don't all swap bonnets as the two young ladies did in the stage-coach in Vermont.

But, notwithstanding the decorum so well preserved as I have mentioned, there are some annoyances to be met with

from gregarious travelling. One is, that occasionally a family of interesting young citizens who are suffering from the whooping-cough, small-pox, or any other complaint, are brought on board, in consequence of the medical gentlemen having recommended change of air. Of course the other children, or even adults, may take the infection, but they are not refused admittance upon such trifling grounds; the profits of the steam boat must not be interfered with.

Of all travelling, I think that by railroad the most intriguing, especially in America. After a certain time the constant coughing of the locomotive, the dazzling of the vision from the rapidity with which objects are passed, the sparks and ashes which fly in your face and on your clothes become very annoying; your only consolation is the speed with which you are passing over the ground.

The railroads in America are not so well made as in England, and are therefore more dangerous; but it must be remembered that at present nothing is made in America but to last a certain time; they go to the exact expense considered necessary and no further, they know that in twenty years they will be better able to spend twenty dollars than one now. The great object is to obtain quick returns for the outlay, and, except in few instances, durability or permanency is not thought of. One great cause of disasters is, that the railroads are not fenced on the sides, so as to keep the cattle off them, and it appears as if the cattle who range the woods are very partial to take their naps on the roads,

probably from their being drier than the other portions of the soil. It is impossible to say how many cows have been cut into atoms by the trains in America, but the frequent accidents arising from these causes has occasioned the Americans to invent a sort of shovel, attached to the front of the locomotive, which takes up a cow, tossing her off right or left. At every fifteen miles of the rail-roads there are refreshment rooms; the cars stop, all the doors are thrown open, and out rush the passengers like boys out of school, and crowd round the tables to solace themselves with pies, patties, cakes, hard-boiled eggs, ham, custards, and a variety of railroad luxuries, too numerous to mention. The bell rings for departure, in they all hurry with their hands and mouths full, and off they go again, until the next stopping place induces them to relieve the monotony of the journey by masticating without being hungry.

The Utica railroad is the best in the United States. The general average of speed is from fourteen to sixteen miles an hour; but on the Utica they go much faster.[3] A gentleman narrated to me a singular specimen of the ruling passion which he witnessed on an occasion when the rail-cars were thrown off the road, and nearly one hundred people killed, or injured in a greater or less degree.

On the side of the road lay a man with his leg so severely fractured, that the bone had been forced through the skin, and

[3] The railroads finished in America in 1835 amounted in length to 1,600 miles; those in progress, and not yet complete, to 1,270 miles more. The canals completed were in length 2,500 miles, unfinished 687 miles.

projected outside his trowsers. Over him hung his wife, with the utmost solicitude, the blood running down from a severe cut received on her head, and kneeling by his side was his sister, who was also much injured. The poor women were lamenting over him, and thinking nothing of their own hurts; and he, it appears, was also thinking nothing about his injury, but only lamenting the delay which would be occasioned by it.

"Oh! my dear, dear Isaac, what can be done with your leg?" exclaimed the wife in the deepest distress.

"What will become of my leg!" cried the man. "What's to become of my business, I should like to know?"

"Oh! dear brother," said the other female, "don't think about your business now; think of getting cured."

"Think of getting cured—I must think how the bills are to be met, and I not there to take them up. They will be presented as sure as I lie here."

"Oh! never mind the bills, dear husband—think of your precious leg."

"Not mind the bills! but I must mind the bills—my credit will be ruined."

"Not when they know what has happened, brother. Oh! dear, dear—that leg, that leg."

"D—n the leg; what's to become of my business," groaned the man, falling on his back from excess of pain.

Now this was a specimen of true commercial spirit. If this man had not been nailed to the desk, he might have been a hero.

I shall conclude this chapter with an extract from an American author, which will give some idea of the indifference as to loss of life in the United States.

"Every now and then is a tale of railroad disaster in some part of the country, at inclined planes, or intersecting points, or by running off the track, making splinters of the cars, and of men's bones; and locomotives have been known to encounter, head to head, like two rams fighting. A little while previous to the writing of these lines, a locomotive and tender shot down the inclined plain at Philadelphia, like a falling star. A woman, with two legs broken by this accident, was put into an omnibus, to be carried to the hospital, but the driver, in his speculations, coolly replied to a man, who asked why he did not go on?—that he was waiting for a *full load*."

# Volume One—Chapter Three

## Travelling

The most general, the most rapid, the most agreeable, and, at the same time, the most dangerous, of American travelling is by steam boats. It will be as well to give the reader an idea of the extent of this navigation by putting before him the lengths of some of the principal rivers in the United States.

| | Miles. |
|---|---|
| Missouri and Mississippi | 4490 |
| Do. to its junction with the Mississippi | 3181 |
| Mississippi proper, to its junction with the Missouri | 1600 |
| Do. to the Gulf of Mexico | 2910 |
| Arkansas River, a branch of the Mississippi | 2170 |
| St. Lawrence River, including the Lakes | 2075 |
| Platte River, a branch of the Missouri | 1600 |
| Red River, a branch of the Mississippi | 1500 |
| Ohio River, Do. Do. | 1372 |
| Columbia River, empties into the Pacific Ocean, | 1315 |
| Kansas River, a branch of the Missouri | 1200 |
| Yellowstone Do. Do. | 1100 |
| Tennessee Do. Ohio | 756 |
| Alabama River, empties into the Gulf of Mexico | 575 |
| Cumberland River, a branch of the Ohio | 570 |
| Susquehanna River, empties into Chesapeake Bay | 460 |
| Illinois River, a branch of the Mississippi | 430 |
| Appalachicola River, empties into the Gulf of Mexico | 425 |
| St. John's River, New Brunswick, rises in Maine | 415 |
| Connecticut River, empties into Long Island Sound | 410 |
| Wabash River, a branch of the Ohio | 360 |
| Delaware River, empties into the Atlantic Ocean | 355 |

Voice from America.

Many of the largest of these rivers are at present running through deserts—others possess but a scanty population on their banks; but, as the west fills up, they will be teeming with life, and the harvest of industry will freight many more hundreds of vessels than those which at present disturb their waters.

The Americans have an idea that they are very far ahead of us in steam navigation, a great error which I could not persuade them of. In the first place, their machinery is not by any means equal to ours; in the next, they have no sea-going steam vessels, which after all is the great desideratum of steam navigation. Even in the number and tonnage of their mercantile steam vessels they are not equal to us, as I shall presently show, nor have they yet arrived to that security in steam navigation which we have.

The return of vessels belonging to the Mercantile Steam Marine of Great Britain, made by the Commissioners on the Report of steam-vessel accidents in 1839, is, number of vessels, 810; tonnage, 157,840; horse power, 63,250.

Mr Levi Woodbury's Report to Congress in December, 1838, states the number of American steam vessels to be 800, and the tonnage to be 155,473; horse power, 57,019.

It is but fair to state, that the Americans have the credit of having sent the first steam vessel across the Atlantic. In 1819, a steam vessel, built at New York, crossed from Savannah to Liverpool in twenty-six days.

The number of *sea-going* steam vessels in England is *two hundred and eighty-two*, while in the United States they have not more than ten at the outside calculation. In the size of our vessels also we are far superior to them. I here insert a table, shewing the dimensions of our largest vessels, as given in the Report to the House of Commons, and another of the largest American vessels collected from the Report of Mr Levi Woodbury to Congress.

*Table shewing some of the Dimensions of the Hull and Machinery of the five largest ships yet built or building.*

(Table to be added in a later edition.)

But the point on which we are so vastly superior to the Americans, is in our steam vessels of war. They have but one in the United States, named the Fulton the Second. The following is a list of those belonging to the Government of Great Britain, with their tonnage:—

| | Tons. | | Tons. | | Tons. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Acheron | 722 | Fearless | 165 | Myrtle | 116 |
| Adder | 237 | Firebrand | 495 | Otter | 237 |
| Advice | 475 | Fire Fly | 550 | Phoenix | 809 |
| African | 295 | Flamer | 496 | Pigmy | 230 |
| Alban | 294 | Fury | 166 | Pike | 112 |
| Ariel | 149 | Gleaner | 306 | Pluto | 365 |
| Asp | 112 | Gorgon | 1111 | Prospero | 244 |
| Avon | 361 | Hecate | 815 | Redwing | 139 |
| Beaver | 128 | Hecla | 815 | Radamanthus | 813 |
| Blazer | 527 | Hermes | 716 | Salamander | 818 |
| Boxer | 159 | Hydra | 818 | Shearwater | 343 |
| Carron | 294 | Jasper | 230 | Spitfire | 553 |
| Charon | 125 | Kite | 300 | Sprightly | 234 |
| Columbia | 360 | Lightning | 296 | Strombolo | 966 |
| Comet | 238 | Lucifer | 387 | Swallow | 133 |
| Confiance | 295 | Medea | 835 | Tartarus | 523 |
| Cuckoo | 234 | Medusa | 889 | Urgent | 583 |
| Cyclops | 1190 | Megaera | 717 | Vesuvius | 966 |
| Dasher | 260 | Merlin | 889 | Volcano | 720 |
| Dee | 704 | Messenger | 733 | Widgeon | 164 |
| Doterel | 723 | Meteor | 296 | Wildfire | 186 |
| Echo | 298 | Monkey | 211 | Zephyr | 237 |

Government Steam Vessels Building.

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alecto | 799 | Lizard | 282 | Polyphemus | 799 |
| Ardent | 799 | Locust | 282 | Prometheus | 799 |
| Dover | Iron | Medina | 889 | | |

I trust that the above statement will satisfy the Americans that we are ahead of them in steam navigation. In consequence of their isolation, and having no means of comparison with other countries, the Americans see only their own progress, and seem to have forgotten that other nations advance as well as themselves. They appear to imagine that while they are going ahead all others are standing still: forgetting that England with her immense resources is much more likely to surpass them than to be left behind.

We must now examine the question of the proportionate security in steam boat travelling in the two countries. The following table, extracted from the Report of the Commissioners on Steam boat Accidents, will show the casualties which have occurred in this country in *ten* years.

Abstract of ninety-two Accidents. Table not included.

The principal portion of this loss of life has been occasioned by vessels having been built for *sale*, and not sea-worthy; an

occurrence too common, I am afraid, in both countries.

The author of "A Voice from America" states the list of steamboat disasters, on the waters of the United States, for *twelve months* out of the years 1837-38, by bursting of boilers, burning, wrecks, etcetera, besides numerous others of less consequence, comprehends the total loss of eight vessels and *one thousand and eighty lives*.

So that we have in England, loss in ten years, 634; one year, 63.

In America, loss in one year, 1,080.

The report of Mr Woodbury to Congress is imperfect, which is not to be wondered at, as it is almost impossible to arrive at the truth; there is, however, much to be gleaned from it. He states that, since the employment of steam vessels in the United States, 1,300 have been built, and of them *two hundred and sixty* have been lost by accidents.

The greatest loss of life by collision and sinking, was in the Monmouth, (Indians transporting to the West), in 1837, by which three hundred lives were lost; Oronoka, by explosion, by which one hundred and thirty or more lives were lost and Moselle, at Cincinnati, by which from one hundred to one hundred and twenty lives were lost.

The greatest loss by shipwreck was in the case of the Home, on the coast of South Carolina, when one hundred lives were lost; the greatest by fire, the Ben Sherrod, in 1837, by which one hundred and thirty perished.

The three great casualties which occurred during my stay in America, were those of the Ben Sherrod, by fire; the Home, by wreck; and the Moselle, by explosion: and as I have authentic details of them, by Americans who were on board, or eye-witnesses, I shall lay them before my readers. The reader will observe that there is a great difference in the loss of life mentioned in Mr Woodbury's report and in the statements of those who were present. I shall hereafter state why I consider the latter as the more correct.

## Loss of the Ben Sherrod, by a Passenger

"On Sunday morning, the 6th of May 1837, the steam-boat Ben Sherrod, under the command of Captain Castleman, was preparing to leave the levée at New Orleans. She was thronged with passengers. Many a beautiful and interesting woman that morning was busy in arranging the little things incident to travelling, and they all looked forward with high and certain hope to the end of their journey. Little innocent children played about in the cabin, and would run to the guards—the *guards* of an American steam-boat are an extension of the deck on each side, beyond the paddle boxes, which gives great width for stowage—now and then, to wonder, in infantine language, at the next boat, or the water, or something else that drew their attention. "Oh, look here, Henry—I don't like that boat, Lexington."—"I wish I was going by her," said Henry, musingly. The men too were

urgent in their arrangements of the trunks, and getting on board sundry articles which a ten days' passage rendered necessary. In fine all seemed hope, and joy, and certainty.

"The cabin of the Ben Sherrod was on the upper deck, but narrow in proportion to her build, for she was what is technically called a Tennessee cotton boat. To those who have never seen a cotton boat loaded, it is a wondrous sight. The bales are piled up from the lower guards wherever there is a cranny until they reach above the second deck, room being merely left for passengers to walk outside the cabin. You have regular alleys left amid the cotton in order to pass about on the first deck. Such is a cotton boat carrying from 1,500 to 2,000 bales.

"The Ben's finish and accommodation of the cabin was by no means such as would begin to compare with the regular passenger boats. It being late in the season, and but few large steamers being in port in consequence of the severity of the times, the Ben Sherrod got an undue number of passengers, otherwise she would have been avoided, for her accommodations were not enticing. She had a heavy freight on board, and several horses and carriages on the forecastle. The build of the Ben Sherrod was heavy, her timbers being of the largest size.

"The morning was clear and sultry—so much so, that umbrellas were necessary to ward off the sun. It was a curious sight to see the hundreds of citizens hurrying on board to leave letters, and to see them coming away. When a steamboat is going off on the Southern and Western waters, the

excitement is fully equal to that attendant upon the departure of a Liverpool packet. About ten o'clock AM the ill-fated steamer pushed off upon the turbid current of the Mississippi, as a swan upon the waters. In a few minutes she was under way, tossing high in air, bright and snowy clouds of steam at every half revolution of her engine. Talk not of your northern steam-boats! A Mississippi steamer of seven hundred tons burthen, with adequate machinery, is one of the sublimities of poetry. For thousands of miles that great body forces its way through a desolate country, against an almost restless current, and all the evidence you have of the immense power exerted, is brought home to your senses by the everlasting and majestic burst of exertion from her escapement pipe, and the ceaseless stroke of the paddle wheels. In the dead of night, when amid the swamps on either side, your noble vessel winds her upward way—when not a soul is seen on board but the officer on deck—when nought is heard but the clang of the fire-doors amid the hoarse coughing of the engine, imagination yields to the vastness of the ideas thus excited in your mind, and if you have a soul that makes you a man, you cannot help feeling strongly alive to the mightiness of art in contrast with the mightiness of nature. Such a scene, and hundreds such have I realised, with an intensity that cannot be described, always made me a better man than before. I never could tire of the steam-boat navigation of the Mississippi.

"On Tuesday evening, the 9th of May 1837, the steam-boat Prairie, on her way to St. Louis, bore hard upon the Sherrod. It

was necessary for the latter to stop at Fort Adams, during which the Prairie passed her. Great vexation was manifested by some of the passengers, that the Prairie should get to Natchez first. This subject formed the theme of conversation for two or three hours, the captain assuring them that he would beat her *any how*. The Prairie is a very fast boat, and under equal chances could have beaten the Sherrod. So soon as the business was transacted at Fort Adams, for which she stopped, orders were given to the men to keep up their fires to the extent. It was now a little after 11 p.m. The captain retired to his berth, with his clothes on, and left the deck in charge of an officer. During the evening a barrel of whisky had been turned out, and permission given to the hands to do as they pleased. As may be supposed, they drew upon the barrel quite liberally. It is the custom on all boats to furnish the firemen with liquor, though a difference exists as to the mode. But it is due to the many worthy captains now on the Mississippi, to state that the practice of furnishing spirits is gradually dying away, and where they are given, it is only done in moderation.

"As the Sherrod passed on above Fort Adams towards the mouth of the Homochitta, the wood piled up in the front of the furnaces several times caught fire, and was once or twice imperfectly extinguished by the drunken hands. It must be understood by those of my readers who have never seen a western steamboat, that the boilers are entirely above the first deck, and that when the fires are well kept up for any length of time, the heat is almost insupportable. Were it not for the draft occasioned

by the speed of the boat it would be very difficult to attend the fires. As the boat was booming along through the water close in-shore, for, in ascending the river, boats go as close as they can to avoid the current, a negro on the beach called out to the fireman that the wood was on fire. The reply was, "Go to h —l, and mind your own business," from some half intoxicated hand. "Oh, massa," answered the negro, "if you don't take care, you will be in h—l before I will." On, on, on went the boat at a tremendous rate, quivering and trembling in all her length at every revolution of the wheels. The steam was heated so fast, that it continued to escape through the safety valve, and by its sharp singing, told a tale that every prudent captain would have understood. As the vessel rounded the bar that makes off from the Homochitta, being compelled to stand out into the middle of the river in consequence, the fire was discovered. It was about one o'clock in the morning. A passenger had got up previously, and was standing on the boiler deck, when to his astonishment, the fire broke out from the pile of wood. A little presence of mind, and a set of men unintoxicated, could have saved the boat. The passenger seized a bucket, and was about to plunge it overboard for water, when he found it locked. An instant more, and the fire increased in volumes. The captain was now awaked. He saw that the fire had seized the deck. He ran aft, and announced the ill-tidings. No sooner were the words out of his mouth, than the shrieks of mothers, sisters, and babes, resounded through the hitherto silent cabin in the wildest confusion. Men

were aroused from their dreaming cots to experience the hot air of the approaching fire. The pilot, being elevated on the hurricane deck, at the instant of perceiving the flames, put the head of the boat shoreward. She had scarcely got under good way in that direction, than the tiller ropes were burnt asunder. Two miles at least, from the land, the vessel took a sheer, and, borne upon by the current, made several revolutions, until she struck off across the river. A (sand) bar brought her up for the moment.

"The flames had now extended fore and aft. At the first alarm several deck passengers had got in the yawl that hung suspended by the davits. A cabin passenger, endowed with some degree of courage and presence of mind, expostulated with them, and did all he could to save the boats for the ladies. 'Twas useless. One got out his knife and cut away the forward tackle. The next instant and they were all, to the number of twenty or more, launched onto the angry waters. They were seen no more.

"The boat being lowered from the other end, filled and was useless. Now came the trying moment. Hundreds leaped from the burning wreck into the waters. Mothers were seen standing on the guards with hair dishevelled, praying for help. The dear little innocents clung to the side of their mothers and with their tiny hands beat away the burning flames. Sisters calling out to their brothers in unearthly voices—'Save me, oh save me, brother!'—wives crying to their husbands to save their children, in total forgetfulness of themselves,—every second or two a desperate plunge of some poor victim falling on the appalled ear,—the

dashing to and fro of the horses on the forecastle, groaning audibly from pain of the devouring element—the continued puffing of the engine, for it still continued to go, the screaming mother who had leaped overboard in the desperation of the moment with her only child,—the flames mounting to the sky with the rapidity of lightning,—shall I ever forget that scene —that hour of horror and alarm! Never, were I to live till the memory should forget all else that ever came to the senses. The short half hour that separated and plunged into eternity two human beings has been so burnt into the memory that even now I think of it more than half the day.

"I was swimming to the shore with all my might, endeavoured to sustain a mother and her child. She sank twice, and yet I bore her on. My strength failed me. The babe was nothing—a mere cork. 'Go, go,' said the brave mother, 'save my child, save my —' and she sank, to rise no more. Nerved by the resolution of that woman, I reached the shore in safety. The babe I saved. Ere I had reached the beach, the Sherrod had swung off the bar, and was floating down, the engine having ceased running. In every direction heads dotted the surface of the river. The burning wreck now wore a new, and still more awful appearance. Mothers were seen clinging, with the last hope to the blazing timbers, and dropping off one by one. The screams had ceased. A sullen silence rested over the devoted vessel. The flames became tired of their destructive work.

"While I sat dripping and overcome upon the beach, a steam

boat, the Columbus, came in sight, and bore for the wreck. It seemed like one last ray of hope gleaming across the dead gloom of that night. Several wretches were saved. And still another, the Statesman, came in sight. More, more were saved.

"A moment *to me* had only elapsed, when high in the heavens the cinders flew, and the country was lighted all round. Still another boat came booming on. I was happy that more help had come. After an exchange of words with the Columbus, the captain continued on his way under full steam. Oh, how my heart sank within me! The waves created by his boat sent many a poor mortal to his long, long home. A being by the name of Dougherty was the captain of that merciless boat. Long may he be remembered!

