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3. Crusaders.

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C R U S A D E R S .

(Harriet Martineau).

Miss Harriet Martineau, the successful English pamphleteer and author, was a strange mixture. She was both stimulating and annoying; intelligent, even amusing - and quite unbearable. Conversation with her was a chore, partly for technical reasons. For she was almost totally deaf, and one was obliged to shout into a big ear trumpet, which she manipulated not without a certain coquettish grandezza. Besides, it made no great difference whether or not she understood other people's remarks, as she knew everything much better anyway.

Her strongly emphasized self-confidence seemed somewhat forced, always a little uneasy - as is characteristic of people who triumph over natural short-comings and achieve an impressive career by sheer persistence. For Harriet Martineau was hardly favored by nature, even apart from the deplorable weakness of her hearing. She was neither pretty nor charming, and moreover was endowed with no sense of smell or taste. Her family was of Huguenot extraction, but had adopted the Unitarian faith. Harriet's only chance for marriage was to a poor, virtuous man by the name of Worthington. At that time Harriet's father had just lost all his money - at which Mr. Worthington promptly declared his love. A few weeks afterwards, however, he became insane. Miss Martineau later said that she was, in fact, thankful for having been rescued from the jaws of matrimony. "I have never since been tempted, nor have suffered anything at all in relation to that matter which is held to be all important to women, - love and marriage."

At the age of twenty-seven she was penniless and lonely, What could she do, barring a jump into the Thames? Both music and the occupation of governess - the usual solutions for poor, well-

educated girls of that period - were out of question in her case. So she began to write - first anonymously for a Unitarian periodical, the Monthly Repository. At that time she was concerned chiefly with religious topics; her stories bore titles such as Female Writers on Practical Divinity, or Devotional Exercises and Adresses, Prayers, and Hymns. She turned out to be a versatile and brilliant journalist on holy subjects. In 1830, the Central Unitarian Association had advertised for prize essays in which Unitarianism was to be presented to the notice of Catholics, Jews, and Mohammedans. Harriet wrote articles on all three sections, under three different names, won all the prizes- and then switched to politics and economics. A series of articles, Illustrations of Political Economy, was to achieve the remarkable feat of " assisting the poor to manage their own welfare." After this - in 1832, at the age of thirty - she became the fashion in London: she was lionized. King Louis Philippe of France ordered copies of her articles for every member of his family, and so did the Russian Czar. But when the latter had glanced at Miss Martineau's text, he grew exceedingly angry, said it was evil, dangerous stuff, and forbade the author to enter his empire. The governments of Austria and Italy promptly followed his example. Harriet, however, was amused and flattered rather than disturbed. She declared that her writings were intended for the people; crowned heads must know what to expect from an enlightened representative of modern British womanhood.

When she left for the United States, in 1834, she was already spoiled by success; she was also ill and tired. What she wanted

was a holiday, recreation - and new material for her pen. Before she sailed an English publisher tried to buy her opinion in advance for 400 pounds - which she flatly refused. On her return, two years later, she was offered 2000 pounds - a striking symptom both of Miss Martineau's increasing reputation and of the growing curiosity of English readers concerning America. What kind of life do they have there, in the New World? What do people eat? What sort of clothes do they wear? What are their hobbies, their prejudices and beliefs? Any book on the United States was likely to be successful: just as, about a hundred years later, there was to be a run on books dealing with Russia. For the United States, at that time, was considered a kind of Utopia - a vast field for grandiose and daring experiments. Literary travellers went there with fixed ideas, obtuse antipathies or exaggerated expectations. Some found that the reality even exceeded their hopes; others were let down.

The "Englishwoman" who had written Views of Society and Manners in America, during the years of 1818, 1819, 1820 was impressed and delighted by almost everything American. There were certain matters, of course, which disturbed and even angered Miss Frances Wright. She was not quite satisfied with the condition of American women, and she was definitely opposed to slavery. Her book, however, ends with the optimistic exclamation of President Monroe: "The day is not very far distant when not a slave will be found in America!"

Miss Wright's intimate friend, Mrs. Trollope, returned from the New World with much less favorable impressions. Her report,

Domestic Manners of the Americans, bristled with malice and obvious resentment. She had been a failure in England - or rather she had been in constant trouble owing to her husband, an unsuccessful lawyer and good-for-nothing-, and she failed abysmally in the United States. It had been Mr. Trollope's wild idea that his wife should sell knickknackery in Cincinnati. The results were disastrous. She got herself into no end of embarrassment, contracted considerable debts, and was exceedingly unhappy. She did, however, collect the material for her spiteful book- which turned out to be a success: it even enabled her to support her family, including her gifted son Anthony and her unfortunate husband, who had been obliged to fly the country from his creditors.