"My hands were burnt, and now I began to experience severe pain. The scene before me—the loss of my two sisters and brother, whom I had missed in the confusion, all had steeled my heart. I could not weep—I could not sigh. The cries of the babe at my side were nothing to me.

"Again—another explosion! and the waters closed slowly and sullenly over the scene of disaster and death. Darkness resumed her sway, and the stillness was only interrupted by the distant efforts of the Columbus and Statesman in their laudable exertions to save human life.

"Captain Castleman lost, I believe, a father and child. Some argue, this is punishment enough. No, it is not. He had the lives of hundreds under his charge. He was careless of his trust; he was

guilty of a crime that nothing will ever wipe out. The bodies of two hundred victims are crying out from the depth of the father of waters for vengeance. Neither society nor law will give it. His punishment is yet to come. May I never meet him!

"I could tell of scenes of horror that would rouse the indignation of a stoic; but I have done. As to myself, I could tell you much to excite your interest. It was more than three weeks after the occurrence before I ever shed a tear. All the fountains of sympathy had been dried up, and my heart was as stone. As I lay on my bed the twenty-fourth day after, tears, salt tears, came to my relief, and I felt the loss of my sisters and brother more deeply than ever. Peace be to their spirits! they found a watery grave.

"In the course of all human events, scenes of misery will occur. But where they rise from sheer carelessness, it requires more than christian fortitude to forgive the being who is in fault. I repeat, may I never meet Captain Castleman or Captain Dougherty!

"I shall follow this tale of woe by some strictures on the mode of building steam-boats in the west, and show that human life has been jeopardised by the demoniac spirit of speculation, cheating and roguery. The fate of the Ben Sherrod shall be my text."

It will be seen from this narrative, that the loss of the vessel was occasioned by racing with another boat, a frequent practice on the Mississippi. That people should run such risk, will appear strange but if any of my readers had ever been on board of a steam vessel in a race, they would not be surprised; the

excitement produced by it is the most powerful that can be conceived—I have myself experienced it, and can answer for the truth of it. At first, the feeling of danger predominates, and many of the passengers beg the captain to desist: but he cannot bear to be passed by, and left astern. As the race continues, so do they all warm up, until even those who, most aware of the danger, were at first most afraid, are to be seen standing over the very boilers, shouting, huzzaing, and stimulating the fireman to blow them up; the very danger gives an unwonted interest to the scene; and females, as well as men, would never be persuaded to cry out, "Hold, enough!"

Another proof of the disregard of human life is here given in the fact of one steam-boat passing by and rendering no assistance to the drowning wretches; nay, it was positively related to me by one who was in the water, that the blows of the paddles of this steam-boat sent down many who otherwise might have been saved.

When I was on the Lakes, the wood which was piled close to the fire-place caught fire. It was of no consequence, as it happened, for it being a well-regulated boat, the fire was soon extinguished; but I mention it to show the indifference of one of the men on board. About half an hour afterwards, one of his companions roused him from his berth, shaking him by the shoulder to wake him, saying, "Get up, the wood's a-fire—quick." "Well, I knew that 'fore I turn'd in," replied the man, yawning.

The loss of the Home occasioned many of the first families in the states to go into deep mourning, for the major portion of the passengers were highly respectable. I was at New York when she started. I had had an hour's conversation with Professor Nott and his amiable wife, and had made arrangements with them to meet them in South Carolina. We never met again, for they were in the list of those who perished.

## Loss of the Home

"The steam-packet Home, commanded by Capt. White, left New York, for Charleston, South Carolina, at four o'clock, p.m., on Saturday, the 7th Oct. 1837, having on board between eighty and ninety passengers, and forty-three of the boat's crew, including officers, making in all about one hundred and thirty persons. The weather at this time was very pleasant, and all on board appeared to enjoy, in anticipation, a delightful and prosperous passage. On leaving the wharf, cheerfulness appeared to fill the hearts and enliven the countenances of this floating community. Already had conjectures been hazarded, as to the time of their arrival at the destined port, and high hopes were entertained of an expeditious and pleasant voyage. Before six o'clock,—a check to these delusive expectations was experienced, by the boat being run aground on the Romer Shoal, near Sandy Hook. It being ebb tide, it was found impossible to get off before the next flood; consequently, the fires were

allowed to burn out, and the boat remained until the flood tide took her off, which was between ten and eleven o'clock at night, making the time of detention about four or five hours. As the weather was perfectly calm, it cannot, reasonably, be supposed that the boat could have received any material injury from this accident; for, during the time that it remained aground, it had no other motion than an occasional roll on the keel from side to side. The night continued pleasant. The next morning, (Sunday,) a moderate breeze prevailed from the north-east. The sails were spread before the wind, and the speed of the boat, already rapid, was much accelerated. All went on pleasantly till about noon, when the wind had increased, and the sea became rough. At sunset, the wind blew heavily, and continued to increase during the night; at daylight, on Monday, it had become a gale. During the night, much complaint was made that the water came into the berths, and before the usual time of rising, some of the passengers had abandoned them on that account.

"The sea, from the violence of the gale, raged frightfully, and caused a general anxiety amongst the passengers; but still, they appeared to rely on the skill and judgment of the captain and officers,—supposing, that every exertion would be used, on their part, for the preservation of so many valuable lives as were then entrusted to those who had the charge of this frail boat. Early on Monday, land was discovered, nearly ahead, which, by many, was supposed to be False Cape, on the northern part of Hatteras. Soon after this discovery, the course of the boat was

changed from southerly to south-easterly, which was the general course through the day, though with some occasional changes. The condition of the boat was now truly alarming; it bent and twisted, when struck by a sea, as if the next would rend it asunder: the panels of the ceiling were falling from their places; and the hull, as if united by hinges, was bending against the feet of the braces. Throughout the day, the rolling and pitching were so great, that no cooking could be done on board.

"It has already been stated, that the general course of the boat was, during the day, south-easterly, and consequently in what is called the trough of the sea, as the wind was from the north-east. Late in the afternoon, the boat was reported to be in twenty-three fathoms of water, when the course was changed to a south-westerly. Soon after this, it was observed that the course was again changed, to north-westerly; when the awful truth burst upon us, that the boat must be filling; for we could imagine no other cause for this sudden change. This was but a momentary suspense; for within a few minutes, all the passengers were called on to bale, in order to prevent the boat from sinking. Immediately, all were employed, but with little effect; for, notwithstanding the greatest exertion on the part of the passengers, including even many of the ladies, the water was rapidly increasing, and gave most conclusive evidence, that, unless we reached the shore within a few hours, the boat must sink at sea, and probably not a soul be left to communicate the heart-rending intelligence to bereaved and disconsolate friends.

Soon after the boat was headed towards the land, the water had increased so much, as to reach the fire under the boilers, which was soon extinguished. Gloomy indeed was the prospect before us. With one hundred and thirty persons in a sinking boat, far out at sea, in a dark and tempestuous night, with no other dependence for reaching the shore than a few small and tattered sails, our condition might be considered truly awful. But, with all these disheartening circumstances, hope, delusive hope, still supported us. Although it was evident that we must soon sink, and our progress towards the land was very slow, still we cherished the expectation that the boat would finally be run on shore, and thus most of us be delivered from a watery grave. Early in the afternoon, the ladies had been provided with strips of blankets, that they might be lashed to such parts of the boat as would afford the greatest probability of safety.

"In this condition, and with these expectations, we gradually, but with a motion nearly imperceptible, approached, what to many of us was an untried, and almost an unknown shore. At about eleven o'clock, those who had been employed in baling were compelled to leave the cabin, as the boat had sunk until the deck was nearly level with the water, and it appeared too probable that all would soon be swallowed up by the foaming waves. The heaving of the lead indicated an approach to the shore. Soon was the cheering intelligence of 'Land! land!' announced by those on the look-out. This, for a moment, aroused the sinking energies of all, when a general bustle ensued, in the hasty, but trifling,

preparations that could be made for safety, as soon as the boat should strike. But what were the feelings of an anxious multitude, when, instead of land, a range of angry breakers were visible just ahead; and land, if it could be seen at all, was but half perceptible in the distance far beyond.

"As every particular is a matter of interest, especially to those who had friends and relatives on board,—it may not be improper to state, that one individual urged the propriety of lowering the small boats, and putting the ladies and children into them for safety, with suitable persons to manage them, before we struck the breakers. By this arrangement, had it been effected, it is believed that the boats might have rode out the gale during the night, and have been rescued in the morning by passing vessels, and thus all, or nearly all, have been saved. But few supported this proposition, and it could not be done without the prompt interference of those who had authority to command, and who would be obeyed.

"Immediately before we struck, one or two passengers, by the aid of some of the seamen, attempted to seek safety in one of the bouts at the quarter, when a breaker struck it, swept it from the davits, and carried with it a seaman, who was instantly lost. A similar attempt was made to launch the long-boat from the upper deck, by the chief mate Mr Mathews, and others. It was filled with several passengers, and some of the crew; but, as we were already within the verge of the breakers, this boat shared the fate of the other, and all on board (about ten in number) perished.

"Now commenced the most heart-rending scene. Wives clinging to husbands,—children to parents,—and women who were without protectors, seeking aid from the arm of the stranger, all awaiting the results of a moment, which would bring with it either life or death. Though an intense feeling of anxiety must, at this time, have filled every breast, yet not a shriek was heard, nor was there any extraordinary exclamation of excitement or alarm. A slight agitation was, however, apparent in the general circle. Some few hurried from one part of the boat to another, as if seeking place of greater safety; yet most, and particularly those who had the melancholy charge of wives and children, remained quiet and calm observers of the scene before them.

"The boat, at length, strikes; it stops, as motionless as a bar of lead. A momentary pause follows, as if the angel of death shrunk from so dreadful a work of slaughter. But soon the work of destruction commenced. A breaker with a deafening crash, swept over the boat, carrying its unfortunate victims into the deep. At the same time, a simultaneous rush was made towards the bows of the boat. The forward deck was covered. Another breaker came, with irresistible force, and all within its sweep disappeared. Our numbers were now frightfully reduced. The roaring of the waters, together with the dreadful crash of breaking timbers, surpasses the power of description. Some of the remaining passengers sought shelter from the encroaching dangers, by retreating to the passage, on the lee side of the boat,

that leads from the after to the forward deck, as if to be as far as possible from the grasp of death. It may not be improper here to remark, that the destruction of the boat, and loss of life, was, doubtless, much more rapid than it otherwise would have been, from the circumstance of the boat heeling to windward, and the deck, which was nearly level with the water, forming, in consequence, an inclined plane, upon which the waves broke with their full force.

"A large proportion of those who rushed into this passage, were ladies and children, with a few gentlemen who had charge of them. The crowd was so dense, that many were in danger of being crushed by the irresistible pressure. Here were perhaps some of the most painful sights ever beheld. Before introducing any of the closing scenes of individuals, which the writer witnessed, or which he has gathered from his fellow passengers, he would beg to be understood, that it is not for the gratification of the idle curiosity of the careless and indifferent reader, or to pierce afresh the bleeding wounds of surviving friends, but to furnish such facts as may be interesting, and which, perhaps, might never be attained through any other channel.

"As the immediate connections of the writer are already informed of the particulars relating to his own unhappy bereavement, there is no necessity for entering in a minute detail of this melancholy event.

"This passage contained perhaps thirty or more persons, consisting of men, women and children, with no apparent

possibility of escape; enclosed within a narrow aperture, over which was the deck, and both ends of which were completely closed by the fragments of the boat and the rushing of the waves. While thus shut up, death appeared inevitable. Already were both decks swept of everything that was on them. The dining cabin was entirely gone, and everything belonging to the quarter-deck was completely stripped off, leaving not even a stanchion or particle of the bulwarks; and all this was the work of about five minutes.

"The starboard wheel-house, and everything about it, was soon entirely demolished. As much of the ceiling forward of the starboard wheel had, during the day, fallen from its place, the waves soon found their way through all that remained to oppose them, and were in a few minutes' time forcing into the last retreat of those who had taken shelter in the passage already mentioned.

"Every wave made a frightful encroachment on our narrow limits, and seemed to threaten us with immediate death. Hopeless as was the condition of those thus hemmed in, yet not a shriek was heard from them. One lady, unknown to the writer, begged earnestly for some one to save her. In a time of such alarm, it is not strange that a helpless female should plead with earnestness for assistance from those who were about her, or even offer them money for that aid which the least reflection would have convinced her it was not possible to render. Another scene, witnessed at this trying hour, was still more painful. A little boy was pleading with his father to save him. 'Father,' said the boy,

'you will save me, won't you? you can swim ashore with me, can't you, father?' But the unhappy father was too deeply absorbed in the other charges that leant on him, even to notice the imploring accents of his helpless child. For at that time, as near as the writer can judge, from the darkness of the place they were in, his wife hung upon one arm, and his daughter of seventeen upon the other. He had one daughter besides, near the age of this little boy, but whether she was at that time living or not, is uncertain.

"After remaining here some minutes, the deck overhead was split open by the violence of the waves, which allowed the writer an opportunity of climbing out. This he instantly did, and assisted his wife through the same opening. As he had now left those below, he is unable to say how they were finally lost; but, as that part of the boat was very soon completely destroyed, their further sufferings could not have been much prolonged. We were now in a situation which, from the time the boat struck, we had considered as the most safe, and had endeavoured to attain. Here we resolved to await our uncertain fate. From this place we could see the encroachment of the devouring waves, every one of which reduced our thinned numbers, and swept with it parts of our crumbling boat. For several hours previously, the gale had been sensibly abating; and, for a moment, the pale moon broke through the dispersing clouds, as if to witness this scene of terror and destruction, and to show to the horror-stricken victims the fate that awaited them. How few were now left, of the many who, but a little before, inhabited our bark! While the moon yet shone,

three men were seen to rush from the middle to the stern of the boat. A wave came rushing on. It passed over the deck. One only, of the three, was left. He attempted to gain his former position. Another wave came. He had barely time to reach a large timber, to which he clung, when this wave struck him, and he too was missing. As the wave passed away, the heads of two of these men were seen above the water; but they appeared to make no effort to swim. The probability is, that the violence with which they were hurled into the sea disabled them. They sunk to rise no more.

"During this time, Mr Lovegreen, of Charleston, continued to ring the boat's bell, which added if possible to the gloom. It sounded, indeed, like the funeral knell over the departed dead. Never before, perhaps, was a bell tolled at such a funeral as this. While in this situation, and reflecting on the necessity of being always prepared for the realities of eternity, our attention was arrested by the appearance of a lady, climbing upon the outside of the boat, abaft the wheel near where we were. Her head was barely above the deck on which we stood, and she was holding to it, in a most perilous manner. She implored help, without which she must soon have fallen into the deep beneath, and shared the fate of the many who had already gone. The writer ran to her aid, but was unable to raise her to the deck. Mr Woodburn, of New York, now came, and, with his assistance, the lady was rescued; she was then lashed to a large piece of timber, by the side of another lady, the only remaining place that afforded any prospect of safety. The former lady (Mrs Shroeder) was washed ashore

on this piece of wreck, one of the two who survived. The writer having relinquished to this lady the place he had occupied, was compelled to get upon a large piece of the boat, that lay near, under the lee of the wheel; this was almost immediately driven from its place into the breakers, which instantly swept him from it, and plunged him deep into the water. With some difficulty he regained his raft. He continued to cling to this fragment, as well as he could, but was repeatedly washed from it. Sometimes when plunged deep into the water, he came up under it. After encountering all the difficulties that seemed possible to be borne, he was at length thrown on shore, in an exhausted state. At the time the writer was driven from the boat, there were but few left. Of these, four survived, *viz*. Mrs Shroeder and Mr Lovegreen, of Charleston; Mr Cohen, of Columbia; and Mr Vanderzee, of New York.

"On reaching the beach, there was no appearance of inhabitants; but after wandering some distance, a light was discovered, which proved to be from Ocracoke lighthouse, about six miles south-west of the place where the boat was wrecked. The inhabitants of the island, generally, treated us with great kindness, and, so far as their circumstances, would allow, assisted in properly disposing the numerous bodies thrown upon the shore.

"The survivors, after remaining on the island till Thursday afternoon, separated, some returning to New York, others proceeding on to Charleston. Acknowledgment is due to the

inhabitants of Washington, Newbern, and Wilmington, as well as of other places through which we passed, for the kind hospitality we received, and the generous offers made to us. Long will these favours be gratefully remembered by the survivors of the unfortunate Home."

Even if the captain of the Home was intoxicated, it is certain that the loss of the vessel was not occasioned by that circumstance, but by the vessel not having been built sea-worthy.

The narrative of the loss of the Moselle is the last which I shall give to the reader. It is written by Judge Hall, one of the best of the American writers.

## Loss of the Moselle

"The recent explosion of the steam-boat Moselle, at Cincinnati, affords a most awful illustration of the danger of steam navigation, when conducted by ignorant or careless men: and fully sustains the remark made in the preceding pages, that, 'the accidents are almost wholly confined to insufficient or badly managed boats.'

"The Moselle was a new boat, intended to ply regularly between Cincinnati and St. Louis. She had made but two or three trips, but had already established a high reputation for speed; and, as is usual in such cases, those by whom she was owned and commanded, became ambitious to have her rated as a 'crack boat,' and spared no pains to exalt her character. The

newspapers noticed the *quick trips* of the Moselle, and passengers chose to embark in this boat in preference to others. Her captain was an enterprising young man, without much experience, bent upon gaining for his boat, at all hazards, the distinction of being the fastest upon the river, and not fully aware, perhaps, of the inevitable danger which attended this rash experiment.

"On Wednesday the 25th of April, between four and five o'clock in the afternoon, this shocking catastrophe occurred. The boat was crowded with passengers; and, as is usually the case on our western rivers, in regard to vessels passing westerly, the largest proportion were emigrants. They were mostly deck passengers, many of whom were poor Germans, ignorant of any language but their own, and the larger portion consisted of families, comprising persons of all ages. Although not a large boat, there were eighty-five passengers in the cabin, which was a much larger number than could be comfortably accommodated; the number of deck passengers is not exactly known, but, as is estimated, at between one hundred and twenty and one hundred and fifty; and the officers and crew amounted to thirty, making in all about two hundred and sixty souls.

"It was a pleasant afternoon, and the boat, with steam raised, delayed at the wharf, to increase the number—already too great—of her passengers, who continued to crowd in, singly or in companies, all anxious to hurry onwards in the first boat, or eager to take passage in the *fast-running* Moselle. They were of all conditions—the military officer hastening to Florida to take

command of his regiment—the merchant bound to St. Louis—the youth seeking a field on which to commence the career of life—and the indigent emigrant with his wife and children, already exhausted in purse and spirits, but still pushing onward to the distant frontier.

"On leaving the wharf, the boat ran up the river about a mile, to take in some families and freight, and having touched at the shore for that purpose, for a few minutes, was about to lay her course down the river. The spot at which she thus landed was at a suburb of the city, called Fulton, and a number of persons had stopped to witness her departure, several of whom remarked, from the peculiar sound of the steam, that it had been raised to an unusual height. The crowd thus attracted—the high repute of the Moselle—and certain vague rumours which began to circulate, that the captain had determined, at every risk, to beat another boat which had just departed—all these circumstances gave an unusual éclat to the departure of this ill-fated vessel.

"The landing completed, the bow of the boat was shoved from the shore, when an explosion took place, by which the whole of the forepart of the vessel was literally blown up. The passengers were unhappily in the most exposed positions on the deck, and particularly on the forward part, sharing the excitement of the spectators on shore, and anticipating the pleasure of darting rapidly past the city in the swift Moselle. The power of the explosion was unprecedented in the history of steam; its effect was like that of a mine of gunpowder. All the boilers, four in

number, were simultaneously burst; the deck was blown into the air, and the human beings who crowded it hurried into instant destruction. Fragments of the boilers, and of human bodies, were thrown both to the Kentucky and the Ohio shore; and as the boat lay near the latter, some of these helpless victims must have been thrown a quarter of a mile. The body of Captain Perry, the master, was found dreadfully mangled, on the nearest shore. A man was hurled with such force, that his head, with half his body, penetrated the roof of a house, distant more than a hundred yards from the boat. Of the number who had crowded this beautiful boat a few minutes before, nearly all were hurled into the air, or plunged into the water. A few, in the after part of the vessel, who were uninjured by the explosion, jumped overboard. An eye-witness says that he saw sixty or seventy in the water at one time, of whom not a dozen reached the shore.

"The news or this awful catastrophe spread rapidly through the city, thousands rushed to the spot, and the most benevolent aid was promptly extended to the sufferers—to such, we should rather say, as were within the reach of human assistance—for the majority had perished.

"The writer was among those who hastened to the neighbourhood of the wreck, and witnessed a scene so sad that no language can depict it with fidelity. On the shore lay twenty or thirty mangled and still bleeding corpses, while others were in the act of being dragged from the wreck or the water. There were men carrying away the wounded, and others gathering the

trunks, and articles of wearing apparel, that strewed the beach.

"The survivors of this awful tragedy presented the most touching objects of distress. Death had torn asunder the most tender ties; but the rupture had been so sudden and violent, that as yet none knew certainly who had been taken, nor who had been spared. Fathers were inquiring for children, children for parents, husbands and wives for each other. One man had saved a son, but lost a wife and five children. A father, partially deranged, lay with a wounded child on one side, a dead daughter on the other, and his wife, wounded, at his feet. One gentleman sought his wife and children, who were as eagerly seeking him in the same crowd—they met, and were re-united.

"A female deck passenger, that had been saved, seemed inconsolable for the loss of her relations. To every question put to her, she would exclaim, 'Oh my father! my mother! my sisters!' A little boy, about four or five years of age, whose head was much bruised, appeared to be regardless of his wounds, but cried continually for a lost father; while another lad, a little older, was weeping for his whole family.

"One venerable looking man wept a wife and five children; another was bereft of nine members of his family. A touching display of maternal affection was evinced by a lady who, on being brought to the shore, clasped her hands and exclaimed, 'Thank God, I am safe!' but instantly recollecting herself, ejaculated in a voice of piercing agony, 'where is my child!' The infant, which had been saved, was brought to her, and she fainted at the sight

of it.

"A public meeting was called in Cincinnati, at which the mayor presided, when the facts of this melancholy occurrence were discussed, and among other resolutions passed, was one deprecating 'the great and increasing carelessness in the navigation of steam vessels,' and urging this subject upon the consideration of Congress. No one denied that this sad event, which had filled our city with consternation, sympathy, and sorrow, was the result of a reckless and criminal inattention to their duty, on the part of those having the care of the Moselle, nor did any one attempt to palliate their conduct. Committees were appointed to seek out the sufferers, and perform the various duties which humanity dictated. Through the exertions of the gentlemen appointed on this occasion, lists were obtained and published, showing the names of the passengers as far as could be obtained, and giving the following result:—"

| | |
|---|---|
| Killed | 81 |
| Badly wounded | 18 |
| Missing | 55 |
| Saved | 117 |
| | 266 |

"As many strangers entered the boat but a few minutes before its departure, whose names were not registered, it is probable that the whole number of souls on board was not less than *two hundred and eighty*. Of the missing, many dead bodies have since been found, but very few have been added to the list of *saved*. The actual number of lives lost, therefore, does not vary much from *one hundred and fifty*."

The following observations are made in the Report of the Committee, relative to the tremendous force of the steam:

"Of the immense force exerted in this explosion, there is abundant evidence: still in this extraordinary occurrence in the history of steam, I deem it important to be particular in noting the facts, and for that purpose I have made some measurements

and calculations. The boat was one hundred and sixteen feet from the water's edge, one hundred and ninety-two from the top of the bank, which was forty-three feet in perpendicular height above the water. The situations of projected bodies ascertained were as follows: Part of the body of a man, thrown nearly horizontally into a skiff at the water's edge, one hundred and sixteen feet. The body of the captain thrown nearly to the top of the bank, two hundred feet. The body of a man thrown through the roof of a house, at the distance of one hundred and twelve feet, and fifty-nine feet above the water's edge. A portion of the boiler, containing about sixty square feet, and weighing about four hundred and fifty pounds, thrown one hundred and seventy feet, and about two-thirds of the way up the bank. A second portion of the boiler, of about thirty-five square feet, and weighing about two hundred and forty-five pounds, thrown four hundred and fifty feet on the hill side, and seventy feet in altitude. A third portion of the boiler, twenty-one square feet, one hundred and forty-seven pounds, thrown three hundred and thirty feet into a tan-yard. A fourth portion, of forty-eight square feet, and weighing three hundred and thirty-six pounds, thrown four hundred and eighty feet into the garret of a back shop of a tan-yard; having broken down the roof and driven out the gable-end. The last portion must have been thrown to a very great height, as it had entered the roof of (sic) an angle of at least sixty degrees. A fifth portion, weighing two hundred and thirty-six pounds, went obliquely up the river eight hundred feet, and

passing over the houses, landed on the side walk, the bricks of which had been broken and driven deeply into the ground by it. This portion had encountered some individual in its course, as it came stained with blood. Such was the situation of the houses that it must have fallen at an angle as high as forty-five degrees. It has been stated, that bodies of persons were projected quite across the river into Kentucky. I can find no evidence of the truth of this: on the contrary, Mr Kerr informs me that he made inquiries of the people on the opposite shore, and could not learn that anything was seen to fall farther than half way across the river, which is at that place about sixteen hundred feet wide."

I was at Cincinnati some time after the explosion, and examined the wreck which still lay on the Ohio shore. After the report was drawn up it was discovered that the force of the explosion had been even greater than was supposed, and that portions of the engine and boilers had been thrown to a much greater distance. It is to be remarked, that Mr Woodbury's report to Congress states from one hundred to one hundred and twenty persons as having been killed. Judge Hall, in the report of the committee, estimates it at one hundred and fifty; but there is reason to believe that the loss on this occasion, as well as in many others, was greater than even in the report of the committee. The fact is, it is almost impossible to state the loss on these occasions; the only data to go upon are the books in which the passengers' names are taken down when the fare is paid, and this is destroyed. In a country like America, there are thousands of

people unknown to anybody, migrating here and there, seeking the Far West to settle in; they come and go, and nobody knows anything of them; there might have been one hundred more of them on board the Moselle at the time that she exploded; and as I heard from Captain Pearce, the harbour-master, and others, it is believed that such was the case, and that many more were destroyed than was at first supposed.

The American steam-boats are very different from ours in appearance, in consequence of the engines being invariably on deck. The decks also are carried out many feet wider on each side than the hull of the vessel, to give space; these additions to the deck aye called guards. The engine being on the first deck, there is a second deck for the passengers, state-rooms, and saloons; and above this deck there is another, covered with a white awning. They have something the appearance of two-deckers, and when filled with company, the variety of colours worn by the ladies have a very novel and pleasing effect. The boats which run from New York to Boston, and up the Hudson river to Albany, are very splendid vessels; they have low-pressure engines, are well commanded, and I never heard of any accident of any importance taking place; their engines are also very superior—one on board of the Narangassett, with a horizontal stroke, was one of the finest I ever saw. On the Mississippi, Ohio, and their tributary rivers, the high-pressure engine is invariably used; they have tried the low-pressure, but have found that it will not answer, in consequence of the great quantity of mud

contained in solution on the waters of the Mississippi, which destroys all the valves and leathers; and this is the principal cause of the many accidents which take place. At the same time it must be remembered, that there is a recklessness—an indifference to life—shown throughout all America; which is rather a singular feature, inasmuch as it extends East as well as West. It can only be accounted for by the insatiate pursuit of gain among a people who consider that time is money, and who are blinded by their eagerness in the race for it, added to that venturous spirit so naturally imbibed in a new country, at the commencement of its occupation. It is communicated to the other sex, who appear equally indifferent. The Moselle had not been blown up two hours, before the other steamboats were crowded with women, who followed their relations on business or pleasure, up and down the river. "Go a-head," is the motto of the country; both sexes join in the cry; and they do go a-head—that's a fact!

I was amused with a story told me by an American gentleman: a steamboat caught fire on the Mississippi, and the passengers had to jump overboard and save themselves by swimming. One of those reckless characters, a gambler, who, was on board, having apparently a very good idea of his own merits, went aft, and before he leapt overboard, cried out, "Now, gallows, claim your own!"

The attention of the American legislature has at length been directed to the want of security in steam navigation; and in July, 1838, an act was passed to provide for the better security of the

passengers. Many of the clauses are judicious, especially as far as the inspecting of them is regulated; but that of iron chains or rods for tiller ropes is not practicable on a winding river, and will be the occasion of many disasters. Had they ordered the boats to be provided with iron chains or rods, to be used as preventive wheel-ropes, it would have answered the purpose. In case of fire they could easily be hooked on; but to steer with them in tide-ways and rapid turns is almost impossible. The last clause, No. 13, (page 170, Report) is too harsh, as a flue may collapse at any time, without any want of care or skill on the part of the builders or those on board.

It is to be hoped that some good effects will be produced by this act of the legislature. At present, it certainly is more dangerous to travel one week in America than to cross the Atlantic a dozen times. The number of lives lost in one year by accidents in steam boats, rail-roads, and coaches, was estimated, in a periodical which I read in America, at *one thousand seven hundred and fifty*.

# Volume One—Chapter Four

## Travelling

To one who has been accustomed to the extortion of the inns and hotels in England, and the old continent, nothing at first is more remarkable than to find that there are more remains of the former American purity of manners and primitive simplicity to be observed in their establishments for the entertainment of man and horse, than in any portion of public or private life. Such is the case, and the causes of the anomaly are to be explained.

I presume that the origin of hotels and inns has been much the same in all countries. At first the solitary traveller is received, welcomed, and hospitably entertained; but, as the wayfarers multiply, what was at first a pleasure becomes a tax. For instance, let us take Western Virginia, through which the first irruption to the Far West may be said to have taken place. At first every one was received and accommodated by those who had settled there; but as this gradually became inconvenient, not only from interfering with their domestic privacy, but from their not being prepared to meet the wants of the travellers, the inhabitants of any small settlement met together and agreed upon one of them keeping the house of reception; this was not done with a view of

profit, the travellers being only charged the actual value of the articles consumed. Such is still the case in many places in the Far West; a friend of mine told me that he put up at the house of a widow woman; he supped, slept, had his breakfast, and his horse was also well supplied. When he was leaving, he inquired what he had to pay, the woman replied—, "Well, if I don't charge something, I suppose you will be affronted. Give me a shilling;" a sum not sufficient to pay for the horse's corn.

The American innkeeper, therefore, is still looked upon in the light of your host; he and his wife sit at the head of the *table-d'hôte* at meal times; when you arrive he greets you with a welcome, shaking your hand; if you arrive in company with those who know him, you are introduced to him; he is considered on a level with you; you meet him in the most respectable companies, and it is but justice to say that, in most instances, they are a very respectable portion of society. Of course, his authority, like that of the captains of the steam-boats, is undisputed; indeed the captains of these boats may be partly considered as classed under the same head.

This is one of the most pleasing features in American society, and I think it is likely to last longer than most others in this land of change, because it is upheld by public opinion, which is so despotic. The mania for travelling, among the people of the United States, renders it most important that every thing connected with locomotion should be well arranged; society demands it, public opinion enforces it, and therefore, with few

exceptions, it is so. The respect shown to the master of a hotel induces people of the highest character to embark in the profession; the continual streams of travellers which pours through the country, gives sufficient support by moderate profits, to enable the innkeeper to abstain from excessive charges; the price of every thing is known by all, and no more is charged to the President of the United States than to other people. Every one knows his expenses; there is no surcharge, and fees to waiters are voluntary, and never asked for. At first I used to examine the bill when presented, but latterly I looked only at the sum total at the bottom and paid it at once, reserving the examination of it for my leisure, and never in one instance found that I had been imposed upon. This is very remarkable, and shows the force of public opinion in America; for it can produce, when required, a very scarce article all over the world, and still more scarce in the profession referred to, Honesty. Of course there will be exceptions, but they are very few, and chiefly confined to the cities. I shall refer to them afterwards, and at the same time to some peculiarities, which I must not omit to point out, as they affect society. Let me first describe the interior arrangements of a first-rate American hotel.

The building is very spacious, as may be imagined when I state that in the busy times, from one hundred and fifty to two, or even three hundred, generally sit down at the dinner-table. The upper stories contain an immense number of bed-rooms, with their doors opening upon long corridors, with little variety in

their furniture and arrangement, except that some are provided with large beds for married people, and others with single beds. The basement of the building contains the dinner-room, of ample dimensions, to receive the guests, who at the sound of a gong rush in, and in a few minutes have finished their repast. The same room is appropriated to breakfast and supper. In most hotels there is but one dining-room, to which ladies and gentlemen both repair, but in the more considerable, there is a smaller dining-room for the ladies and their connexions who escort them. The ladies have also a large parlour to retire to; the gentlemen have the reading-room, containing some of the principal newspapers, and the *Bar*, of which hereafter. If a gentleman wants to give a dinner to a private party in any of these large hotels, he can do it; or if a certain number of families join together, they may also eat in a separate room (this is frequently done at Washington;) but if a traveller wishes to seclude himself *à l'Anglaise*, and dine in his own room, he must make up his mind to fare very badly, and, moreover, if he is a foreigner, he will give great offence, and be pointed out as an aristocrat—almost as serious a charge with the majority in the United States, as it was in France during the Revolution.

The largest hotels in the United States are Astor House, New York; Tremont House, Boston; Mansion house, Philadelphia; the hotels at West Point, and at Buffalo; but it is unnecessary to enumerate them all. The two pleasantest, are the one at West Point, which was kept by Mr Cozens, and that belonging to Mr

Head, the Mansion House at Philadelphia; but the latter can scarcely be considered as a hotel, not only because Mr Head is, and always was, a gentleman with whom it is a pleasure to associate, but because he is very particular in whom he receives, and only gentlemen are admitted. It is more like a private club than any thing else I can compare it to, and I passed some of my pleasantest time in America at his establishment, and never bid farewell to him or his sons, or the company, without regret. There are some hotels in New York upon the English system: the Globe is the best, and I always frequented it; and there is an excellent French restaurateur's (Delmonico's).

Of course, where the population and traffic are great, and the travellers who pass through numerous, the hotels are large and good; where, on the contrary, the road is less and less frequented, so do they decrease in importance, size, and respectability, until you arrive at the farm-house entertainment of Virginia and Kentucky; the grocery, or mere grog-shop, or the log-house of the Far West. The way-side inns are remarkable for their uniformity; the furniture of the bar-room is invariably the same: a wooden clock, map of the United States, map of the State, the Declaration of Independence, a looking-glass, with a hair-brush and comb hanging to it by strings, *pro bono publico*; sometimes with the extra embellishment of one or two miserable pictures, such as General Jackson scrambling upon a horse, with fire or steam coming out of his nostrils, going to the battle of New Orleans, etcetera, etcetera.

He who is of the silver-fork school, will not find much comfort out of the American cities and large towns. There are no neat, quiet little inns, as in England. It is all the "rough and tumble" system, and when you stop at humble inns you must expect to eat peas with a two-pronged fork, and to sit down to meals with people whose exterior is any thing but agreeable, to attend upon yourself, and to sleep in a room in which there are three or four other beds; (I have slept in one with nearly twenty,) most of them carrying double, even if you do not have a companion in your own.

A New York friend of mine travelling in an Extra with his family, told me that at a western inn he had particularly requested that he might not have a bed-fellow, and was promised that he should not. On his retiring, he found his bed already occupied, and he went down to the landlady, and expostulated. "Well," replied she, "it's only your own *driver*; I thought you wouldn't mind him."

Another gentleman told me, that having arrived at a place called Snake's Hollow, on the Mississippi, the bed was made on the kitchen-floor, and the whole family and travellers, amounting in all to seventeen, of all ages and both sexes, turned into the same bed altogether. Of course this must be expected in a new country, and is a source of amusement, rather than of annoyance.

I must now enter into a very important question, which is that of eating and drinking. Mr Cooper, in his remarks upon his own countrymen, says, very ill-naturedly—"The Americans are the

grossest feeders of any civilised nation known. As a nation, their food is heavy, coarse, and indigestible, while it is taken in the least artificial forms that cookery will allow. The predominance of grease in the American kitchen, coupled with the habits of hearty eating, and of constant expectoration, are the causes of the diseases of the stomach which are so common in America."

This is not correct. The cookery in the United States is exactly what it is and must be every where else—in a ratio with the degree of refinement of the population. In the principal cities, you will meet with as good cookery in private houses as you will in London, or even Paris; indeed, considering the great difficulty which the Americans have to contend with, from the almost impossibility of obtaining good servants, I have often been surprised that it is so good as it is. At Delmonico's, and the Globe Hotel at New York, where you dine from the Carte, you have excellent French cookery; so you have at Astor House, particularly at private parties; and, generally speaking, the cooking at all the large hotels may be said to be good; indeed, when it is considered that the American table-d'hôte has to provide for so many people, it is quite surprising how well it is done. The daily dinner, at these large hotels, is infinitely superior to any I have ever sat down to at the *public* entertainments given at the Free-Masons' Tavern, and others in London, and the company is usually more numerous. The bill of fare of the table-d'hôte of the Astor House is *printed every day*. I have one with me which I shall here insert, to prove that the eating is not so bad

in America as described by Mr Cooper.

| Astor House, *Wednesday, March* 21, 1838. |
| --- |
| *Table-d'Hôte* |
| Vermicelli Soup |
| Boiled Cod Fish and Oysters |
| Do. Corn'd Beef |
| Do. Ham |
| Do. Tongue |
| Do. Turkey and Oysters |
| Do. Chickens and Pork |
| Do. Leg of Mutton |
| Oyster Pie |
| Cuisse de Poulet Sauce Tomate |
| Poitrine de Veau au Blanc |
| Ballon de Mouton au Tomate |
| Tête de Veau en Marinade |
| Salade de Volaille |
| Casserolle de Pomme de Terre garnie |

There are some trifling points relative to eating which I shall not remark upon until I speak of society, as they will there be better placed. Of course, as you advance into the country, and population recedes, you run through all the scale of cookery until you come to the "*corn bread, and common doings*," (i.e. bread made of Indian meal, and fat pork,) in the Far West. In a new country, pork is more easily raised than any other meat, and the Americans eat a great deal of pork, which renders the cooking in the small taverns very greasy; with the exception of the Virginian farm taverns, where they fry chickens without grease in a way which would be admired by Ude himself; but this is a State receipt, handed down from generation to generation, and called *chicken fixings*. The meat in America is equal to the best in England; Miss Martineau does indeed say that she never ate good beef during the whole time she was in this country; but she also says that an American stage-coach is the most delightful of all conveyances, and a great many other things, which I may hereafter quote, to prove the idiosyncracy of the lady's disposition; so we will let that pass, with the observation that there is no accounting for taste. The American markets in the cities are well supplied. I have been in the game market, at New York, and seen at one time nearly three hundred head of deer, with quantities of bear, racoons, wild turkeys, geese, ducks, and every variety of bird in countless profusion. Bear I abominate; racoon is pretty good. The wild turkey is excellent; but the

great delicacies in America are the terrapin, and the canvas-back ducks. To like the first I consider as rather an acquired taste. I decidedly prefer the turtle, which are to be had in plenty, all the year round; but the canvas-back duck is certainly well worthy of its reputation. Fish is well supplied. They have the sheep's head, shad, and one or two others, which we have not. Their salmon is not equal to ours, and they have no turbot. Pine-apples, and almost all the tropical fruits, are hawked about in carts in the Eastern cities; but I consider the fruit of the temperate zone, such as grapes, peaches, etcetera, inferior to the English. Oysters are very plentiful, very large, and, to an English palate, rather insipid. As the Americans assert that the English and French oysters taste of copper, and that therefore they cannot eat them, I presume they do; and that's the reason why we do not like the American oysters, copper being better than no flavour at all.

I think, after this statement, that the English will agree with me that there are plenty of good things for the table in America; but the old proverb says, "God sends meat, and the devil sends cooks;" and such is, and unfortunately must be, the case for a long while, in most of the houses in America, owing to the difficulty of obtaining, or keeping servants. But I must quit the subject of eating, for one of much more importance in America, which is that of drinking.

I always did consider that the English and the Swiss were the two nations who most indulged in potations; but on my arrival in the United States, I found that our descendants, in this point

most assuredly, as they fain would be thought to do in all others, surpassed us altogether.

Impartiality compels me to acknowledge the truth; we must, in this instance, submit to a national defeat. There are many causes for this: first, the heat of the climate, next the coldness of the climate, then the changeableness of the climate; add to these, the cheapness of liquor in general, the early disfranchisement of the youth from all parental control, the temptation arising from the bar and association, and, lastly, the pleasantness, amenity, and variety of the potations.