Mrs. Trollope drew a rather dreary picture of the country whose hospitality she had enjoyed. She found it devoid of gaiety and of any kind of amusement, public or private-: even billiards and cards were forbidden by law. Everything English- she noticed - was considered " decidedly mauvais ton by Americans." Even she, Fanny Trollope, was looked at askance by the stern, puritan women of Cincinnati - simply because of her nationality. Harriet Martineau - who utterly disliked Mrs. Trollope- supposed, and said publicly, that " poor Fanny" might have shocked the sound feeling of Americans not merely by being British but also, or primarily, through her unbusiness-like conduct and foolish eccentricities. She was inseparable from Frances Wright who had returned to the United States, where she drew enthusiastic crowds with her sweeping appeals for equal rights, for the right of working men to have free schools for their children, for the ten hour day and the

immediate emancipation of the slaves. Both Fanny Trollope and Frances Wright were on intimate terms with Robert Owen, the English philanthropist and social philosopher.

This other Don Quixote - muddled though remarkably gifted -, considered the United States a fitting domain for his experiments. The Hamarck Mills, which he had established with other idealistic reformers, were supposed to work on the principle " that all profits beyond five per cent per annum on the capital invested shall be laid aside for the educational and moral improvement of the workers." Later he gave up the management of the Mills, and appeared before the Committee of the House of Commons with a peculiar report on the Poor Law, recommending as " the only effective remedy for the permanent social distress" the immediate organisation of many small communities of about 1200 people, settled on areas of land from 1000 to 1500 acres. Work and the enjoyment of its results should be common. His project was worked out in convincing detail. "As these townships should increase in number, unions of them federatively united shall be formed in circles of tens, hundreds and thousands, till they should embrace the whole world in a common interest."

~~It all sounded very attractive and even fairly reasonable; certain influential gentlemen became interested in Mr. Owen's ideas, and he might have had a good chance to see many of his wish-dreams materialize had he not shocked the public by his sudden declaration of scorn for " all the received forms of religion." This, of course, discredited his theories, altogether. Since he~~

had turned out to be an evil atheist, it seemed quite likely that that strange notion of "socialism" which he so frequently mentioned, should have a dangerous meaning as well.

He went to America, in 1825, and there established a model colony at Harmony, Indiana, to prove that man is not sinful by nature, as the theologians maintain, but can be moulded by his surroundings. He found a good many enthusiastic followers - vagabonds, adventurers, philosophers, poor devils, rascals, and harmless fools. After a trial of about two years the experiment failed completely. This, according to Mr. Owen^N, was because it had been allowed to deviate from the original principles as laid down by himself. He returned to Europe - having made himself unpopular by challenging the church, represented by the Reverend Alexander Campbell from Bethany - "not of Judaea, but of Kentucky", as Mrs. Trollope jokingly remarked. She described in her book the queer controversy that took place in Cincinnati. Mr. Owen tried very hard to convince the Reverend that "the principles of all religions are erroneous, and their practice is injurious to the human race." The Reverend considered religion a good thing. Both gentlemen held their ground, and most Americans who knew anything about this odd discussion were rather inclined to believe that the Reverend was right.

Miss Martineau became a little nervous at the thought of all that transatlantic gossip, all those books and speeches and somewhat unsavory stories. Many English people had rubbed America the wrong way, and made thorough fools of themselves. There were a few, however, who had managed to achieve temporary success: Miss Fanny

Kemble, for instance, the youngest member of the famous Kemble tribe. Harriet decided, characteristically, that she would avoid the obvious mistakes of her minor colleagues, and that she would have a greater triumph in the United States than any of her compatriots to date.

* * *

She sailed on August 4, 1834, armed with letters from everyone who mattered in social, political or literary English life; accompanied by Miss Louise Jeffrey who acted as a private secretary and travel marshal; equipped with her ear trumpet, her arrogance, her vivid intelligence and her eager curiosity.