Reasons, therefore, are as plentiful as blackberries, and habit becomes second nature.

To run up the whole catalogue of the indigenous compounds in America, from "iced water" to a "stone fence," or "streak of lightning," would fill a volume; I shall first speak of foreign importations.

The Port in America is seldom good; the climate appears not to agree with the wine. The quantity of Champagne drunk is enormous, and would absorb all the vintage of France, were it not that many hundred thousand bottles are consumed more than are imported.

The small state of New Jersey has the credit of supplying the *American* Champagne, which is said to be concocted out of turnip juice, mixed with brandy and honey. It is a pleasant and harmless drink, a very good imitation, and may be purchased at six or seven dollars a dozen. I do not know what we shall do when

America fills up, if the demand for Champagne should increase in proportion to the population; we had better drink all we can now.

Claret, and the other French wines, do very well in America, but where the Americans beat us out of the field is in their Madeira, which certainly is of a quality which we cannot procure in England. This is owing to the extreme heat and cold of the climate, which ripens this wine; indeed, I may almost say, that I never tasted good Madeira, until I arrived in the United States. The price of wines, generally speaking, is very high, considering what a trifling duty is paid, but the price of good Madeira is surprising. There are certain brands, which if exposed to public auction, will be certain to fetch from twelve to twenty, and I have been told even forty dollars a bottle. I insert a list of the wines at Astor House, to prove that there is no exaggeration in what I have asserted. Even in this list of a tavern, the reader will find that the best Madeira is as high as twelve dollars a bottle, and the list is curious from the variety which it offers.

But the Americans do not confine themselves to foreign wines or liquors; they have every variety at home, in the shape of compounds, such as mint-julep and its varieties; slings in all their varieties; cocktails, but I really cannot remember, or if I could, it would occupy too much time to mention the whole battle array against one's brains. I must, however, descant a little upon the mint-julep; as it is, with the thermometer at 100 degrees, one of the most delightful and insinuating potations that ever was

invented, and may be drank with equal satisfaction when the thermometer is as low as 70 degrees. There are many varieties, such as those composed of Claret, Madeira, etcetera; but the ingredients of the real mint-julep are as follows. I learnt how to make them, and succeeded pretty well. Put into a tumbler about a dozen sprigs of the tender shoots of mint, upon them put a spoonful of white sugar, and equal proportions of peach and common brandy, so as to fill it up one third, or perhaps a little less. Then take rasped or pounded ice, and fill up the tumbler. Epicures rub the lips of the tumbler with a piece of fresh pine-apple, and the tumbler itself is very often incrusted outside with stalactites of ice. As the ice melts, you drink. I once overheard two ladies talking in the next room to me, and one of them said, "Well, we have a weakness for any one thing, it is for a mint-julep—" a very amiable weakness, and proving her good sense and good taste. They are, in fact, like the American ladies, irresistible.

The Virginians claim the merit of having invented this superb compound, but I must dispute it for my own country, although it has been forgotten of late. In the times of Charles the First and Second it must have been known, for Milton expressly refers to it in his Comus:—

> "Behold the cordial julep—here
> Which flames and dances in its crystal bounds
> With spirits of *balm* and *fragrant syrups* mixed.
> Not that Nepenthes, which the wife of Thone

In Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena
Is of such power to stir up joy like this,
To life so friendly, or so *cool to thirst*."

If that don't mean mint-julep, I don't know the English language.

The following lines, however, which I found in an American newspaper, dates its origin very far back, even to the period when the heathen gods were not at a discount as they are now.

## Origin of Mint-Julep

'Tis said that the gods, on Olympus of old,
(And who, the bright legend profanes, with a doubt,)
One night, 'mid their revels, by Bacchus were told
That his last butt of nectar had somewhat run out!

But determined to send round the goblet once more,
They sued to the fairer immortals—for aid
In composing a draught which, till drinking were o'er,
Should cast every wine ever drank in the shade.

Grave Cerce herself blithely yielded her corn,
And the spirit that lives in each amber-hued grain,
And which first had its birth from the dews of the morn,
Was taught to steal out in bright dew drops again.

Pomona, whose choicest of fruits on the board,
Were scattered profusely in every one's reach,
When called on a tribute to cull from the board,
Expressed the mild juice of the delicate peach.

The liquids were mingled while Venus looked on
With glances so fraught with sweet-magical power,
That the honey of Ilybla, e'en when they were gone,
Has never been missed in the draught from that hour.

Flora, then, from her bosom of fragrance shook,
And with roseate fingers pressed down in the bowl,
As dripping and fresh as it came from the brook,
The herb whose aroma should flavour the whole.

The draught was delicious, each god did exclaim,
Though something yet wanting they all did bewail,
But Julep the drink of immortals became,
When Jove himself added a handful of hail.

I have mentioned the principal causes to which must be assigned the propensity to drink, so universal in America. This is an undeniable fact, asserted by every other writer, acknowledged by the Americans themselves in print, and proved by the labours of their Temperance Societies. It is not confined to the lower classes, but pervades the whole mass: of course, where there is most refinement, there is less intoxication, and in the Southern and Western States, it is that the custom of drinking is most

prevalent.

I have said that in the American hotels there is a parlour for the ladies to retire to: there is not one for the gentlemen, who have only the reading-room, where they stand and read the papers, which are laid out on desks, or the bar.

The bar of an American hotel is generally a very large room on the basement, fitted up very much like our gin palaces in London, not so elegant in its decorations indeed, but on the same system. A long counter runs across it, behind which stand two or three bar-keepers to wait upon the customers, and distribute the various potations, compounded from the contents of several rows of bottles behind them. Here the eye reposes on masses of pure crystal ice, large bunches of mint, decanters of every sort of wine, every variety of spirits, lemons, sugar, bitters, cigars and tobacco; it really makes one feel thirsty, even the going into a bar.[4] Here you meet every body and every body meets you. Here the senator, the member of Congress, the merchant, the store-keeper, travellers from the Far West, and every other part of the country, who have come to purchase goods, all congregate.

Most of them have a cigar in their mouth, some are transacting business, others conversing, some sitting down together whispering confidentially. Here you obtain all the news, all the scandal, all the politics, and all the fun; it is this dangerous propinquity, which occasions so much intemperance. Mr Head

[4] Every steam-boat has its bar. The theatres, all places of public amusement, and even the capitol itself; as I have observed in my Diary.

has no bar at the Mansion-house in Philadelphia, and the consequence is, that there is no drinking, except wine at dinner; but in all the other hotels, it would appear as if they purposely allowed the frequenters no room to retire to, so that they must be driven to the bar, which is by far the most profitable part of the concern.

The consequence of the bar being the place of general resort, is, that there is an unceasing pouring out, and amalgamation of alcohol, and other compounds, from morning to late at night. To drink with a friend when you meet him is good fellowship, to drink with a stranger is politeness, and a proof of wishing to be better acquainted.

Mr A is standing at the bar, enter B. "My dear B, how are you?"—"Quite well, and you?"—"Well, what shall it be?"—"Well, I don't care—a gin sling."—"Two gin slings, Bar-keeper." Touch glasses, and drink. Mr A has hardly swallowed his gin sling, and replaced his cigar, when, in comes Mr D. "A, how are you?"—"Ah! D, how goes it on with you?"—"Well, I thankey—what shall we have?"—"Well, I don't care; I say brandy cocktail."—"Give me another," both drink, and the shilling is thrown down on the counter.

Then B comes up again. "A, you must allow me to introduce my friend C."—"Mr A"—shake hands—"Most happy to make the acquaintance. I trust I shall have the pleasure of drinking —something with you?"—"With great pleasure, Mr A, I will take a julep."—"Two juleps, Bar-keeper."—"Mr C, your good

health"—"Mr A, yours; if you should come our way, most happy to see you,"—drink.

Now, I will appeal to the Americans themselves, if this is not a fair sample of a bar-room.

They say that the English cannot settle any thing properly, without a dinner. I am sure the Americans can fix nothing, without a drink. If you meet, you drink; if you part, you drink; if you make acquaintance, you drink; if you close a bargain you drink; they quarrel in their drink, and they make it up with a drink. They drink, because it is hot; they drink because it is cold. If successful in elections, they drink and rejoice; if not, they drink and swear; they begin to drink early in the morning, they leave off late at night; they commence it early in life, and they continue it, until they soon drop into the grave. To use their own expression, the way they drink, is "quite a caution"[5]. As for water, what the man said, when asked to belong to the Temperance Society, appears to be the general opinion, "it's very good for navigation."

So much has it become the habit to cement all friendship, and commence acquaintance by drinking, that it is a cause of serious offence to refuse, especially in a foreigner, as the Americans like to call the English. I was always willing to accommodate the Americans in this particular, as far as I could; (there at least, they will do me justice;) that at times I drank much more

[5] It was not a bad idea of a man who, generally speaking, was very low-spirited, on being asked the cause, replied, that he did not know, but he thought "that he had been born with *three drinks too little* in him."

than I wished is certain, yet still I gave most serious offence, especially in the West, because I would not drink early in the morning, or before dinner, which is a general custom in the States, although much more prevalent in the South and West, where it is literally, "Stranger, will you drink or fight?" This refusal on my part, or rather excusing myself from drinking with all those who were introduced to me, was eventually the occasion of much disturbance and of great animosity towards me —certainly, most unreasonably, as I was introduced to at least twenty every forenoon; and had I drunk with them all, I should have been in the same state as many of them were—that is, not really sober for three or four weeks at a time.

That the constitutions of the Americans must suffer from this habit is certain; they do not, however, appear to suffer so much as we should. They say that you may always know the grave of a Virginian; as from the quantity of juleps he has drunk, mint invariably springs up where he has been buried. But the Virginians are not the greatest drinkers, by any means. I was once looking for an American, and asked a friend of his, where I should find him. "Why," replied he, pointing to an hotel opposite, "that is his *licking place*, (a term borrowed from deer resorting to lick the salt:) we will see if he is there." He was not; the bar-keeper said he had left about ten minutes. "Well, then, you had better remain here, he is certain to be back in ten more—if not sooner." The American judged his friend rightly; in five minutes he was back again, and we had a drink together, of course.

I did not see it myself, but I was told that somewhere in Missouri, or thereabouts, west of the Mississippi, all the bars have what they term a *kicking-board*, it being the custom with the people who live there, instead of touching glasses when they drink together, to kick sharply with the side of the foot against the board, and that after this ceremony you are sworn friends. I have had it mentioned to me by more than one person, therefore I presume it is the case. What the origin of it is I know not, unless it intends to imply, "I'm your's to the *last kick*."

Before I finish this article on hotels, I may as well observe here that there is a custom in the United States, which I consider very demoralising to the women, which is that of taking up permanent residence in large hotels.

There are several reasons for this: one is, that people marry so very early that they cannot afford to take a house with the attendant expenses, for in America it is cheaper to live in a large hotel than to keep a house of your own; another is, the difficulty of obtaining servants, and, perhaps, the unwillingness of the women to have the fatigue and annoyance which is really occasioned by an establishment in that country: added to which is the want of society, arising from their husbands being from morning to night plodding at their various avocations. At some of the principal hotels you will find the apartments of the lodgers so permanently taken, that the plate with their name engraved on it is fixed on the door. I could almost tell whether a lady in America kept own establishment or lived at an hotel, the difference of

manners are so marked; and, what is worse, it is chiefly the young married couples who are to be found there. Miss Martineau makes some very just comments upon this practice:—

"The uncertainty about domestic service is so great, and the economy of boarding-house life so tempting to people who have not provided themselves with house and furniture, that it is not to be wondered at that many young married people use the accommodation provided. But no sensible husband, who could beforehand become acquainted with the liabilities incurred, would willingly expose his domestic peace to the fearful risk. I saw enough when I saw the elegantly dressed ladies repair to the windows of the common drawing-room, on their husbands' departure to the counting-house after breakfast.

"I have been assured that there is no end to the difficulties in which gentlemen have been involved, both as to their commercial and domestic affairs, by the indiscretion of their thoughtless young wives, amidst the idleness and levities of boarding-house life. As for the gentlemen, they are much to be pitied. Public meals, a noisy house, confinement to one or two private rooms, with the absence of all gratifications of their own peculiar convenience and taste, are but a poor solace to the man of business, after the toils and cares of the day. When to these are added the snares to which their wives are exposed, it may be imagined that men of sense and refinement would rather bear with any domestic inconvenience from the uncertainty and bad quality of help, than give up housekeeping."

If such is the case in boarding-houses, what must it be in hotels, where the male company is ever changing. It is one constant life of scandal, flirting, eating, drinking, and living in public; the sense of delicacy is destroyed, and the women remind you of the flowers that have been breathed upon till they have lost their perfume.

Miss M observes:—

"I can only say, that I unavoidably knew of more eases of lapse in highly respectable families in one State than ever came to my knowledge at home; and that they were got over with a disgrace far more temporary and superficial than they could have been visited with in England."

If this observation is correct, it must, in my opinion, be considered as referring to that portion of the sex who live in *hotels*, certainly not to the mass, for reasons which I shall hereafter point out.

Indeed, what I have seen at some of the large hotels fully bears out her assertion. Miss M talks of young ladies being *taken* to the piano in a promiscuous company. I have seen them go to the piano without being taken there, sit down and sing with all the energy of peacocks, before total strangers, and very often without accompaniment. In the hotels, the private apartments of the boarders seldom consist of more than a large bed-room, and although company are admitted into it, still it is natural that the major portion of the women's time should be passed down below in the general receiving room. In the evening, especially in the

large western cities, they have balls almost every night; indeed it is a life of idleness and vacuity of outward pretence, but of no real good feeling.

Scandal rages—every one is busy with watching her neighbour's affairs; those who have boarded there longest take the lead, and every newcomer or stranger is canvassed with the most severe scrutiny; their histories are ascertained, and they are very often sent to Coventry, for little better reason than the will of those who, as residents, lay down the law.

Indeed, I never witnessed a more ridiculous compound of pretended modesty, and real want of delicacy, than is to be found with this class of sojourners on the highway. Should any of their own sex arrive, of whom some little scandal has been afloat, they are up in arms, and down they plump in their rocking-chairs; and although the hotel may cover nearly an acre of ground, so afraid are they of contamination, that they declare they will not go down to dinner, or eat another meal in the hotel, until the obnoxious parties "clear out." The proprietors are summoned, husbands are bullied, and, rather than indignant virtue should starve in her rocking-chair, a committee is formed, and the libelled parties, guilty or not guilty, are requested to leave the hotel. As soon as this purification is announced, virtue, appeased, recovers her appetite, and they all eat drink, talk scandal, flirt, and sing without invitation as before.

I have been severe upon this class of society in America, not only because I consider that it deserves it, but because I wish to

point out that Miss Martineau's observations must be considered as referring to it, and not to the general character of the American woman.

Note 1. The Americans are apt to boast that they have not to pay for civility, as we do in England, by facing waiters, coachmen, etcetera. In some respects this is true, but in the cities the custom has become very prevalent. A man who attends a large dinner-table, will of course pay more attention to those who give him something, than to those who do not; one gives him something, and another, if he wishes for attention and civility, is obliged to do the same thing. In some of the hotels at New York, and in the principal cities, you not only must fee, but you must fee much higher than you do in England, if you want to be comfortable.

Note 2. If I am rightly informed; there are very unpleasant cutaneous diseases to which the Americans are subject, from the continual use of the same brush and comb, and from sleeping together, etcetera, but it is a general custom. At Philadelphia, a large ball was given, (called, I think, the Fireman's Ball,) and at which about 1,500 people were present, all the fashion of Philadelphia; yet even here there were six combs, and six brushes, placed in a room with six looking-glasses for the use of *all* the gentlemen. An American has come into my room in New York, and *sans cérémonie* taken up my hair-brush, and amused himself with brushing his head. They are certainly very unrefined in the toilet as yet. When I was travelling, on my arrival

at a city I opened my dressing case, and a man passing by my room when the door was open, attracted by the glitter, I presume, came in and looked at the apparatus which is usually contained in such articles—"Pray, Sir," said he, "are you a *dentist*?"

Note 5. In a chapter which follows this, I have said that the women of America are physically superior to the men. This may appear contradictory, as of course they could not be born so; nor are they, for I have often remarked how very fine the American male children are, especially those lads who have grown up to the age of fourteen or sixteen. One could hardly believe it possible that the men are the same youths, advanced in life. How is this to be accounted for? I can only suppose that it is from their plunging too early into life as men, having thrown off parental control, and commencing the usual excesses of young men in every country at too tender an age. The constant stimulus of drink must, of course, be another powerful cause; not that the Americans often become intoxicated, on the contrary, you will see many more in this condition every day in this country than you will in America. But occasional intoxication is not so injurious to the constitution as that continual application of spirits, which must enfeeble the stomach, and, with the assistance of tobacco, destroy its energies. The Americans are a *drinking* but not a *drunken*, nation, and, as I have before observed, the climate operates upon them very powerfully.

# Volume One—Chapter Five

## Emigration and Migration

In this chapter I shall confine myself to the emigration to the United States, reserving that to Canada until I remark upon that colony. In discussing this question I have no statistics to refer to, and must, therefore, confine myself to general observations.

What the amount of emigration from the Old Continent to the United States may be at present I do not think the Americans themselves can tell, as many who arrive at New York go on to the Canadas. The emigrants are, however, principally English, Irish, and German; latterly, the emigration to New South Wales, New Zealand, and particularly Texas, has reduced the influx of emigrants to the United States.

It ought to be pointed out, that among the emigrants are to be found the portion of the people in the United States the most disaffected and the most violent against England and its monarchical institutions; and who assist very much to keep up the feelings of dislike and ill-will which exist towards us. Nor is this to be wondered at; the happy and the wealthy do not go into exile; they are mostly disappointed and unhappy men, who attribute their misfortunes, often occasioned by their own imprudence,

to any cause but the true one, and hate their own country and its institutions because they have been unfortunate in it. They form Utopian ideas of liberty and prosperity to be obtained by emigration; they discover that they have been deceived, and would willingly, if possible, return to the country they have abjured, and the friends they have left behind. This produces an increase of irritation and ill-will, and they become the more violent vituperative in proportion as they feel the change.[6]

I have had many conversations with English emigrants in the United States, and I never yet found one at all respectable, who did not confess to me that he repented of emigration. One great cause of this is honourable to them; they feel that in common plain-dealing they are no match for the keen-witted, and I must add unprincipled, portion of the population with which they are thrown in contact. They must either sacrifice their principle or not succeed.

Many have used the same expression to me. "It is no use, sir, you must either turn regular Yankee and do as they do, or you have no chance of getting on in this country."

These people are much to be pitied; I used to listen to them

[6] I was once conversing with one who was formerly very popular with the democrats, but who was likely to be outset by another demagogue, who "went the whole hog," down to the Agrarian system. "Captain," said he, with his fist clenched, "I'm the very personification of democracy, but I'm out-Heroded by this fellow. The emigrants are a pack of visionaries, who don't know what they want. The born Americans I can deal with, but with these newcomers democracy is not sufficient; they want a mobocracy, and I suppose we must have it."—"You have it now," replied I.—"Well, captain, I believe you're right."

with feelings of deep compassion. Having torn themselves away from old associations, and broken the links which should have bound them to their native soil, with the expectation of finding liberty, equality, and competence in a new country, they have discovered when too late that they have not a fraction of the liberty which is enjoyed in the country which they have left; that they have severed themselves from their friends to live amongst those with whom they do not like to associate; that they must now labour with their own hands, instead of employing others; and that the competence they expected, if it is to be obtained, must be so by a sacrifice of those principles of honesty and fair-dealing imbibed in their youth, adhered to in their manhood, but which now that they have transplanted themselves, are gradually, although unwillingly, yielded up to the circumstances of their position.

I was once conversing with an Irishman; he was not very well pleased with his change; I laughed at him, and said, "But here you are free, Paddy."—"Free?" replied he, "and pray who the devil was to buy or sell me when I was in Ireland? Free! och! that's all talk; you're free to work as hard as a horse, and get but little for so doing."

The German emigrants are by far the most contented and well-behaved. They trouble themselves less about politics, associate with one another as much as possible, and when they take a farm, always, if they possibly can, get it in the neighbourhood of their own countrymen.

The emigrants most troublesome, but, at the same time, the most valuable to the United States, are the Irish. Without this class of people the Americans would not have been able to complete the canals and rail-roads, and many other important works. They are, in fact, the principal labourers of the country, for the poor Germans who come out prefer being employed in any other way than in agriculture, until they amass sufficient to obtain farms of their own. As for the Irish, there are not many of them who possess land in the United States, the major portion of them remain labourers, and die very little better off than when they went out. Some of them set up groceries (these are the most calculating and intelligent,)—and by allowing their countrymen to run in debt for liquor, etcetera, they obtain control over them, and make contracts with the government agents, or other speculators (very advantageous to themselves,) to supply so many men for public works; by these means a few acquire a great deal of money, while the many remain in comparative indigence.

We have been accustomed to ascribe the turbulence of the Irish lower classes to ill-treatment and a sense of their wrongs, but this disposition appears to follow them every where. It would be supposed that, having emigrated to America and obtained the rights of citizens, they would have amalgamated and fraternised to a certain degree with the people: but such is not the case; they hold themselves completely apart and distinct, living with their families in the same quarter of the city, and adhering to their own manners and customs. They are just as little pleased with the

institutions of the United States as they are with the government at home; the fact is, that they would prefer no government at all, if (as Paddy himself would say) they knew where to find it. They are the leaders in all the political rows and commotions, and very powerful as a party in all elections, not only on account of their numbers (if I recollect rightly, they muster 40,000 at New York,) but by their violence preventing other people from coming to the poll; and, farther, by multiplying themselves, so as greatly to increase their force, by voting several times over, which they do by going from one ward to another. I was told by one of them that, on the last election he had voted *seven* times.[7]

An American once said to me that the lower Irish ruled the United States, and he attempted to prove his assertion as follows:

The New York election is carried by the Irish; now the New York election has great influence upon the other elections, and often carries the State. The State of New York has great influence upon the elections of other States, and therefore the Irish of New York govern the country.—QED.

The Irish, in one point, appear to improve in the United States —they become much more provident, and many of them hoard their money. They put it into the Savings Banks, and when they have put in the sum allowed by law to one person, they deposite in other names.

A captain of one of the steam-boats told me an anecdote or

[7] I don't know why, but there is no scrutiny of the votes in American elections, or if there be, I never heard of one being made.

two relative to the Irish emigrants, by which it would appear that they are more saving of their money than is quite consistent with honesty.

He constantly received them on board, and said that sometimes, if they were very few, they would declare at the end of the trip that they had no money, although when detained they never failed to produce it; if they were very numerous they would attempt to fight their way without paying. In one instance, an Irishman declared that he had no money, when the captain, to punish him, seized his old jacket, and insisted upon retaining it for payment. The Irishman suffered it to be taken off, expecting, it is to be presumed, that it would be returned to him as valueless, when the captain jerked it overboard. "Oh! murder!—captain, drop the boat," cried Paddy; "pick my jacket up, or I'm a ruined man. *All* my *money's* in it." The jacket was fortunately picked up before it sank, and, on ripping it up, it was found to contain, sewed up in it, upwards of fifty sovereigns and gold eagles. The same captain narrated to me the particulars of one instance in which about one hundred Irish were on board, who when asked for payment, commenced an attack upon the captain and crew with their bludgeons; but, having before experienced such attempts, he was prepared for them, and receiving assistance from the shore, the Irishmen were worsted, and then every man paid his fare. The truth is that they are very turbulent, and the lower orders of the Americans are very much enraged against them. On the 4th of July there were several bodies of Americans,

who were out on the look-out for the Irish, after dark, and many of the latter were severely beaten, if not murdered; the Irish, however, have to thank themselves for it.

The spirit of the institutions of the States is so opposed to servitude, that it is chiefly from the emigrants that the Americans obtain their supply of domestics; the men servants in the private houses may be said to be, with few exceptions, either emigrants or free people of colour. Amongst other points upon which the Americans are to be pitied, and for which the most perfect of theoretical governments could never compensate, is the misery and annoyance to which they are exposed from their domestics. They are absolutely slaves to them, especially in the western free States; there are no regulations to control them. At any fancied affront they leave the house without a moment's warning, putting on their hats or bonnets, and walking out of the street-door, leaving their masters and mistresses to get on how they can. I remember when I was staying with a gentleman in the west, that, on the first day of my arrival, he apologised to me for not having a man servant, the fellow having then been drunk for a week; a woman had been hired to help for a portion of the day, but most of the labour fell upon his wife, whom I found one morning cleaning my room. The fellow remained ten days drunk, and then (all his money being spent) sent to his master to say that he would come back on condition that he would give him a little more liquor. To this proposition the gentleman was compelled to assent, and the man returned as if he had conferred a favour.

The next day, at dinner, there being no porter up, the lady said to her husband, "Don't send for it, but go *yourself*, my dear; he is so very cross again that I fear he will leave the house." A lady of my acquaintance in New York told her coachman that she should give him warning; the reply from the box was —"I reckon I have been too long in the woods to be scared with an owl." Had she noticed this insolence, he would probably have got down from the box, and have left her to drive her own cattle. The coloured servants are, generally speaking, the most civil; after them the Germans; the Irish and English are very bad. At the hotels, etcetera, you very often find Americans in subordinate situations, and it is remarkable that when they are so, they are much more civil than the imported servants. Few of the American servants, even in the large cities, understand their business, but it must be remembered that few of them have ever learnt it, and, moreover, they are expected to do three times as much as a servant would do in an English house. The American houses are much too large for the number of servants employed, which is another cause for service being so much disliked.

It is singular that I have not found in any one book, written by English, French, or German travellers, any remarks made upon a custom which the Americans have of almost entirely living, I may say, in the basement of their houses; and which is occasioned by their difficulties in housekeeping with their insufficient domestic establishments. I say custom of the Americans, as it is the case in nine houses out of ten; only the more wealthy travelled, and

refined portion of the community in their cities deviating from the general practice.

I have before observed that, from the wish of display, the American houses are generally speaking, too large for the proprietors and for the domestics which are employed. Vying with each other in appearance, their receiving rooms are splendidly furnished, but they do not live in them.

The basement in the front area, which with us is usually appropriated to the housekeeper's-room and offices, is in most of their houses fitted up as a dining-room; by no means a bad plan, as it is cool in summer, warm in winter, and saves much trouble to the servants. The dinner is served up in it, direct from the kitchen, with which it communicates. The master of the house, unless he dines late, which is seldom the case in American cities, does not often come home to dinner, and the preparations for the family are of course not very troublesome. But although they go on very well in their daily routine, to give a dinner is to the majority of the Americans really an effort, not from the disinclination to give one, but from the indifference and ignorance of the servants; and they may be excused without being taxed with want of hospitality. It is a very common custom, therefore, for the Americans to invite you to come and "*take wine*" with them, that is to come after dinner, when you will find cakes, ices, wine, and company, already prepared. But there is something unpleasant in this arrangement; it is too much like the bar of the tavern in the west, with—"Stranger, will you drink?" It must, however, be

recollected that there are many exceptions to what I have above stated as the general practice. There are houses in the principal cities of the States where you will sit down to as well-arranged and elegant a dinner as you will find in the best circles of London and Paris; but the proprietors are men of wealth, who have in all probability been on the old continent, and have imbibed a taste for luxury and refinement generally unknown and unfelt in the new hemisphere.

I once had an instance of what has been repeatedly observed by other travellers of the dislike to be considered as servants in this land of equality.

I was on board of a steam-boat from Detroit to Buffalo, and entered into conversation with a young woman who was leaning over the taffrail. She had been in service, and was returning home.

"You say you lived with Mr W.?"

"No, I didn't," replied she, rather tartly; "I said I lived with *Mrs*. W."

"Oh, I understand. In what situation did you live?"

"I lived in the house."

"Of course you did, but what as?"

"What as? As a *gal* should live."

"I mean what did you do?"

"I helped Mrs W."

"And now you are tired of helping others?"

"Guess I am."

"Who is your father?"

"He's a doctor."

"A doctor! and he allows you to go out?"

"He said I might please myself."

"Will he be pleased at your coming home again?"

"I went out to please myself, and I come home to please myself. Cost him nothing for four months; that's more than all gals can say."

"And now you're going home to spend your money?"

"Don't want to go home for that, it's all gone."

I have been much amused with the awkwardness and nonchalant manners of the servants in America. Two American ladies who had just returned from Europe, told me that shortly after their arrival at Boston, a young man had been sent to them from Vermont to do the duty of footman. He had been a day or two in the house, when they rang the bell and ordered him to bring up two glasses of lemonade. He made his appearance with the lemonade, which had been prepared and given to him on a tray by a female servant, but the ladies, who were sitting one at each end of a sofa and conversing, not being ready for it just then, said to him—"We'll take it presently, John."—"Guess I can wait," replied the man, deliberately taking his seat on the sofa between them, and placing the tray on his knees.

When I was at Tremont House, I was very intimate with a family who were staying there. One morning we had been pasting something, and the bell was rung by one of the daughters, a

very fair girl with flaxen hair, who wanted some water to wash her hands. An Irish waiter answered the bell. “Did you ring, ma’am?”—“Yes, Peter, I want a little warm water.”—“Is it to *shave with*, miss?” inquired Paddy, very gravely.

But the emigration from the old continent is of little importance compared to the migration which takes place in the country itself.

As I have before observed, all America is working west. In the north, the emigration by the lakes is calculated at 100,000 per annum, of which about 30,000, are foreigners; the others are the natives of New England and the other eastern States, who are exchanging from a sterile soil to one “flowing with milk and honey.” But those who migrate are not all of them agriculturalists; the western States are supplied from the north-eastern with their merchants, doctors, schoolmasters, lawyers, and, I may add, with their members of congress, senators, and governors. New England is a *school*, a sort of manufactory of various professions, fitted for all purposes—a talent bazaar, where you have every thing at choice; in fact, what Mr Tocqueville says is very true, and the States fully deserve the compliment.

“The civilisation of New England has been like a beacon lit upon a hill, which, after it has diffused its warmth around, tinges the distant horizon with its glory.”

From the great extent of this emigration to the west, it is said that the female population in the New England states is

greater than the male. In the last returns of Massachusetts the total population was given, but males and females were not given separately, an omission which induces one to believe that such was the truth.[8]

But it is not only from the above States that the migration takes place; the fondness for "shifting right away," the eagerness for speculation, and the by no means exaggerated reports of the richness of the western country, induce many who are really well settled in the States of New York, Pennsylvania, and other fertile States, to sell all and turn to the west. The State of Ohio alone is supposed to have added many more than a million to her population since the last census. An extensive migration of white population takes place from North and South Carolina and the adjacent States, while from the eastern Slave States, there is one continual stream of black population pouring in, frequently the cavalcade headed by the masters of their families.

As the numerous tributary streams pour their waters into the Mississippi, so do rivers of men from every direction continually and unceasingly flow into the west. It is indeed the promised land, and that the whites should have been detained in the eastern States so long without a knowledge of the fertile soil beyond the Alleghanines, reminds you of the tarrying of the Jewish nation

[8] "The young men of New England migrate in large numbers to the west, leaving an over proportion of female population, the amount of which I never could learn. Statements were made to me, but so incredible that I withhold them. Suffice it, that there were more women than men in from six to nine States in the Union."—Miss Martineau.

in the wilderness before they were permitted to take possession of their inheritance.

Here there is matter for deep reflection. I have already given my opinion upon the chances of the separation of the northern and Southern States upon the question of slavery; but it appears to me, that while the eyes of their legislators have been directed with so much interest to the prospects arising from the above question, that their backs have been turned to a danger much more imminent, and which may be attended by no less consequences than a convulsion of the whole Union.

The Southern and Northern States may separate on the question of slavery, and yet be in reality better friends than they were before: but what will be the consequence, when the Western States become, as they assuredly will, so populous and powerful, as to control the Union; for not only population, but power and wealth, are fast working their way to the west. New Orleans will be the first maritime port in the universe, and Cincinnati will not only be the Queen of the West, but Queen of the Western World. Then will come the real clashing of interests, and the Eastern States must be content to succumb and resign their present power, or the Western will throw them off, as an useless appendage to her might. This may at present appear chimerical to some, and would be considered by many others as too far distant; but be it remembered, that ten years in America, is as a century; and even allowing the prosperity of the United States to be checked, as very probably it may soon be, by any quarrel with

a foreign nation, the Western States will not be those who will suffer. Far removed from strife, the population hardly interfered with, when the Eastern resources are draining, they will continue to advance in population, and to increase in wealth. I refer not to the Slave States bordering on the Mississippi, although I consider that they would suffer little from a war, as neither England, nor any other nation, will ever be so unwise in future as to attack in a quarter, where she would have extended the olive branch, even if it were not immediately accepted. Whether America is engaged in war, therefore, or remains in peace, the Western States must, and will soon be the arbiters, and dictate as they please to the Eastern.

At present, they may be considered as infants, not yet of age, and the Eastern States are their guardians; the profits of their produce are divided between them and the merchants of the Eastern cities, who receive at least thirty per cent. as their share. This must be the case at present, when the advances of the Eastern capitalists are required by the cotton growers, who are precisely in the same position with the Eastern States, as the West India planters used to be with the merchants of London and Liverpool, to whom they consigned their cargoes for advances received. But the Western States (to follow up the metaphor) will soon be of age, and no longer under control: even last year, vessels were freighted direct from England to Vicksburg, on the Mississippi; in a few years, there will be large importing houses in the Far West, who will have their goods direct from England at

one half the price which they now pay for them, when forwarded from New York, by canal, and other conveyances.[9] Indeed, a very little inquiry will prove, that the prosperity of the Eastern free States depends in a great measure upon the Western and Southern. The Eastern States are the receivers and transporters of goods, and the carriers of most of the produce of the Union. They advance money on the crops, and charge high interest, commissions, etcetera. The transport and travelling between the Eastern, Southern, and Western States, are one great source of this prosperity, from the employment on the canals, rail roads, and steam boats.

All these are heavy charges to the Western States, and can be avoided by shipping direct from, and sending their produce direct to, the Old Continent. As the Western States advance in wealth, so will they advance in power, and in proportion as they so do, will the Eastern States recede, until they will be left in a small minority, and will eventually have little voice in the Union.

Here, then, is a risk of convulsion; for the clashing of interests, next to a war, is the greatest danger to which a democracy can be exposed. In a democracy, every one legislates, and every one legislates for his own interests. The Eastern States will still be wealthy and formidable, from their population; but the commerce of the principal Eastern cities will decrease, and they

[9] To give the reader some idea of the price of European articles in the Western country, I will mention cloth. A coat which costs 4 pounds in England, is charged 7 pounds 10 shillings at New York; and at Cincinnati, in the West, upwards of 10 pounds.

will have little or no staple produce to return to England, or elsewhere, whereas the Western States can produce every thing that the heart of man can desire, and can be wholly independent of them. They have, in the West, every variety of coal and mineral, to a boundless extent; a rich alluvial soil, hardly to be exhausted by bad cultivation, and wonderful facilities of transport; independent of the staple produce of cotton, they might supply the whole world with grain; sugar they already cultivate; the olive flourishes; wine is already produced on the banks of the Ohio, and the prospect of raising silk is beyond calculation. In a few days, the manufactures of the Old World can find their way from the mouth of the Mississippi by its thousand tributary streams, which run like veins through every portion of the country, to the confines of Arkansas and Missouri, to the head of navigation at St. Peter's, on again to Wisconsin, Michigan, and to the Northern lakes, at a *much cheaper rate* than they are supplied at present.

One really is lost in admiration when one surveys this great and glorious Western country, and contemplates the splendour and riches to which it must ultimately arrive.

As soon as the Eastern States are no longer permitted to remain the factors of the Western, they must be content to become manufacturing states, and probably will compete with England. The Western States, providentially, I may say, are not likely to be manufacturers to any great extent, since they have not *water* powers; the valley of the Mississippi is an alluvial flat,

and although the Missouri and Mississippi are swift streams, in general the rivers are sluggish, and, at all events, they have not the precipitate falls of water necessary for machinery, and which abound in the North-eastern States; indeed, if the Western States were to attempt to manufacture, as well as to produce, they would spoil the market for their own produce. Whatever may be the result, whether the Eastern States submit quietly to be shorn of their greatness, (a change which must take place,) or to contest the point until it ends in a separation, this is certain, that the focus of American wealth and power will eventually be firmly established in the Free States on the other side of the Alleghany mountains.

# Volume One—Chapter Six

## Newspaper Press

Mr Tocqueville observes, "that not a single individual of the twelve millions who inhabit the territory of the United States has as yet dared to propose any restrictions upon the liberty of the press." This is true, and all the respectable Americans acknowledge that this liberty has degenerated into a licentiousness which threatens the most alarming results; as it has assumed a power, which awes not only individuals, but the government itself. A due liberty allowed to the press, may force a government to do right, but a licentiousness may compel it into error. The American author, Mr Cooper, very justly remarks: "It may be taken as a rule, that *without* the liberty of the press there can be no *popular liberty* in a nation, and without its licentiousness, neither *public honesty, justice*, or a proper regard for *character*. Of the two, perhaps, that people is the happiest which is deprived altogether of a free press, as private honesty and a healthful tone of the public mind are not incompatible with narrow institutions, though neither can exist under the corrupting action of a licentiousness press."

And again—"As the press of this country now exists, it would

seem to be expressly devised by the great agent of mischief, to depress and destroy all that is good, and to elevate and advance all that is evil in the nation. The little truth which is urged, is usually urged coarsely, weakened and rendered vicious by personalities, while those who live by falsehoods, fallacies, enmities, partialities, and the schemes of the designing, find the press the very instrument that devils would invent to effect their designs."

A witty, but unprincipled statesman of our own times, has said, that "speech was bestowed on man to conceal his thoughts;" judging from its present condition, he might have added—"the press, in America, to *pervert truth*."

But were I to quote the volumes of authority from American and English writers, they would tire the reader. The above are for the present quite sufficient to establish the fact, that the press in the United States is licentious to the highest possible degree, and defies control; my object is to point out the effect of this despotism upon society, and to show how injurious it is in every way to the cause of morality and virtue.

Of course, the newspaper press is the most mischievous, in consequence of its daily circulation, the violence of political animosity, and the want of respectability in a large proportion of the editors. The number of papers published and circulated in Great Britain, among a population of twenty-six millions, is calculated at about three hundred and seventy. The number published in the United States, among thirteen millions, are

supposed to vary between *nine and ten thousand*. Now the value of newspapers may be fairly calculated by the capital expended upon them; and not only is not one-quarter of the sum expended in England, upon three hundred and seventy newspapers, expended upon the nine or ten thousand in America; but I really believe that the expense of the '*Times*' newspaper alone, is equal to at least five *thousand* of the *minor* papers in the United States, which are edited by people of no literary pretension, and at an expense so trifling as would appear to us not only ridiculous, but impossible. As to the capabilities of the majority of the editors, let the Americans speak for themselves.

"Every wretch who can write an English paragraph (and many who cannot,) every pettifogger without practice, every one whose poverty or crimes have just left him cash or credit enough to procure a press and types, sets up a newspaper."

Again—"If you be puzzled what to do with your son, if he be a born dunce, if reading and writing be all the accomplishments he can acquire, if he be horribly ignorant and depraved, if he be indolent and an incorrigible liar, lost to all shame and decency, and incurably dishonest, make a newspaper editor of him. Look around you, and see a thousand successful proofs that no excellence or acquirement, moral or intellectual, is requisite to conduct a press. The more defective an editor is, the better he succeeds. We could give a thousand instances."—*Boston News.*

These are the assertions of the Americans, not my own; that in many instances they are true, I have no doubt. In a country

so chequered as the United States, such must be expected; but I can also assert, that there are many very highly respectable and clever editors in the United States. The New York papers are most of them very well conducted, and very well written. The New York Courier and Enquirer, Colonel Webb; the Evening Star, by Noah; the Albion, by Doctor Birtlett; Spirit of the Times, and many others, which are too numerous to quote, are equal to many of the English newspapers. The best written paper in the States, and the happiest in its sarcasm and wit, is the Louisville Gazette, conducted by Mr Prentice of Kentucky; indeed, the western papers, are, generally speaking, more amusing and witty than the eastern; the New Orleans Picayune, by Kendall, is perhaps, after Prentice's, the most amusing; but there are many more, which are too numerous to mention, which do great credit to American talent. Still the majority are disgraceful not only from their vulgarity, but from their odious personalities and disregard to truth. The bombast and ignorance shown in some of these is very amusing. Here is an extract or two from the small newspapers published in the less populous countries. An editor down East, speaking of his own merits, thus concludes—"I'm a real catastrophe—a small creation; Mount Vesuvius at the top, with red hot lava pouring out of the crater, and routing nations —my fists are rocky mountains—arms, whig liberty poles, with iron springs. Every step I take is an earthquake—every blow I strike is a clap of thunder—and every breath I breathe is a tornado. My disposition is Dupont's best, and goes off at a flash

—when I blast there'll be nothing left but a hole three feet in circumference and no end to its depth."