She was fairly well informed on current American affairs, especially on the alarming developments connected with the slavery issue. She had studied the series of petitions to Congress since the days of Washington's first administration, demanding the abolition of slavery in the United States,- and she was also familiar with the evasive answer: that slavery, being a "domestic institution", was subject to the laws of the states, not to those of the national government, in accordance with the time-honored principle of "non-intervention". At the close of 1819, there was an equal number of slave and free states in the Union. The problem of whether or not Congress could impose restrictions on a state, became urgent when the slaveholding territory of Missouri applied for admission to the Union, in the autumn of 1818. Miss Martineau had carefully followed all the details of the discussions concerning the Missouri Bill and leading to the "Missouri Compromise", signed by President Monroe in 1820. Her position was unequivocal. She

denounced the Compromise, by which both the slave-holding territory of Missouri and the anti-slavery province of Maine were admitted to the Union, calling it " the shame of the North" and declaring that " a small majority had yielded to the temptation to follow temporary expediency in preference to everlasting principles."

She came to America not merely as an observer but, above all, as a partisan, a crusader. She realized that the United States was divided into pro- and anti-slavery camps - or rather into three distinct parties: the pro-slavery multitude, the Colonizationists who were on the fence, and the Abolitionists. And even before leaving her own country she had thrown in her lot openly and whole-heartedly with the Abolitionists. She was against slavery for moral and political reasons, and simply because she felt that " a modern person" had to be against it. It may be open to question whether Harriet would have had the courage and independence to take a really isolated stand: to fight for a cause by herself, without anybody's assistance. She did, however, have the pluck and intellectual integrity to join the ranks of a courageous minority that understood the direction and true moral postulate of their time, and acted according to this **ehhical** command.

There are certain institutions and public habits which become unbearable and scandalous at a given moment in history. The Greeks and Romans took for granted the right of gentlemen to hold barbarians as private property. And even in the year of 1619, when a Dutch trading vessel brought twenty colored men from the West Indies, to the Virginia colony, it was generally accepted as only right and fitting that these inferior creatures should work as

slaves. ~~During the century that followed, about 25,000 Negroes~~
~~were landed in the American colonies. They worked in the tobacco~~
~~and rice fields of the South; they became household servants in~~
~~the well-to-do families in the middle and Northern regions.~~ Almost
nobody had any objection to the fact that the importation of slaves
was increasing steadily and had proved to be a prosperous trade.
Britain obtained the monopoly of carrying Negroes from the shores
of Africa to the New World. Respected business men invested con-
siderable sums in this flourishing business; so did the British
Lords, and even Queen Anne made her profits. The whole civilized
world was acquainted with the abject practices of the slave hun-
ters who kidnapped the Negroes in Africa; chained them together
like wild animals; maltreated them, debauched them with rum. But
the conscience of mankind is not delicate: it reacts only slowly
and reluctantly - if at all...

First there are only a few sporadic voices to pronounce the
indictment, at a time when the evil is still generally accepted.
As far back as 1688 the Quakers had protested against slavery.
But the trade in human beings continued to flourish. In the
original draft of the Declaration of Independence, - Thomas
Jefferson - a slaveholder himself - held against George III the
fact that he had promoted the slave trade, "violating the most
sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of distant
people, who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into
slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their
transportation thither."

America gained Independence and Liberty: but not its colored

inhabitants - and there were about 700,000 of them in the year of 1790. This state of affairs - the existence of many hundreds of thousands of slaves in the Land of Free - was obviously incompatible with the basic principles of the Christian religion and Democracy.

The zeal of social reformers, the militant passion of moral and religious fighters, naturally came to focus on the question of slavery, which seemed, among all the evils of imperfect democracy, the most obvious and abhorrent. Abolitionist preachers travelled through the country, addressing meetings, appealing to colleges and churches, establishing anti-slavery societies. Many brave and determined men considered the cause of the Negro their life mission. They delivered countless speeches, composed countless pamphlets, and edited magazines with flowery titles such as Genius of Universal Emancipation. The publishers of this particular periodical, a New Jersey Quaker, named, Benjamin Lundy, advocated the organization of colonies for liberated slaves on the island of Haiti. His former collaborator and co-editor, William Lloyd Garrison, went a decisive step further and announced that "all slaves were entitled to immediate and complete emancipation." He set up his own press in Boston, although he possessed no capital but his own stern, unyielding passion. The Liberator became the main forum of the Abolitionist vanguard, and when some desperate Negroes killed over sixty white people, mostly women and children, in Southampton County, Virginia, many infuriated Southerners held Garrison and his Liberator responsible for the outrage.