Another writes the account of a storm as follows:—

"On Monday afternoon, while the haymakers were all out gathering in the hay, in anticipation of a shower from the small cloud that was seen hanging over the hilly regions towards the south-east, a tremendous storm suddenly burst upon them, and forced them to seek shelter from its violence. The wind whistled outrageously through the old elms, scattering the beautiful foliage, and then going down into the meadow, where the men had just abruptly left their work unfinished, and overturning the half-made ricks, whisked them into the air, and filled the *whole afternoon* full of hay."

I copied the following from a western paper:—

"Yes, my countrymen, a dawn begins to open upon us; the crepusculous rays of returning republicanism are fast extending over the darkness of our political horizon, and before their brightness, those myrmidons shall slink away to the abode of the demons who have generated them, in the hollow caves of darkness."

Again—"Many who have acquired great fame and celebrity in the world, began their career as printers. Sir William Blackstone, the learned English commentator of laws, was a printer by trade. *King Charles the Third* was a printer, and not unfrequently worked at the trade after he ascended the throne of England."

Who Charles the Third of England was I do not know, as he

is not yet mentioned in any of our histories.

The most remarkable newspaper for its obscenity, and total disregard for all decency and truth in its personal attacks, is the Morning Herald of New York, published by a person of the name of Bennett, and being published in so large a city, it affords a convincing proof with what impunity the most licentious attacks upon private characters are permitted. But Mr Bennett is *sui generis*; and demands particular notice. He is indeed a remarkable man, a species of philosopher, who acts up to his tenets with a moral courage not often to be met with in the United States. His maxim appears to be this—"Money will find me every thing in this world, and money I will have, at any risk, except that of my life, as, if I lost that, the money would be useless." Acting upon this creed, he has lent his paper to the basest and most malignant purposes, to the hatred of all that is respectable and good, defaming and inventing lies against every honest man, attacking the peace and happiness of private families by the most injurious and base calumny. As may be supposed, he has been horse-whipped, kicked, trodden under foot, and spat upon, and degraded in every possible way; but all this he courts, because it brings money. Horse-whip him, and he will bend his back to the lash, and thank you, as every blow is worth so many dollars. Kick him, and he will remove his coat tails, that you may have a better mark, and he courts the application of the toe, while he counts the total of the damages which he may obtain. Spit upon him, and he prizes it as precious ointment, for it brings him

the sovereign remedy for his disease, a fever for specie.

The day after the punishment, he publishes a full and particular account of how many kicks, tweaks of the nose, or lashes he may have received. He prostitutes his pen, his talent, every thing for money. His glory is, that he has passed the rubicon of shame; and all he regrets is, that the public is at last coming to the unanimous opinion, that he is too contemptible, too degraded, to be even touched. The other, and more respectable editors of newspapers, avoid him, on account of the filth which he pours forth; like a polecat, he may be hunted down; but no dog will ever attempt to worry him, as soon as he pours out the contents of his foetid bag.

It is a convincing proof of the ardent love of defamation in this country, that this modern Thersites, who throws the former of that name so immeasurably into the background, has still great sway over men in office; every one almost, who has a character, is afraid of him, and will purchase his silence, if they cannot his good will.

During the crash at New York, when even the suspicion of insolvency was fatal, this miscreant published some of the most respectable persons of New York as bankrupts, and yet received no punishment. His paper is clever, that is certain; but I very much doubt if Bennett is the clever man—and my reason is this, Bennett was for some time in England, and during that time the paper, so far from falling off, was better written than before. I myself, before I had been six weeks in the country, was attacked

by this wretch, and, at the same time, the paper was sent to me with this small note on the margin:– "Send twenty dollars, and it shall be stopped."—"I only wish you may get it," said I to myself.[10]

Captain Hamilton, speaking of the newspaper press in America, says—

"In order to form a fair estimate of their merit, I read newspapers from all parts of the union, and found them utterly contemptible, in point of talent, and dealing in abuse so virulent, as to excite a feeling of disgust,—not only with the writers, but with the public which afforded them support. Tried by this standard—and I know not how it can be objected to—the moral feeling of this people must be estimated lower than in any deductions from other circumstances I have ventured to rate it."

In the following remarks, also, I most cordially agree with him. "Our newspaper and periodical press is bad enough. Its sins against propriety cannot be justified, and ought not to be defended. But its violence is meekness, its liberty restraint, and even its atrocities are virtues, when compared with that system of *brutal and ferocious outrage* which distinguishes the press in America. In England, even an insinuation against personal honour is intolerable. A hint—a breath—the contemplation even of a possibility of tarnish—such things are sufficient to poison

[10] *Some* of the *invented calumnies* against me found their way to this country. I consider the contents of this chapter to be a sufficient refutation, not only of what has been, but of what will in all probability be hereafter asserted against me by the American press.

the tranquillity, and, unless met by prompt vindication, to ruin the character of a public man; but in America, it is thought necessary to have recourse to other weapons. The strongest epithets of a ruffian vocabulary are put in requisition."

It may be asked, how is it possible that an "enlightened nation" can permit such atrocity. It must be remembered, that newspapers are vended at a very low price throughout the States, and that the support of the major portion of them is derived from the ignorant and lower classes. Every man in America reads his newspaper, and hardly any thing else; and while he considers that he is assisting to govern the nation, he is in fact, the dupe of those who pull the strings in secret, and by flattering his vanity, and exciting his worst feelings, make him a poor tool in their hands. People are too apt to imagine that the newspapers echo their own feelings; when the fact is, that by taking in a paper, which upholds certain opinions, the readers are, by daily repetition, become so impressed with these opinions, that they have become slaves to them. I have before observed, that learning to read and write is not education, and but too often is the occasion of the demoralisation of those, who might have been more virtuous and more happy in their ignorance. The other day when I was in a steam-vessel, going down to Gravesend, I observed a foot-boy sitting on one of the benches—he was probably ten or eleven years old, and was deeply engaged in reading a cheap periodical, mostly confined to the lower orders of this country called the Penny Paul Pry. Surely it had been a blessing to the lad, if he

had never learnt to read or write, if he confined his studies, as probably too many do, from want of farther leisure, to such an immoral and disgusting publication.

In a country where every man is a politician, and flatters himself that he is assisting to govern the country, political animosities must of course be carried to the greatest lengths, and the press is the vehicle for party violence; but Captain Hamilton's remarks are so forcible, and so correct, that I prefer them to any I could make myself.

"The opponents of a candidate for office, are generally not content with denouncing his principles, or deducing from the tenor of his political life, grounds for questioning the purity of his motives. They accuse him boldly of *burglary* or *arson*, or at the very least, of petty larceny. *Time, place and circumstances*, are all stated. The candidate for Congress or the Presidency, is broadly asserted to have *picked pockets*, or pocketed silver spoons, or to have been guilty of something equally mean and contemptible. Two instances of this, occur at this moment to my memory. In one newspaper, a member of Congress was denounced as having feloniously broken open a scrutoire, and having thence stolen certain bills and banknotes; another was charged with selling franks at twopence a piece, and thus coppering his pockets at the expense of the public."

But let me add the authority of Americans. Mr Webster, in his celebrated speech on the public lands, observes in that powerful and nervous language for which he is so celebrated:– "It

is one of the thousand calumnies with which the press teemed, during an excited political canvass. It was a charge, of which there was not only no proof or probability, but which was, in itself, wholly impossible to be true. No man of common information ever believed a syllable of it. Yet it was of that class of falsehoods, which by continued repetition, through all the organs of detraction and abuse, are capable of misleading those who are already far misled, and of farther fanning passion, already kindled into flame. Doubtless, it served in its day, and, in greater or less degree, the end designed by it. Having done that, it has sunk into the general mass of stale and loathed calumnies. It is the very cast-off slough of a *polluted* and *shameless* press." And Mr Cooper observes—"Every honest man appears to admit that the press in America is fast getting to be *intolerable*. In escaping from the tyranny of foreign aristocrats, we have created in our bosoms a *tyranny of a character* so *insupportable*, that a change of some sort is getting indispensable to peace."

Indeed, the spirit of defamation, so rife in America, is so intimately connected with its principal channel, the press, that it is impossible to mention one, without the other, and I shall, therefore, at once enter into the question.

Defamation is the greatest curse in the United States, and its effects upon society I shall presently point out. It appears to be inseparable from a democratic form of government, and must continue to flourish in it, until it pleases the Supreme to change the hearts of men. When Aristides inquired of the

countryman, who requested him to write down his own name on the oyster-shell, what cause of complaint he had against Aristides; the reply given was, "I have none; except, that I do not like to hear him always called the *Just*." So it is with the free and enlightened citizens of America. Let any man rise above his fellows by superior talent, let him hold a consistent, honest career, and he is exalted only into a pillory, to be pelted at, and be defiled with ordure. False accusations, the basest insinuations, are industriously circulated, his public and private character are equally aspersed, truth is wholly disregarded: even those who have assisted to raise him to his pedestal, as soon as they perceive that he has risen too high above them, are equally industrious and eager to drag him down again. Defamation exists all over the world, but it is incredible to what an extent this vice is carried in America. It is a disease which pervades the land; which renders every man suspicious and cautious of his neighbour, creates eye-service and hypocrisy, fosters the bitterest and most malignant passions, and unceasingly irritates the morbid sensibility, so remarkable among all classes of the American people.

Captain Hamilton, speaking of the political contests, says, "From one extremity of the Union to the other, the political war slogan is sounded. No quarter is given on either side; every printing press in the United States is engaged in the conflict. Reason, justice, and charity; the claims of age and of past services, of high talents and unspotted integrity, are forgotten. No lie is too malignant to be employed in this unhallowed

contest, if it can but serve the purpose of deluding, even for a moment, the most ignorant of mankind. No insinuation is too base, no equivocation too mean, no artifice too paltry. The world affords no parallel to the scene of political depravity exhibited periodically in this free country."

Governor Clinton, in his address to the legislature in 1828, says—"Party spirit has entered the recesses of retirement, violated the sanctity of female character, invaded the tranquillity of private life, and visited with severe inflictions the peace of families. Neither elevation nor humility has been spared, nor the charities of life, nor distinguished public services,—nor the fire-side, nor the altar, been left free from attack; but a licentious and destroying spirit has gone forth, regardless of everything, but the gratification of malignant feelings and unworthy aspirations." And in the New York Annual Register, quoted by Captain Hamilton, we have the following remarks: "In conducting the political discussions which followed the adjournment of Congress, both truth and propriety were set at defiance. The decencies of private life were disregarded; conversations and correspondence which should have been confidential, were brought before the public eye; the ruthless warfare was carried into the bosom of private life; neither age nor sex were spared, the daily press teemed with ribaldry and falsehood; and even the tomb was not held sacred from the rancorous hostility which distinguished the presidential election of 1828."

I have considered it necessary thus to heap authority upon authority, as the subject is one of the most vital importance; and I must first prove the extent of this vice, without the chance of the shadow of contradiction, before I point out its fatal consequences.

That the political animosities arising from a free and enlightened people governing themselves, have principally engendered and fostered this vice, is most certain; and it would be some satisfaction, if, after the hostile feelings had subsided, the hydra also sank to repose.

But this cannot be the case. A vice, like detraction, so congenial to our imperfect natures, is not to be confined to one channel, and only resorted to, as a political weapon, when required. It is a vice which when once called into action, and unchecked by the fear of punishment or shame, must exist and be fed. It becomes a confirmed habit, and the effect upon society is dreadful. If it cannot aim its shafts at those who are in high places, if there is no noble quarry for its weapons, it will seek its food amongst smaller game, for it never tires. The consequence is, that it pervades and feeds upon society—private life is embittered; and, as Mr Cooper most justly observes, "*rendering men indifferent to character, and indeed rendering character of little avail.*"

Indeed, from the prevalence of this vice, society in America appears to be in a state of constant warfare—Indian warfare, as every one is crouched, concealed, watching for an opportunity

to scalp the reputation of his neighbour! They exist in fear and trembling, afraid to speak, afraid to act, or follow their own will, for in America there is no free will. When I have asked why they do not this or that, the reply has invariably been, that they dare not. In fact, to keep their station in society, they must be slaves —not merely slaves, for we are all so far slaves, that if we do that which is not right, we must be expelled from it; but abject and cowardly slaves, who dare not do that which is innocent, lest they should be misrepresented. This is the cause by there is such an attention to the *outward* forms of religion in the United States, and which has induced some travellers to suppose them a religious people, as if it were possible that any real religion could exist, where morality is at so low an ebb. When I first went to Boston, I did not go to church on the following day. An elderly gentleman called upon and pointed out to me that I had omitted this duty; "but," continued he, "I have had it put into one of the newspapers that you attended divine service at such a church, so all is right." All was right; yes, all was right, according to the American's ideas of "all was right." But I thought at the time, that my sin of omission was much more venial than his of commission.

When at Detroit, I was attacked in the papers because I returned a few calls on a Sunday. I mention this, not because I was justified in so doing, but because I wish to show the censorship exercised in this very moral country.

The prevalence of this evil acts most unfortunately upon

society in other ways. It is the occasion of your hardly ever knowing whom you may, or whom you may not, be on terms of intimacy with, and of the introduction of many people into society, who ought to be wholly excluded. Where slander is so general, when in the space of five minutes you will be informed by one party, that Mr So and So is an excellent person, and by another that he is a great scoundrel, just as he may happen to be on their side or the opposite, in politics, or from any other cause, it is certain that you must be embarrassed as to the person's real character; and as a really good man may be vituperated, so the reports against one who is unworthy, are as little credited: the fact is, you never know who you are in company with.

Almost all the duels which are so frequent in America, and I may add all the assassinations in the western country, arise principally from defamation. The law gives no redress, and there is no other way of checking slander, than calling the parties to account for it. Every man is therefore ready and armed against his fellow.

Inadvertently affront any party, wound his self-love, and he will immediately coin some malignant report, which is sure to be industriously circulated. You are at the mercy of the meanest wretch in the country; for although praise is received with due caution, slander is everywhere welcomed. An instance occurred with respect to myself. I was at Lexington, and received great kindness and civility from Mr Clay. One day I dined at his table; there was a large party, and at the further end, at a distance

where he could not possibly have heard what passed between Mr Clay and me, there sat a young man, whose name is not worth mentioning. When he returned to Louisville, he spread a report that I had grossly insulted Mr Clay at his own table. Now the catalogue of enormities circulated against me was already so extensive, that I was not in very good odour; but Mr Clay is so deservedly the idol of this State, and indeed of almost the whole Union, that there could not be a more serious charge against me —even those who were most friendly avoided me, saying, they could forgive me what I had formerly done, but to insult Mr Clay was too bad. So high was the feeling, and so industriously was the calumny circulated, that at last I was compelled to write to Mr Clay on the subject, and I received in return a most handsome letter, acquitting me of the malicious charge. This I showed to some, and they were satisfied; and they advised me to print it, that it might be better known. This was a compliment I did not choose to pay them; and the impression of the majority still is that I insulted Mr Clay. The affair being one of the many connected with myself, I should not have mentioned it, except to prove how lightly such a practice is estimated.

Whatever society permits, people will do, and moreover, will not think that they are wrong in so doing. In England, had a person been guilty of a deliberate and odious lie, he would have been scouted from society, his best friends would have cut him; but how was this person treated for his conduct? When I showed Mr Clay's letter, one said, "Well now, that was very wrong of

A."—Another, "I did not believe that A would have done so."—A third, "that A ought to be ashamed of himself;" but they did not one of them, on account of this falsehood, think it necessary to avoid him. On the contrary, he was walking arm-in-arm with the men, dancing and flirting with the women just as before, although his slander, and the refutation of it, were both well known.

The reader will now perceive the great moral evil arising from this vice, which is, that it habituates people to falsehood. The lie of slander is the basest of all lies; and the practice of it, the most demoralising to the human heart. Those who will descend to such deliberate and malignant falsehood, will not scruple at any other description. The consequence is, that what the Americans have been so often taxed with, is but too prevalent, "a disregard to *truth*."

To what must we ascribe the great prevalence of this demoralising habit in the United States? That the licentiousness of the press feeds it, it is true; but I am rather inclined to imagine that the real source of it is to be found in the peculiarity of their institutions. Under a democracy, there are but two means by which a man can rise above his fellows—wealth and character; and when all are equal, and each is struggling to rise above the other, it is to the principle that if you cannot rise above another by your own merit, you can at least so far equalise your condition by pulling him down to your own level, that this inordinate appetite for defamation must be ascribed. It is a state of ungenerous

warfare, arising from there being no gradation, no scale, no discipline, if I may use the term, in society. Every one asserts his equality, and at the same time wishes to rise above his fellows; and society is in a state of perpetual and disgraceful scuffle. Mr Tocqueville says, "There exists in the human heart a depraved taste for equality, which impels the weak to attempt to lower the powerful to their own level, and induces men to prefer equality in slavery to inequality with freedom."

In politics, especially, character becomes of much more importance than wealth, and if a man in public life can once be rendered odious, or be made suspected, he loses his supporters, and there is one antagonist removed in the race for pre-eminence. Such is one of the lamentable defects arising from a democratical form of Government. How different from England, and the settled nations of the old world, where it may be said that everything and everybody is, comparatively speaking, in his place!

Although many will, and may justifiably, attempt to rise beyond his circumstances and birth, still there is order and regularity; each party knows the precise round in the ladder on which he stands, and the majority are content with their position.

It is lamentable to observe how many bad feelings, how many evil passions, are constantly in a state of activity from this unfortunate chaotical want of gradation and discipline, where all would be first, and every one considers himself as good as his neighbour.

The above-mentioned author observes—"The surface of American society is, if I may use the expression, covered with a layer of democracy, from beneath which the aristocratic colours sometimes peep."

In a moral sense, this is also true, the nobler virtues which are chiefly produced in the fertile field of aristocracy do occasionally appear; but the whole surface is covered with a layer of democracy, which like the lava which the volcano continually belches forth, has gradually poured down, and reduced the country round it to barrenness and sterility.[11]

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[11] This chapter was in the press, when a paragraph, cut out of the Baltimore Chronicle, was received from an anonymous hand at New York. Whether with a friendly intention or otherwise, I am equally obliged to the party, as it enables me to further prove, if it were necessary, the vituperation of the American press."Many persons in our country had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the Captain. The fast-anchored isle never gave birth to a *more unmitigated blackguard*. His awkward, unwieldy misshapen body, was but a fair lodging for a low, depraved, licentious soul. Although liberally educated, he seemed insensible to any other enjoyments than those of sense. No human being could in his desires or habits approach more near to the animal than him. No gentleman ever sat down with him an hour without a sensation of loathing and disgust. 'What kind of man is Captain Marryat?' was once asked in our presence of a distinguished member of Congress, who had sojourned with him at the White Sulphur Springs. 'He is no man at all,' was the reply, 'he is a beast.'"This is really "going the whole hog" himself, and making me go it too. Now, if I receive such abuse for my first three volumes, in which I went into little or no analysis, what am I to expect for those which are about to appear? To the editor of the Baltimore Chronicle I feel indebted: but I suspect that the *respectable* portion of the American community will be very much annoyed at my thus giving his remarks more extensive circulation than he anticipated.

# Volume One—Chapter Seven

## Authors, etc

The best specimens of American writing are to be found in their political articles, which are, generally speaking, clear, argumentative, and well arranged. The President's annual message is always masterly in composition, although disgraced by its servile adulation of the majority. If we were to judge of the degrees of enlightenment of the two countries, America and England, by the President's message and the King's speech, we should be left immeasurably in the back-ground—the message, generally speaking, being a model of composition, while the speech is but too often a farrago of bad English. This is very strange, as those who concoct the speech are of usually much higher classical attainments than those who write the message. The only way to account for it, is, that in the attempt to condense the speech, they pare and pare away till the sense of it is almost gone; his Majesty's ministers perfectly understanding what they mean themselves, but forgetting that it is necessary that others should do the same. But in almost all branches of literature the Americans have no cause to be displeased with the labours of their writers, considering that they have the disadvantage of

America looking almost entirely to the teeming press of England for their regular supply, and nowhere in that country can be said at present to be men of leisure and able to devote themselves to the pursuit. An author by profession would gain but a sorry livelihood in the United States, unless he happened to be as deservedly successful as Washington Irving or Cooper. He not only has to compete against the best English authors, but as almost all the English works are published without any sum being paid for the copyright, it is evident that he must sell his work at a higher price if he is to obtain any profit. An English work of fiction, for instance, is sold at a dollar and a quarter, while an American one costs two dollars.