After the Missouri Compromise and the Virginia massacre all

free discussion of the slavery problem in the South died out; it was considered " high treason to the vital interests of the country." ~~Moderate anti-slavery men remarked that " an omnibus load of Boston Abolitionists had done more to harm the anti-slavery cause than all its enemies."~~ Garrison and a few others, however, continued to agitate - redoubling their efforts - brave, indefatigable, firmly convinced that they spoke and acted in accordance with the sublime will of the Lord.

Garrison proclaimed:

If we have whispered truth.
Whisper no longer;
But speak as the tempest does,
Stern and stronger.

And he sang with aggressive pride:

I am an Abolitionist!
I glory in the name;
Though now by Slavery's minions hissed,
And covered o'er with shame.

I am an Abolitionist!
Then urge me not to pause;
For joyfully do I enlist
in Freedom's sacred cause.

It was ~~thoroughly~~ in the nature of Miss Harriet Martineau-approaching the shores of a great and storm-tossed country- to take part in this militant chorus.

* * *

She was a social sensation in New York, Philadelphia, Washington and Boston. Since she was famous and knew all the important people in England, people overlooked, in the beginning, her ugly ear trumpet, her tactless remarks and her inclination for radical ideas. During the first months of her stay she was received and

fêted by all the social lions and lion-hunters of the Northern and Southern states. She travelled frantically, obsessed with curiosity and ambition; allowing herself no rest, no fun, no relaxation; always tense, observant - always at work on some new and startling observation to be made on the material at hand. She felt that her opinions of people or things were more significant than those persons or matters themselves. ~~The main function of the universe, and especially of the United States, was to serve as material for Miss Martineau's journalistic genius.~~ Problems and figures and events assumed ultimate reality only if and when immortalized by Harriet in her note books, letters, articles and pamphlets.

Her zeal for writing, her obstinate passion for covering paper with words is both pathetic and grotesque. She was a maniac of journalism. Writing was the predominant, if not the exclusive content of her existence. As a nun devotes her life to prayers, she devoted hers to the odd occupation of observing things and describing them. She rushed from city to city, from party to party, brandishing her ear trumpet and her note book- a merciless hunter of news, of famous faces and places; strangely isolated by her deafness in the midst of so much hubbub: a moving figure - both greedy and ascetic; exploiting reality for the chimera of the written word, and sacrificing her own real life on the altar of the same cruel idol.

She arrived at New York on September 19, 1834, and almost immediately went to Patterson, New Jersey, to inspect the cotton factories at Passaic Falls. She stayed with friends on the banks of the Hudson and at Stockbridge, Massachusetts; then rushed to

Albany, on October 6, across New York State,- which was her first real experience in American highway traveling. She did not dislike it, and complained only of the lack of privacy in American inns, and of " the disagreeable practice of rocking in the chair which is seen there in its excess."

Trenton Falls, Auburn, Buffalo, Niagara Falls; a trip on Lake Erie, landing in Pennsylvania and going on through Meadville to Pittsburgh, over the Alleghanies to Northumberland: this is only the first lap of Harriet's journey. She travelled 10,000 miles during her two years' sojourn in the United States. She travelled in wagons, stage-coaches, in the best and worst of steamboats, and on horseback. There was little rail service available; the first steam locomotive had run only four years before, in 1830, on the new 23-mile track of the Baltimore and Ohio Railway. Her physical endurance was as impressive as her insatiable desire for new knowledge and new impressions.

~~She spent three weeks in Philadelphia and five in Washington.~~

In Philadelphia she met Fanny Kemble who had just become Mrs. Pierce Butler: the husband of the celebrated young actress was a wealthy lawyer, " something of a political worker", and a rather weak, egotistical character. Fanny Kemble was very young- only twenty-five: it was just five years since she had started her brilliant career as Juliet in London. And only three years after her English debut she had conquered the audiences of the New World. Philadelphia critics wrote: " The town went Kemble mad...", and when she played in Washington two ^{former} ~~renowned~~ Presidents of the United States attended the performance. She was accepted, even courted

by the most exclusive society - which was no mere matter of course in those days. ~~At Boston she was introduced to Daniel Webster who seemed delighted by her personality. She was intelligent and had a fine, sensitive face. Reviewers emphasized: "The great peculiarity of her acting is mind."~~

Yet she was as bewildered as a little girl when presented to Harriet Martineau, and was completely thrown off at having to shout into the notorious ear trumpet all the compliments she had so carefully prepared for her distinguished compatriot. Still, she was naively pleased to have met the celebrated woman. Fanny noted in her diary: " we might become good friends..."