This circumstance would alone break down the American literature if it were not for the generosity of England in granting their authors a copyright in this country; indeed, the American public pay that tacit compliment to us that they will hardly look at a work by one of their own citizens, until it has first been published in England, and received the stamp of approbation. Those American authors who have obtained a reputation look, therefore chiefly to the English copyright for remuneration; and if it were not for this liberality on our part, the American literature would not receive sufficient support from its own country to make it worth the while of any one to engage in it. The number of English works republished in America is very great, but the number of each work sold is much smaller than people here imagined.

The periodical literature of the United States is highly creditable. The American Quarterly Review; the New York Mirror, by George P Morris; the Knickerbocker, by Clarke; and the Monthly Magazine; all published at New York, are very good; so, indeed, are the magazines published at Philadelphia, and many others. It may be said that, upon the whole, the periodical press of America is pretty well on a par with that of this country. Periodical literature suits the genius of the Americans, and it is better supported by them than any other description.

The Americans are jealous of our literature, as they are, indeed, of everything connected with this country; but they do themselves injustice in this respect, as I consider that they have a very fair proportion of good writers. In history, and the heavier branches of literature, they have the names of Sparks, Prescott, Bancroft, Schoolcraft, Butler, Carey, Pitkin, etcetera. In general literature, they have Washington Irving, Fay, Hall, Willis, Sanderson, Sedgwick, Leslie, Stephens, Child and Neal. In fiction, they have Cooper, Paulding, Bird, Kennedy, Thomas, Ingraham, and many others. They have, notwithstanding the mosquitoes, produced some very good poets: Bryant, Halleck, Sigourney, Drake, etcetera; and have they not, with a host of polemical writers, Dr Channing, one of their greatest men, and from his moral courage in pointing out their errors, the best friend to his country that America has ever produced! Indeed, to these names we might fairly add their legal writers—Chancellor Kent and Judge Story, as well as Webster, Clay, Everett, Cass,

and others, who are better known from their great political reputations than from their writings. Considering that they have but half our population, and not a quarter of the time to spare that we have in this country, the Americans have no want of good writers, although there are few of them well known to the British public. It must be pointed out that the American writers are under another disadvantage which we are not subject to in this country, which is, that freedom of opinion is not permitted to them; the majority will not allow it, except on points of religion, and in them they may speculate as much as they please, and publish their opinions, whether Deistical, Atheistical, or worse, if they can find worse out. It is true than an author may, and some will, publish what they please, but if he does not wish to lose his popularity, and thereby lose his profits, he must not only not offend, but he must conciliate and flatter the nation: and such is the practice with the majority of American authors. Whether it be a work of fiction or one of history his countrymen must be praised, and, if it be possible to introduce it, there must be some abuse of England. This fact will account for the waning popularity of Mr Cooper; he has ventured to tell his countrymen the truth in more than (one) of his later works, and now the majority are against him. The work, which I have often quoted in these pages, called "The Democrat," fell dead from the press. I think it fortunate for Mr Cooper that it did, as people have been lynched who have not said half so much as he did in that work. His "Naval History" will reinstate him, and I suspect it has

been taken up with that view, for, although Mr Cooper has shown a good deal of moral courage, he has not remained consistent. At one moment he publishes "The Democrat," and gives his countrymen a good *whipping*, and then he publishes his "Naval History," and *soft sawders* them. But, with the exception of Dr Channing, he almost stands alone in this particular.

One of the best authors of America is Judge Hall; he proves himself by his writings to be a shrewd, intelligent man, and yet in his "Statistics of the West" I was surprised to find the following paragraph, the substance of which was more than once repeated in the work. Speaking of the Indian hostilities, he says:—

"The mother country (England) never ceased to indulge in the hope of reuniting the colonies (that is the United States) to her empire, until the *war of eighteen hundred and twelve* crushed the last vestige of her delusive anticipations."

Such is his preposterous assertion, the absurdity of which will make an Englishman laugh; but the corollaries drawn from it are serious, as they are intended to feed the hostile feeling still existing against this country; for he attempts to prove that from the time the Independence was ratified by George the Third, that we have ever been trying to reduce America again to our sway; and that all the hostile attempts of the various Indian tribes, all the murders of women and children, and scalping, since that date, were wholly to be ascribed to the agency and bribes of England, who hoped by such means to drive the Americans back to the sea coast, where they could be assailed by her navy.

A little reflection might satisfy any reasonable American, that when they wrestled by main force, and without regard to justice, those lands from the Indians which they had hunted over for so many generations, and which were their own property, it was very natural that the Indians should not surrender them without a struggle. But the wish of Judge Hall was to satisfy his countrymen that their exterminating wars against the Indians have been those of *self defence*, and not of *unpardonable aggression*. At that period there were many white men who had either joined, or, having been captured, had been adopted into, the Indian tribes. All these Judge Hall would make out to be English emissaries, especially one whom he very correctly designates as the "infamous Girty." Unfortunately for Judge Hall the infamous Girty was an American, and born in Philadelphia, as is proved by American authority.

This obligation to write for their own countrymen, and for them alone, has very much injured the sale of American works in England, for publishers having read them find so many offensive and untrue remarks upon this country, that they will not print them. But it does more harm, as it cramps genius, harrows their ideas, and instead of leading in the advance, and the people looking up to them, they follow in the rear, and look up to the people, whom they flatter to obtain popularity; and thus the pen in America, as a moral weapon, is at present "*niddering*."

The remarks of Miss Martineau on American literature are, as all her other remarks, to be received with great caution. Where

she obtained her information I know very well, and certain it is that she has been most egregiously deceived. An American critic observes very truly:—

"It is the misfortune of professed book writers, when they arrive in the United States, to fall into the hands of certain cliques in our principal cities and town, who make themselves the medium of interpretation—their own modes of life, the representation of those of the *élite* of the country; their own opinions, the infallible criterion by which all others must be estimated. They surround the traveller with an atmosphere of their own, and hope to shine through it on the future pages of the grateful guest.

"This accounts satisfactorily for many things which are to be found in Miss Martineau's work, for her numerous misapprehensions as to the character, taste, and occupations of the American women.

"She evidently mistakes the character of our merchants, and does our literature but meagre justice. To hold up some obscure publications from the pens of mere literary adventurers as the best works she has seen, and at the same time pronounce Mr Cooper's much regretted failure, is a stretch of boldness, quite unwarranted by anything Miss Martineau has yet achieved in the republic of letters."

Such was really the case; Miss Martineau fell into what was termed the Stockbridge clique, and pinned her faith upon the oracles which they poured into her ears. She says that in America,

Hannah More is best known; on the contrary, Hannah More is hardly known in the United States.

She says that Wordsworth is much read. Mr Wordsworth has never even in this country been appreciated as he ought to be. In America it may almost be said that he has not been read; and she adds to this, that Byron is *little known*; this is really too bold an assertion. Miss Martineau was everywhere in the best society in America; and I believe that in nine drawing-rooms out of ten, she must have seen a copy of Byron lying on the table.

She says Mr Cooper is a failure. With the exception of Washington Irving, there never was an American writer so justly popular in America as Cooper. It is true that latterly he has displeased the majority, by pointing out to them their faults, and that he is not *always* in a good humour when he writes about England. But to state the author of such works as "*The Pilot*", "*The Last of the Mohicans*", and "*The Prairie*", a failure, is really too absurd. The cause of this remark is said to be that Mr Cooper had a quarrel with Miss Martineau's particular friend Mr S—. There is only one remark in the whole of her observations which is in itself true. She says Bulwer is much read. Here she is correct: but the cause which she gives for his being so much read, is not the real one. She asserts it is on account of his liberal opinions; it is not on that account, it is from the interest of his stories, and the beauty of his writing.

But the assertion that seemed to me the most strange in Miss Martineau's work, was, that Mr Carlisle, the author of "*Sartor*

*Resartus*", was the most read of any English author. Without intending to depreciate the works of Mr Carlisle, I felt convinced from my own knowledge, that this could not be a fact, for Mr Carlisle's works are not suited to the Americans. I, therefore, determined to ascertain how far it was correct. I went to the publishers, and inquired how many of Mr Carlisle's works had been printed. They replied that they had printed one edition of six hundred copies, which they had nearly sold; and were considering whether it would be worth their while to print a second; and in consequence of Miss Martineau's assertion, that Byron was little known, I applied to the largest publishers in New York and Philadelphia, to ascertain, if I could, how many copies of Byron had been published. The reply was, that it was impossible to say exactly, as there had been so many editions issued, by so many different publishers, but that they considered that from one hundred and fifty to two hundred thousand copies, must have been sold! so much for the accuracy of Miss Martineau.[12]

I am afraid, that notwithstanding the eloquent and energetic exertions of the author of "*Ion*," we shall never be able to make the public believe that the creations of a man's brain are his own

[12] Miss Martineau talks of Dr Follett as one of the greatest men in America. I was surprised at this, as I never heard of his name, so I inquired—"Who is Dr Follett?"—"I don't know."—"Do you know Dr Follett?"—"Never heard of him."—"Do you?"—"No." I asked so many people that at last I became quite tired; at last I found a man who knew him, his answer was—"Oh, yes; he's an *Abolitionist*!" As the American critic justly observes, "He shines in the future pages of his grateful guest."

property, or effect any arrangement with foreign countries, so as to secure a copyright to the English author. As on my arrival in America it was reported in the newspapers that I had come out to ascertain what could be done in that respect, and to follow up the petition of the English authors. The subject was, therefore, constantly introduced and canvassed; and I naturally took an interest in it. Every one almost was for granting it; but, at the same time, every one told me that we should not obtain it.

The petition of the English authors to Congress was warmly espoused by Mr Clay, who invariably leads the van in everything which is liberal and gentlemanlike. A select committee, of which Mr Clay was chairman, was formed to consider upon it, and the following was the result of their inquiry, and a bill was brought in, upon the report of the committee:—

"*In Senate of the United States, Feb.* 16, 1837.

"Mr Clay made the following report:—

"The select committee to whom was referred the address of certain British and the petition of certain American authors, have, according to order, had the same under consideration, and beg leave now to report:—

"That, by the act of Congress of 1831, being the law now in force regulating copyrights, the benefits of the act are restricted to citizens or residents of the United States; so that no foreigner, residing abroad, can secure a copyright in the United States for any work of which he is the author, however important or valuable it may be. The object of the address and petition,

therefore, is to remove this restriction as to British authors, and to allow them to enjoy the benefits of our law.

"That authors and inventors have, according to the practice among civilised nations, a property in the respective productions of their genius is incontestible; and that this property should be protected as effectually as any other property is, by law, follows as a legitimate consequence. Authors and inventors are among the greatest benefactors of mankind. They are often dependent, exclusively, upon their own mental labours for the means of subsistence; and are frequently, from the nature of their pursuits, or the constitutions of their minds, incapable of applying that provident care to worldly affairs which other classes of society are in the habit of bestowing. These considerations give additional strength to their just title to the protection of the law.

"It being established that literary property is entitled to legal protection, it results that this protection ought to be afforded wherever the property is situated. A British merchant brings or transmits to the United States a bale of merchandise, and the moment it comes within the jurisdiction of our laws they throw around it effectual security. But if the work of a British author is brought to the United States, it may be appropriated by any resident here, and republished, without any compensation whatever being made to the author. We should be all shocked if the law tolerated the least invasion of the rights of property, in the case of the merchandise, whilst those which justly belong to

the works of authors are exposed to daily violation, without the possibility of their invoking the aid of the laws.

"The committee think that this distinction in the condition of the two descriptions of property is not just; and that it ought to be remedied by some safe and cautious amendment of the law. Already the principle has been adopted in the patent laws, of extending their benefits to foreign inventions and improvements. It is but carrying out the same principle to extend the benefit of our copyright laws to foreign authors. In relation to the subject of Great Britain and France, it will be but a measure of reciprocal justice; for, in both of those countries, our authors may enjoy that protection of their laws for literary property which is denied to their subjects here.

"Entertaining these views, the committee have been anxious to devise some measure which, without too great a disturbance of interests or affecting too seriously arrangements which have grown out of the present state of things, may, without hazard, be subjected to the test of practical experience. Of the works which have heretofore issued from the foreign press, many have already been republished in the United States; others are in a progress of republication, and some probably have been stereotyped. A copyright law which should embrace any of these works, might injuriously affect American publishers, and lead to collision and litigation between them and foreign authors.

"Acting, then, on the principles of prudence and caution, by which the committee have thought it best to be governed, the

bill which the committee intend proposing provides that the protection which it secures shall extend to those works only which shall be published after its passage. It is also limited to the subjects of Great Britain and France; among other reasons, because the committee have information that, by their laws, American authors can obtain there protection for their productions; but they have no information that such is the case in any other foreign country. But, in principle, the committee perceive no objection to considering the republic of letters as one great community, and adopting a system of protection for literary property which should be common to all parts of it. The bill also provides that an American edition of the foreign work for which an American copyright has been obtained, shall be published within reasonable time.

"If the bill should pass, its operation in this country would be to leave the public, without any charge for copyright, in the undisturbed possession of all scientific and literary works published prior to its passage—in other words, the great mass of the science and literature of the world; and to entitle the British or French author only to the benefit of every copyright in respect to works which may be published subsequent to the passage of the law.

"The committee cannot anticipate any reasonable or just objection to a measure thus guarded and restricted. It may, indeed, be contended, and it is possible that a new work, when charged with the expense incident to the copyright, may come

into the hands of the purchaser at a small advance beyond what would be its price, if there were no such charge; but this is by no means certain. It is, on the contrary, highly probable that, when the American publisher has adequate time to issue carefully an edition of the foreign work, without incurring the extraordinary expense which he now has to sustain to make a hurried publication of it, and to guard himself against dangerous competition, he will be able to bring it into the market as cheaply as if the bill were not to pass. But, if that should not prove to be the case, and if the American reader should have to pay a few cents to compensate the author for composing a work which he is instructed and profited, would it not be just in itself? Has any reader a right to the use, without remuneration, of intellectual productions which have not yet been brought into existence, but lie buried in the mind of genius? The committee think not; and they believe that no American citizen would not feel it quite as unjust, in reference to future publications, to appropriate to himself their use, without any consideration being paid to their foreign proprietors, as he would to take the bale of merchandise, in the case stated, without paying for it; and he would the more readily make this trifling contribution, when it secured to him, instead of the imperfect and slovenly book now often issued, a neat and valuable work, worthy of preservation.

"With respect to the constitutional power to pass the proposed bill, the committee entertain no doubt, and Congress, as before stated, has acted on it. The constitution authorises Congress to

promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing, for limited times, to authors and inventors, the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries. There is no limitation of the power to natives or residents of this country. Such a limitation would have been hostile to the object of the power granted. That object was to *promote* the progress of science and useful arts. They belong to no particular country, but to mankind generally. And it cannot be doubted that the stimulus which it was intended to give to mind and genius, in other words, the promotion of the progress of science and the arts, will be increased by the motives which the bill offers to the inhabitants of Great Britain and France.

"The committee conclude by asking leave to introduce the bill which accompanies this report."

Let it not, however, be supposed that Mr Clay was unreported by the American press; on the contrary, a large portion of it espoused the cause of the English author in the most liberal manner, indeed the boon itself, if granted, would in reality be of more advantage to America than to us; as many of them argued. The New York Daily Express observes, "But another great evil resulting from the present law is, that most of the writers of our own country are utterly precluded from advancing our native literature, since they can derive no emolument or compensation for their labours; and it is idle to urge that the devotees of literature, any more than the ingenious artisan or mechanic, can be indifferent to the ultimate advantages which should result alike

to both from the diligent use and studious application of their mental energies. We patronise and read the works of foreign writers, but it is at the expense of our own, the books of the English author being procured free of all cost, supersede those which would otherwise be produced by our own countrymen,—thus the foreigner is wronged, while the same wrong acts again as a tariff upon our American author and all this manifest injury is perpetuated without its being qualified by the most remote advantage to any of the parties concerned."

The Boston Atlas responded to this observation in almost the same language.

"This systematic, legalised depredation on English authors, is perfectly ruinous to all native literature. What writer can devote himself to a literary work, which he must offer on its completion, in competition with a work of the same description, perhaps, furnishing *printed copy* to the compositors, and to be had for the expense of a single London copy. What publisher would give its worth for a novel, in manuscript, supposing it to be equal to Bulwer's best, when he would get a novel of Bulwer himself, for a few shillings—with an English reputation at the back of it? This is the great reason that we have so few works illustrative of our own history—whether of fact or fiction. Our booksellers are supplied for nothing."

I extract the following from a very excellent article on the subject, in the North American Review.

Another bad consequence of the existing state of things is, that

the choice of books, which shall be offered us, is in the wrong hands. Our publishers have, to no small extent, the direction of our reading, inasmuch as they make the selection of books for reprinting. They, of course, will choose those works which will command the readiest and most extensive sale; but it must be remembered, that in so doing, while they answer the demand of the most numerous class of readers, they neglect the wants of the more cultivated and intelligent class. Besides his, there are many admirable works, which might come into general use if they were presented to our reading public, but which are left unnoticed by the publishers, because their success is doubtful. Supposing Abbott's 'Young Christian,' for instance, a book which has had a more extensive circulation than any work of the present times, had been first published in England at the same moment that a good novel appeared, the American publishers would have given us immediately a horrid reprint of the novel; but we should have heard nothing of Abbott's book, till its success had been abundantly tried abroad; nor even then, if some ephemeral novel had started up which promised to sell better.

"Nor is it certain that the price of books would be seriously augmented by the passage of the copyright law. It must be remembered, that a great number of writers would thus be called into the field at once, English as well as American writers; for, if English authors could enjoy this benefit, they would soon begin to write expressly for America; and the competition would become so great, as to regulate the prices of books to a proper standard.

But, even supposing the price to be considerably raised, it would certainly be better to pay two dollars for a handsome volume, which is worth keeping, and worth reading again, than to pay only one dollar for a book, which in five years will be worth no more than the same amount of brown paper. And, finally, there is the consideration of a native literature, which will, we presume, be placed by all reasonable and intelligent persons above that of cheap books."

Nevertheless, a large portion of the press took up the other side of the question, as may be inferred from a reply which I have inserted in the note beneath.[13]

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[13] The International Copyright Question.One of the most important questions, upon principle, that ever was mooted, has for some time placed in juxtaposition the various editors of the corps critical, accordingly as their interests or feelings have been worked upon. Our chief object in these remarks is to hold up to the scorn and derision that it richly merits the assumption of an editor, that an author has no right to the emanations of his own mind—to the productions of his own pen. We do not mean to answer the many and gross absurdities—which this talented gentleman's sophistry has palmed upon the public,—it would be a work of supererogation, inasmuch as his 'airy vision' has already been completely 'dissolved' by the breath of that eminent gentleman, well known to us, who has so completely annihilated the wrong which he is so anxious to continue. But the shameful assumption that a writer, universally allowed to be the worst paid artist in creation, should not have—is not entitled to have, by every principle —of courtesy and honour, a sole and undivided right to, and in, his own productions —is so monstrous, that every editor imbued with those feelings, which through life, should be the rule of his conduct, is in duty bound to come forward and express his dissent from such a doctrine, and his abhorrence of a principle so flagitious."We avail ourselves of the opportunity this number affords of upholding the poor author's right, of censuring the greedy spoliation of publishing tribe, who would live, batten, and fatten upon the despoiled labours of those whom their piracy starves—snatching the scanty crust from their needy mouths to pamper their own insatiate maws."This

The bill brought in was lost. Strange to say, the Southerner voted against, on the grounds that they would not give a copyright to Miss Martineau, to propagate her abolition doctrines in that country—forgetting, that as a copyright would increase the price of a work, it would be the means of checking its circulation, rather than of extending it.

When I arrived at Washington, I thought it would be worth while to ascertain the opinion of any of the members of Congress I might meet; and one fine morning, I put the question to one of the Loco foco delegates; when the following conversation took place:—

"Why, Captain, there is much to be said on this subject. Your authors have petitioned our Congress, I perceive. The petition was read last session."