The sentiment was not mutual. Harriet disliked Mrs. Butler - perhaps out of envy of her particular gifts: youth, and beauty, and a radiant smile...In Miss Martineau's opinion Fanny Kemble was thoroughly frivolous and not very intelligent.

It was the question of slavery that brought the two ladies somewhat closer. Fanny had been vaguely opposed to slavery, for emotional reasons, but until now had failed to realize the urgency of the problem. Harriet enlightened and incited her. Mrs. Butler was suddenly horrified at the fact that her husband, who owned plantations in the South, was a slave-holder. "Oh, how I wish I were a man!" Fanny cried. "How I wish I owned those slaves! I would like to release them, instead of being supported by their unpaid labor..."

Mrs. Butler had tried very hard to be a good Philadelphia housewife, and to a certain degree had succeeded, although some of the more severe Wuaker ladies still distrusted " that English

actor-woman." Harriet, however, had no disposition whatsoever to spare public opinion; on the contrary, it was more grist to her mill. She herself could make public opinion; besides she did not hear the malicious whispers gathering around her, insulated as she was by her deafness, her fame, and her passionate belief in her own infallibility.

She declared publicly that she saw no harm in marriages between white and black, provided there was true love on both sides. Many Americans, she said, took Negro mistresses: Why should they not marry them? Morality demanded it.

This was an unprecedented provocation: it was indeed sacrilegious- and a great deal of tolerance - or snobbism- was necessary to excuse it as the harmless hobby of a famous guest. In Philadelphia a lady turned full upon Miss Martineau and asked: "Can it be as your friend assures me? She says that if any young person known to you was attached to a Negro, you would not interfere to prevent their marrying." Whereupon Harriet bluntly replied that she did not believe in any interference with lovers who wanted to marry. " I should think it no business of mine to interfere on account of complexion." She pointed to the rapidly increasing mulatto element of the population, and asked whether it was the religious service that made the difference between holy marriage and abhorred " amalgamation."

The Philadelphia matron was petrified. At last she pulled herself together for a final shot: "If you ever should marry, Miss Martineau, and have daughters,- would you permit them to become the brides of niggers?" - The virgin journalist explained, firmly

though somewhat evasively, that she had no intention of marrying and regarded the issue from a purely social and general, not from a personal point of view.

Her shocking remarks were repeated by gossip-mongers and even publicized in the papers. Harriet was warned to proceed no further South than Philadelphia: she would be courting insult perhaps disaster. She laughed, shrugged, and said she was not afraid. She left for Baltimore and Philadelphia, always accompanied by her faithful friend, Miss Jeffrey. In ^{Washington?} Washington the two daring women were told that people had been imprisoned, even killed, for opinions similar to those proclaimed in Miss Martineau's many articles and conversations. The state of South Carolina had drastic laws bearing on the crime of anti-slavery agitation. Dire hints were made to the two female travellers regarding the chances of their returning alive.

Harriet spread out a large map showing the large area of the Southern States through which they would have to pass, probably for the most part without an escort- and always, where they were known at all, with her anti-slavery reputation uppermost in everybody's mind. "Now, Louise," she said to her friend, "does it not look dreadful? If you have the slightest fear, say so now! We can still change our route..." - "Not the slightest", declared the sturdy secretary. "If you are not afraid, I am not."

They had a splendid time in Washington, where they stayed five weeks. Harriet carried letters to all the leading statesmen. She observed the Supreme Court and both Houses of Congress, met almost every important senator, and soon was on friendly or even intimate terms with leading members of the Administration and several judges

of the Supreme Court. She was even entertained by the President.

Fanny Kemble, who had also been presented to Andrew Jackson, said of him: "A good specimen of a fine, old, well battered soldier; very tall and thin, but erect and dignified in his carriage; his manners are simple and quiet and, therefore, good." Harriet's description of the General is more detailed, but almost as inadequate. She failed to understand - or at least to analyze - the strange combination of qualities that made up that "military chieftain in the White House," the venerable Hero of New Orleans, the much feared and widely loved "Old Hickory". She noticed that "the poor President was terribly persecuted by autograph hunters; and to him it was a real nuisance, as he had no poetical resource by Watt's hymns." But she gives us only a hazy picture of this complex and imposing figure, brutal and friendly, shrewd, high-handed, the autocrat of the White House and the champion of democracy.

Her talents showed themselves to better effect when she dealt with aspects of Washington. She was able to observe some of General Jackson's secret advisers and she made friends with some of his most ardent foes. She was "fortunate enough once to catch a glimpse of the invisible Amos Kendall, one of the most remarkable men in America. He is supposed to be the moving spring of the whole administration; the thinker, planner, and doer; but it is all in the dark."

The former postmaster and editor of the Patriot at Georgetown, Kentucky, co-editor of the Argus of Western America, fourth auditor of the United States Treasury, main aid in the formation of the

President's anti-Bank policy - Postmaster-General Amos Kendall was the mystery man of the capital. Harriet was fascinated when she saw him, " leaning on a chair, with head bent down, and eye glancing up at a member of Congress with whom he was in earnest conversation, and in a few minutes he was gone..."

Neither Henry Clay nor any member of his family had ever spoken a word of Mr. Kendall. Harriet who was on very friendly terms with Mr. Clay, knew that the former Secretary of State had been very strongly impressed by Kendall's talents and knowledge: he had even retained him as tutor to his sons. But later there had been quarrels, separation, and enmity.

The portrait of Henry Clay offered by Harriet Martineau is the most vivid chapter of her Washington memoirs. She succeeds in conveying the somewhat melancholy atmosphere surrounding this highly gifted man, who had failed ~~twice~~, at that time, as a candidate for the presidency - defeated first by J.G. Adams, then by Andrew Jackson. He had entered the Senate, in 1831, and now was leader of the opposition to Jackson's administration policy and the new Whig party. Harriet could hardly admire the man whom she herself had called " responsible for the Missouri Compromise". But she liked him and knew him well.

Her description of Clay, in the book Retrospect of Western Travel, appears in a lengthy comparison of this statesman and orator with Daniel Webster, whom she had met socially and admired as a speaker when she visited the Supreme Court. She was struck with Webster's " great attraction"; his " dreamy eyes" that seemed

to see nothing about him; his " air of most unaffected indolence and careless self-sufficiency". Harriet found his argument "ingenious...., and imbued with moral beauty." As to Clay - Miss Martineau's " personal friend" - she noticed and praised " his subtle expression of placid kindness, mingled with astuteness." She found him somewhat formal and even stiff, sometimes of a grave humour, and often irritable and impetuous.

~~She inspected the library and the curiosities of the State Department; visited Mount Vernon " in company with a large party of ladies and gentlemen"; and became reflective and rather sad at the sight of the former library of Congress, that " was burned by the British in their atrocious attack upon Washington in 1814."~~

Various Senators from Southern States invited her to visit their homes in her progress through the South. She accepted, but emphasized that the hospitality of slave-owners would not silence her on the subject of slavery. The Senators replied that they had never dared to presume that anything or anybody could quell Miss Martineau's sparkling eloquence. " On the contrary," added these urban^e gentlemen, " we hope you may publicly describe exactly what you ~~see~~ in our cities and on our plantations."

They had cause later to regret their careless generosity.

She was treated everywhere with the utmost kindness. Mr. and Mrs. Madison asked her to visit them at their estate in Montpelier, Virginia. She went there, " on a sweet day of early spring", and had interesting discussions concerning slavery with the former President. He admitted that it was an evil institution. They spoke of the great dead and the petty living politicians of the

United States, and finally of literature. Mr. Madison told his visitor that he had always been in favor of arrangements for the security of literary property all over the world. He wanted English authors to be protected from piracy in the United States. What he forgot to mention - or what Miss Martineau failed to quote - was the other side of the picture: namely, that the lack of an international copyright law badly injured the interests of American writers as well. They bitterly complained about the powerful competition of English books which cost nothing to American publishers and were lavishly re-printed. With the exception of educational and religious work, nine-tenths of all the books printed in the United States at that time, were reprints of English works.

From Madison's residence it was only about thirty-five miles to Thomas Jefferson's seat, Monticello, where the great American had died eight years before. Harriet went there and also paid a brief visit to the University of Virginia, "Jefferson's University", the beauty and significance of which - she said - was "scarcely recognized by British travellers." She admired the library, collected for the most part by the late statesman and thinker.

She enjoyed and studied both country and city life in the South. With her usual avidity she interviewed the slaves, as well as "the whip-laden Negro drivers." She watched that "filth and vermin which abound the clothes and persons": that deplorable wretchedness of men, women and children - the whole complex of misery that later was to shock and horrify Fanny Kemble-Butler when

she stayed on her husband's plantation. But Fanny tried herself to sweep the filthy Negro huts - an effort that amazed and amused the colored people-; she did her best to persuade them to wash; she spent her time caring for their babies, cutting out dresses for women and children, finding small jobs for the men. In short, Fanny worked - while Harriet observed and wrote.