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matter lies between the publisher and the author. The author claims a right to his own productions, wherever they may be. The publishers, like the Cornwall wreckers, say no, the moment your labours touch our fatal shore they are ours; you have no right to them, no title in them. Good heavens! shall such a cruel despoliation be permitted! The publishers, with consummate cunning, turn to the public, and virtually say, support us in our theft, and we will share the spoil with you; we will give you standard works at a price immeasurably below their value. As well might a thief, brought before the honest and worthy recorder say: If your honour will wink at the crime, you will make me a public benefactor, for whilst I rob one man of an hundred watches, I can sell them to an hundred persons for one-third of their prime cost; and thus injure one and benefit a hundred, you shall have one very cheap. What would this recorder say? He would say, the crime is apparent, and I spurn with indignation and contempt your offer to part with to me that which is not your own. And should not this be the reply of the public to the publishers? Yes, and it will be too. And the vampires who have so long lived upon the spirits of authors, will have tax their own to yield themselves support."

(Many of the Americans appeared to be highly gratified at the idea of an English petition having been sent to Congress.)

"I believe it was."

"Well, now, you see, Captain—you will ask us to let you have your copyright in this country, as you allow our authors their copyright in yours; and I suppose you mean to say that if we do not, that our authors shall have no copyright in your country. We'll allow that, but still I consider you ask too much, as the balance is on our side most considerably. Your authors are very numerous—ours are not. It is very true, that you can steal our copyrights, as well as we can yours. But if you steal ten, we steal a hundred. Don't you perceive that you ask us to give up the advantage?"

"Oh, certainly," replied I, "I have nothing more to say on the subject. I'm only glad of one thing."

"And what may that be, Captain?"

"That I did not sign the petition."

"No, we observed that your name was not down, which rather surprised us."

To this cogent argument of the honourable member, I had no reply; and this was the first and last time that I broached the subject when at Washington; but after many conversations with American gentleman on the subject, and examination into the real merits of the case, came to the conclusion, that the English authors never would obtain a copyright in the United States, and as long as the present party are in power.

Their principal argument raised against the copyright, is as follows:—

"It is only by the enlightening and education of the people, that we can expect our institutions to hold together. You ask us to tax ourselves, to check the circulation of cheap literature, so essential to our welfare for the benefit of a few English authors? Are the interests of thirteen millions of people to be sacrificed? the foundation of our government and institutions to be shaken for such trivial advantages as would be derived by a few foreign authors. Your claim has the show of justice we admit, but when the sacrifice to justice must be attended with such serious consequences, must we not adhere to expediency?"

Now, it so happens that the very reverse of this argument has always proved to be the case from the denial of copyright. The enlightening of a people can only be produced by their hearing the truth, which they cannot, and do not, under existing regulations, receive from their own authors, as I have already pointed out; and the effects of their refusal of the copyright to English authors, is, that the American publishers will only send forth such works as are likely to have an immediate sale, such as the novels of the day, which may be said at present to comprise nearly the whole of American rending. Such works as might enlighten the Americans are not so rapidly saleable as to induce an American publisher to risk publishing when there is such competition. What is the consequence that the Americans are amused, but not instructed or enlightened?

According to the present system of publication in America, the grant of copyright would prove to be of advantage only to a few authors—of course, I refer to the most popular. I had free admission to the books of one of the largest publishing houses in the United States, and I extracted from them the profits received by this house for works of a certain reputation. It will be perceived, that the editions published are not large. The profits of the American houses chiefly resulting from the number of works published, each of these yielding a moderate profit, which when collected together, swell into a large sum total.

| | copies printed | Trade price | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Fielding | 2,500 | 104 cents | many left unsold |
| Prior's Life of Goldsmith | 750 | 200 cents | sold |
| Arethusa | 1,250 | 70 cents | all sold |
| Abel Allnut | 1,250 | 52 cents | almost all sold |
| Fellow Commoner | 2,000 | 70 cents | many on hand |
| Rifle Brigade | 2,000 | 37 cents | many on hand |
| Sharpe's Essays | 1,000 | 54 cents | one half sold |

Now, as there are one hundred cents to a dollar, and the expenses of printing, paper, and advertising have to be deducted, as well as the copies left on hand, it will be evident, that the profit on each of the above works, would be too small to allow the publishers in America to give even 20 pounds for the copyright,

the consequence of a copyright would therefore be, that the major portion of the works printed would not be published at all, and better works would be substituted. Of course, such authors as Walter Scott, Byron, Bulwer, etcetera, have a most extensive sale; and the profits are in proportion, but then it must be remembered that a great many booksellers publish editions, and the profits are divided accordingly. Could Sir Walter Scott have obtained a copyright in the United States, it would have bean worth to him by this time at least 100,000 pounds.

The Americans talk so much about their being the most enlightened nation in the world, that it has been generally received to be the case. I have already stated my ideas on this subject, and I think that the small editions usually published, of works not standard or elementary, prove, that with the exception of newspapers, they are not a *reading* nation. The fact is, they have no time to read; they are all at work; and if they get through their daily newspaper, is quite as much as most of them can effect. Previous to my arrival in the United States, and even for some time afterwards, I had an idea that there was a much larger circulation of every class of writing in America, than there really is. It is only the most popular English authors, as Walter Scott, or the most fashionable, as Byron, which have any extensive circulation; the works which at present the Americans like best, are those of fiction in which there is anything to excite or amuse them, which is very natural, considering how actively they are employed during the major portion of their existence, and the

consequent necessity of occasional relaxation. When we consider the extreme cheapness of books in the United States, and the enormous price of them in this country, the facilities of reading them there, and the difficulty attending it here from the above cause, I have no hesitation in saying, that as a *reading nation*, the United States cannot enter into comparison with us.

As I am upon this subject, I cannot refrain from making a few remarks upon it, as connected with this country. The price of a book now published is enormous, when the prime cost of paper and printing is considered; the actual value of each three volumes of a moderate edition, which are sold at a guinea and a half, being about four shillings and sixpence, and when the edition is large, as the outlay for putting up the type is the same in both, of course it is even less; but the author must be paid, and upon the present small editions he adds considerably to the price charged upon every volume; then comes the expense of advertising, which is very heavy; the profits of the publisher, and the profits of the trade in general; for every book for which the public pay a guinea and a half, is delivered by the publisher to the trade, that is, to the booksellers, at 1 pound 1 shillings 3 pence. The allowance to the trade, therefore, is the heaviest tax of all; but it is impossible for booksellers to keep establishments, clerks, etcetera, without having indemnification. In all the above items, which so swells up the price of the book, there cannot well be any deduction made.

Let us examine into the division of profits. I am only making an approximation, but it is quite near enough for the purpose.

An edition of 1,000 copies at 1 pound 11 shillings 6 pence will give 1,575 pounds.

## Positive Expenses to Publisher

Trade allowance of 10 shillings. 3 pence per copy: 512 pounds 10 shillings.

Extra allowance. 25 for 24-40 copies: 63 pounds.

Printing and paper, 4 shillings 6 pence per copy: 225 pounds 0 shillings.

Advertising, equal to 2 shillings per copy: 100 pounds 0 shillings.

Presentations to Universities and Reviewers, say 30 copies: 47 pounds 5 shillings.

The author if he is well known, may be said to receive 7 shillings per copy: 250 pounds 0 shillings.

Leaving for the publisher: 277 pounds 0 shillings.

Total 1,575 pounds 0 shillings.

All the first expenses being positive, it follows that the struggle is between the publisher and the author, as to what division shall be made of the remainder. The publisher points out the risk he incurs, and the author his time and necessities; and when it is considered that many authors take more than a year to write a book, it must be acknowledged that the sum paid to them, as I have put it down, is not too great. The risk, however, is with the publisher, and the great profits with the trade, which is perhaps

the reason why booksellers often make fortunes, and publishers as often become bankrupts. Generally speaking, however, the two are combined, the sure gain of the bookseller being as a set off against the speculation of the publisher.

But one thing is certain, the price of books in this country is much too high, and what are the consequences? First, that instead of purchasing books, and putting them into their libraries, people have now formed themselves into societies and book-clubs, or trust entirely to obtaining them from circulating libraries. Without a book is very popular, it is known by the publisher what the sale is likely to be, within perhaps fifty copies; for the book-clubs and libraries will, and must have it, and hardly anybody else will; for who will pay a guinea and a half for a book which may, after all, prove not worth reading! Secondly, it has the effect of the works being reprinted abroad, and sent over to this country; which, of course, decreases the sale of the English edition. At the Custom-House, they now admit English works printed in Paris, at a small duty, when brought over in a person's luggage for private reading; and these foreign editions are smuggled, and are to be openly purchased at most of the towns along the coast. This cannot be prevented—and as for any international copyright being granted by France or Belgium, I do not think that it ever will be; and if it were, it would be of no avail, for the pirating would then be carried on a little further off in the small German States; and if you drove it to China, it would take place there. We are running after a Will-o'-the-wisp in that expectation. The

fault lies in ourselves; the books are too dear, and the question now is, cannot they be made cheaper?

There is a luxury in printing, to which the English have been so long accustomed, that it would not do to deprive them of it. Besides, bad paper and bad type would make but little difference in the expense of the book, as my calculation will show; but if a three volume work[14] could be delivered to the public at ten shillings, instead of a guinea and a half, it would not only put a stop to piracy abroad, but the reduced price would induce many hundreds to put it into their library, and be independent of the hurried reading against time, and often against inclination, to which they are subject by book-clubs and circulating libraries; and that this is not the case, is the fault of the public itself, and not of the author, publisher, or any other party.

It is evident that the only way by which books may be made cheap, is by an extended sale—and "*Nicholas Nickleby*", and other works of that description, have proved that a cheap work will have an extended sale—always provided it is a really good one.

But it is impossible to break through the present arrangements

[14] I ought here to remark, that the authors are much injured by the present system. It having been satisfactorily proved, that a three-volume work is the only one that can be published at the minimum of expense, and the magnum of profits, no publisher likes to publish any other. There is the same expense in advertising, etcetera, a two volume, or a one octavo book, as a three. The author, therefore, has to spin out to three volumes, whether he has matter or not; and that is the reason why the second volume, like the fourth act of a five act play, is, generally speaking, so very heavy. Publishers, now-a-days, measure works with a foot-rule, as the critic did in Sterne.

which confine the sale of books, unless the public themselves will take it in hand—if they choose to exert themselves, the low prices may be firmly established with equal benefit to all parties, and with an immense increase in the consumption of paper. To prove that any attempt on the part of an author or publisher will not succeed unaided, it was but a few months ago, that Mr Bentley made the trial, and published the three volumes at one guinea; but he did not sell one copy more—the clubs and libraries took the usual number, and he was compelled to raise his price. The rapid sale of the Standard Novels, which have been read over and over again, when published at the price of five shillings, is another proof that the public has no objection to purchase when the price is within its means.

I can see but one way by which this great desideratum is to be effected; which is, by the public insuring by subscription any publisher or bookseller from loss, provided he delivers the works at the reduced price. At present, one copy of a book may be said to serve for thirty people at least; but say that it serves for ten, or rather say that you could obtain five thousand, or even a less number, of people to put down their names as subscribers to all new works written by certain named authors, which should be published at the reduced price of ten shillings per copy. Let us see the result.

A ten shilling work under such auspices would be delivered to the trade at eight shillings.

The value of the five thousand copies to the publisher would

be 2,000 shillings 0 shillings.

The expenses of printing and paper would be reduced to about 3 shillings a copy, which would be 750 pounds.

Advertising, as before, 100 pounds.

Extra 1 shilling 3 pence, 4 shillings, 5 shillings, about 16 pounds, subtotal 866 pounds.

Leaving a profit for author and publisher of 1,134 pounds 0 shillings.

Whereas, in the printing of a thousand copies, the profits of author 350 pounds, and of publisher 277 pounds 5 shillings, equalled only 627 pounds 5 shillings.

Extra profit to author and publisher 506 pounds 15 shillings.

Here the public would gain, the author would gain, and the publisher would gain; nor would any party lose; the profits of the trade would not be quite so great, being 500 pounds, instead of 575 pounds; but it must be remembered, that there are many who, not being subscribers, would purchase the book as soon as they found that it was approved of—indeed, there is no saying to what extent the sale might prove to be.

If any one publisher sold books at this price, the effect would be of reducing the price of all publications, for either the authors must apply to the cheap publisher, or the other publishers sell at the same rate, or they would not sell at all. Book-clubs and circulating libraries would then rapidly break up, and we should obtain the great desideratum of cheap literature.

And now that I have made my statement, what will be the

consequence? Why, people will say, "that's all very well, all very true"—and nobody will take the trouble—the consequence is, that the public will go on, paying through the nose as before—and if so, let it not grumble; as it has no one to thank but itself for it.[15]

The paper and printing in America is, generally speaking, so very inferior, that the books are really not worth binding, and are torn up or thrown away after they are read—not that they cannot print well; for at Boston particularly they turn out very excellent workmanship. Mr Prescott's "*Ferdinand and Isabella*", is a very good specimen, and so are many of the Bibles and Prayer books. In consequence of their own bad printing, and the tax upon English books, there are very few libraries in America: and in this point, the American government should make some alteration, as it will be beneficial to both countries. The English editions, if sent over, would not interfere with the sale of their cheap editions, and it would enable the American gentlemen to collect libraries. The duty, at present, is twenty-six cents per pound, on books in boards, and thirty cents upon bound-books.

Now, with the exception of school books, upon which the duty should be retained, this duty should be very much reduced.

At present, all books published prior to 1775, are admitted upon a reduced duty of five cents. This date should be extended

[15] The members of the peerage and baronetage of Great Britain, the members of the untitled aristocracy—the staff officers of the army and navy—the members of the different clubs—are each of them sufficiently numerous to effect this object; and if any subscription was opened, it could not fail of being filled up.

to 1810, or 1815, and illustrated works should also be admitted upon the reduced duty. It would be a bonus to the Americans who wish to have libraries, and some advantage to the English booksellers.

I cannot dismiss this subject without pointing out a most dishonest practice, which has latterly been resorted to in the United States, and which a copyright only, I am afraid, can prevent the continuance of. Works which have become standard authority in England, on account of the purity of their Christian principles, are republished in America with whole pages altered, advantage being taken of the great reputation of the orthodox writers, to disseminate Unitarian and Socinian principles. A friend of mine, residing in Halifax, Nova Scotia, sent to a religious book society at New York for a number of works, as presents to the children attending the Sunday school. He did not examine them, having before read the works in England, and well knowing what ought to have been the contents of each.

To his surprise, the parents came to him a few days afterwards to return the books, stating that they presumed that he could not be aware of the nature of their contents; and on examination, he found that he had been circulating Unitarian principles among the children, instead of those which he had wished to inculcate.[16]

The press of America, as I have described it, is all powerful; but still it must be borne in mind, that it is but the slave of the

[16] One of those works was Abbot's 'Young Christian', or some other work by that author.

majority; which, in its turn, it dare not oppose.

Such is its tyranny, that it is the dread of the whole community. No one can—no one dare—oppose it; whosoever falls under its displeasure, be he as innocent and as pure as man can be, his doom is sealed. But this power is only delegated by the will of the majority, for let any author in America oppose that will, and he is denounced. You must drink, you must write, not according to your own opinions, or your own thoughts, but as the majority will.[17]

Mr Tocqueville observes, "I know no country in which there is so little true independence of mind, and freedom of discussion, as in America."

[17] Indeed, one cannot help being reminded of what Beaumarchais makes Figaro say upon the liberty of the press in another country. "On me dit que pendant ma retraite économique il s'est établi dans Madrid un système de liberté sur la vente des productions, qui s'étend même a celles de la presse; et, pourvu que je parle dans mes écrits, ni de l'autorité, ni du culte, ni de la politique, ni de la morale, ni des gens en place, ni des corps en crédit, ni de l'opéra, ni des autres spectacles, ni de personne qui tient a quelque chose, je puis tout imprimer *librement*; sous l'inspection de *deux ou trois censeurs*."

# Volume One—Chapter Eight

## The Mississippi

I have headed this chapter with the name of the river which flows between the principal States in which the society I am about to depict is to be found; but, at the same time, there are other southern States, such as Alabama and Georgia, which must be included. I shall attempt to draw the line as clearly as I can, for although the territory comprehended is enormous, the population is not one-third of that of the United States, and it would be a great injustice if the description of the society I am about to enter into should be supposed to refer to that of the States in general. It is indeed most peculiar, and arising frow circumstances which will induce me to refer back, that the causes may be explained to the reader. Never, perhaps, in the records of nations was there an instance of a century of such unvarying and unmitigated crime as is to be collected from the history of the turbulent and blood-stained Mississippi. The stream itself appears as if appropriate for the deeds which have been committed. It is not like most rivers, beautiful to the sight, bestowing fertility in its course; not one that the eye loves to dwell upon as it sweeps along, nor can you wander on its bank, or trust yourself without danger

to its stream. It is a furious, rapid, desolating torrent, loaded with alluvial soil; and few of those who are received into its waters ever rise again, or can support themselves long on its surface without assistance from some friendly log. It contains the coarsest and most uneatable of fish, such as the cat-fish and such genus, and, as you descend, its banks are occupied with the fetid alligator, while the panther basks at its edge in the cane-brakes, almost impervious to man. Pouring its impetuous waters through wild tracks, covered with trees of little value except for firewood, it sweeps down whole forests in its course, which disappear in tumultuous confusion, whirled away by the stream now loaded with the masses of soil which nourished their roots, often blocking up and changing for a time the channel of the river, which, as if in anger at its being opposed, inundates and devastates the whole country round; and as soon as it forces its way through its former channel, plants in every direction the uprooted monarchs of the forest (upon whose branches the bird will never again perch, or the racoon, the opossum or the squirrel, climb) as traps to the adventurous navigators of its waters by steam, who, borne down upon these concealed dangers which pierce through the planks, very often have not time to steer for and gain the shore before they sink to the bottom. There are no pleasing associations connected with the great common sewer of the western America, which pours out its mud into the Mexican Gulf, polluting the clear blue sea for many miles beyond its mouth. It is a river of desolation; and instead of reminding you,

like other beautiful rivers, of an angel which has descended for the benefit of man, you imagine it a devil, whose energies have been only overcome by the wonderful power of steam.

The early history of the Mississippi is one of piracy and buccaneering; its mouths were frequented by these marauders, as in the bayous and creeks they found protection and concealment for themselves and their ill-gotten wealth. Even until after the war of 1814 these sea-robbers still to a certain extent flourished, and the name of Lafitte, the last of their leaders, is deservedly renowned for courage and for crime; his vessels were usually secreted in the land-locked bay of Barataria, to the westward of the mouth of the river. They were, however, soon extirpated by the American government. The language of the adjacent States is still adulterated with the slang of those scoundrels, proving how short a period it is since they disappeared, and how they must have mixed up with the reckless population, whose head-quarters were then at the mouth of the river.

But as the hunting-grounds of Western Virginia, Kentucky, and the northern banks of the Ohio, were gradually wrested from the Shawnee Indians, the population became more dense, and the Mississippi itself became the means of communication and of barter with the more northern tribes. Then another race of men made their appearance, and flourished for half a century, varying indeed in employment, but in other respects little better than the buccaneers and pirates, in whose ranks they were probably first enlisted. These were the boatmen of the Mississippi, who

with incredible fatigue forced their "keels" with poles against the current, working against the stream with the cargoes entrusted to their care by the merchants of New Orleans, labouring for many months before they arrive at their destination, and returning with the rapid current in as many days as it required weeks for them to ascend. This was a service of great danger and difficulty, requiring men of iron frame and undaunted resolution: they had to contend not only with the stream, but, when they ascended the Ohio, with the Indians, who, taking up the most favourable positions, either poured down the contents of their rifles into the boat as she passed; or, taking advantage of the dense fog, boarded them in their canoes, indiscriminate slaughter being the invariable result of the boatmen having allowed themselves to be surprised. In these men was to be found, as there often is in the most unprincipled, one redeeming quality (independent of courage and perseverance), which was, that they were, generally speaking, unscrupulously honest to their employers, although they made little ceremony of appropriating to their own use the property, or, if necessary, of taking the life any other parties. Wild, indeed, are the stories which are still remembered of the deeds of courage, and also of the fearful crimes committed by these men, on a river which never gives up its dead. I say still remembered, for in a new country they readily forget the past, and only look forward to the future, whereas in an old country the case is nearly the reverse—we love to recur to tradition, and luxuriate in the dim records of history.

# Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.