There were brighter aspects of the slavery problem, and Harriet did not fail to notice them. One chapter of the book she prepared -Society in America - was to bear the title Morals of Slavery- which " is not written down in a spirit of mockery", as the author underlines in an introduction. For she had occasion to watch several examples of kindness and patience in the relations between slaves and their owners. This paternalistic element, however, existed only as long as the owners lived side by side with their slaves. With the owners for the most part absent the plantations were run by overseers, on a strictly commercial basis. Harriet had ample opportunity to observe the ruthless exploitation, the scars, the wounds; she heard the screams of those who were beaten. She drew this simple conclusion: "The personal oppression of the Negroes is the grossest vice which strikes a stranger in this country." - In conversations with Southerners she usually found that the sublime idea of Human Rights had been reduced, in their minds, to the dry axiom: Sufficient food in return for hard labor.

In New Orleans she was taken to the battle ground, " the native soil of General Jackson's political growth." There she noted:

The British killed were nearly 3000; the Americans had six killed and seven wounded. By all accounts, General Jackson showed

consummate ability throughout the whole brief campaign, and the British leaders an imbecility no less remarkable.

Derogatory statements on her own people appear frequently in her writings - a fact which somewhat mitigated her occasional rudeness in regard to American institutions or personalities. Concerning her stay on the shores of Lake Erie, she noted:

My eyes never rested on the Canada shore without my feeling how absurd it was that that poor country should belong to us, its poverty and hopeless inactivity contrasting, so much to our disgrace, with the prosperous activity of the opposite shore.

...She liked Charleston which "deserves its renown for hospitality"; but she did not like her host, a clergyman by the name of Gilman. Both Mr. & Mrs. Gilman came from the North, and "had rushed into that admiration of slavery which the natives do not entertain." Most of the ladies of Southern origin whom Harriet had met, spoke of slavery as a sin and a curse - the burden which oppressed their lives; whereas Mrs. Gilman insisted that the one race must be subordinate to the other. She expressed this opinion during a visit by the two women to the slave-market at Charleston. Very near to them a colored woman was on the stand with her infant. "Don't speak so loud, at least!" Harriet whispered. "The poor creature may hear you!"

The clergyman's wife shrugged: "What's the difference? I certainly would not mind standing on this table with my children and being sold to the highest bidder, if the blacks should ever have the upper hand." -

Mrs. Gilman's inhuman attitude is but a further illustration of a fact that was confirmed by many contemporaries: that in the North, radical Abolitionism was much more unpopular than slavery.

Garrison found " contempt more bitter, opposition more active, detraction more relentless, prejudice more stubborn" in New England than anywhere in the South. It was in Boston, and not in Charleston or New Orleans, that the editor of The Liberator was dragged through the streets and almost lynched, by a mob of respectable citizens - and it was Boston that was to give Harriet Martineau a similar experience.

She went there in October, 1835, after having spent the summer and early fall in New York and in various country places in Massachusetts and elsewhere. Boston was still discussing the meetings that had taken place in August as a warning to Abolitionists. Men had been tarred and feathered for agitation against slavery. Nevertheless the women abolitionists, well knowing that it might cost them their lives, decided to hold their own meeting, on October 21. Despite the urgent warning of friends Harriet promptly agreed to attend.

She knew, of course, what lynching was and had often referred in her writings to " Judge Lynch - that is, a mob with hints of cowhide, and tar and feathers." Naturally it had never entered her head that she, Harriet Martineau, the oracle of Great Britain, might be a victim of such attack. Her bravery derived partly from conceit, partly from her unswerving belief in the obvious rightness of her cause. " I have attended Colonization meetings, and all others where I thought I could gain light on the subject of slavery," she declared calmly. " I am not only willing but anxious to hear what the Abolitionists have to say."

She went, accompanied by Miss Jeffrey.

During the meeting a note was handed to her:

Knowing your opinions, we just ask you whether you would object to give a word of sympathy to those who are suffering here for what you have advocated elsewhere. It would afford great comfort.

She wavered only for a few moments. She knew that to comply was probably to close against her every door in the United States but those of the Abolitionists. The fury against "foreign incendiaries" ran high. Houses had been sacked; children had been carried from their beds at midnight; travellers had been lynched in the market places as well as in the woods; there was no safety for anyone, native or foreign, who did what she was compelled to do.

For she could not refuse. She got up and spoke.

"I have been requested by a friend present to say something- if only a word - to express my sympathy in the objects of this meeting. I had supposed that my presence here would be understood as showing my sympathy with you. But as I am requested to speak, I will say what I have said through the whole South, in every family where I have been; that I consider Slavery as inconsistent with the law of God, and as incompatible with the course of his Providence. I should certainly say no less in the North than in the South concerning this utter abomination- and I now declare that in your principle I fully agree."

She was cheered enthusiastically. But the festive sounds of this spontaneous ovation were soon interrupted by others, shrill and ugly, coming from outside. A crowd was growing rapidly, hooting and yelling and throwing mud and dust at the windows. They shouted threats and insults. They raved. They had distorted, inhuman faces.

They seemed capable of any crime, including murder.

Some of the windows broke. In a minute the blood-thirsty mob could storm the room.

In the midst of the panic-struck women, the roaring turmoil stood Harriet Martineau. For the first time in America, she did not need her ear trumpet to know what was being said. It sounded like a remote, hollow noise, but she understood: " Kill her! Tear her to pieces!"

The woman who was standing next to her clasped her arm and implored her with desperate signs to follow her, to escape. But Harriet remained motionless, for a few more seconds. She waited, though she did not know for what. She observed the scene. Even now, with her own life at stake, she observed and made inward notes.

At the same time she felt, vaguely but intensely, that this was both the most horrible and the greatest moment of her life. This was adventure, was reality. She would write about it - naturally. But it was greater, far more terrifying and significant than it would seem in words. She was jeopardizing her life for the cause of some hundred-thousand colored people. She was risking everything she had - her reputation, her career, her body. In a few minutes she might be beaten to death, or carried through the streets, a grotesque figure, bleeding, deformed, tarred and feathered.

She had never loved. Her better feelings had been frustrated by life. She was a malicious woman- clever, detached, observant, and ambitious. But now she was risking her life. Now she was not observing but suffering. She was a human being. She trembled.

She escaped through a back door.

* * *

She had gone too far. The celebrated guest of yesterday had suddenly become a pariah. The same woman who had been received by the President of the United States, only a few months before, now was boycotted by the society of Boston. She was shunned by people who had courted her. The newspapers came out in full fury against her.

Abuse of Harriet Martineau spread from Boston to almost every paper in the Union. Newspapers came from the South, offering mock invitations to visit the slave states again and see how foreign incendiaries would be received. They would hang her, cut her tongue out, and cast it on a dunghill. She was represented as a hired agent, and appeals were made to public passions to stop her disgraceful activities.

When she returned to New York, in the spring of 1836, she found public feeling incited against her there as well. Her host, on whose arm she entered a ballroom, was promptly cut by fourteen of his old friends....Harriet noticed two young gentlemen staring at her and obviously discussing her personality. She listened, with the help of her ear trumpet. One was declaring vehemently: "My verdict is that Miss Martineau is either an impertinent meddler in our affairs, or a woman of genius without common sense."

'Woman of genius still sounds flattering', she thought with gloomy satisfaction. 'But impertinent is a strong expression...'

These outbursts of public opinion which she now had to face, were far more substantial and harder to cope with than the anger of His Majesty the Czar when he had read her pamphlets. For the Emperor of all Russians was far away - a remote figure, almost

legendary. It was easy to pass off his indignation. But American public opinion was very near, and had a million voices. It was as incalculable as a wild animal; cruel and cunning as a Spanish Inquisitor.

This country, which has given to the world the example of physical liberty, owes to it that of moral emancipation also; for as yet it is but nominal with us. The inquisition of public opinion overwhelms, in practice, the freedom asserted by the laws in theory.

She was impressed by these words of Thomas Jefferson, and noted them for her book.

The frightening power of public opinion in American life was to become one of the leading thoughts in her critical writings on the United States. She found that some American citizens were even afraid to vote.

~~A public man told me that it would be a great point gained, if every citizen could be induced to vote, at least once a year. So far is it from being true that all Americans are the bustling politicians the English have been apt to suppose.~~

~~The fear of public opinion takes many forms - fear of vulgarity, of responsibility, and above all, of being different-; it is more marked among the well-to-do than among the poor, and more in the North than in the South.~~

~~There is something more displeasing, at the first view, in the caution of the Yankees than in the recklessness of the cavalier race of the south.~~

Liberty of thought -yes, in principle it was the very cornerstone of this proud land. But it had become almost a wearisome cant. Harriet quoted a Boston writer as having said " that here what we call public opinion has set up a despotism, such as exists nowhere else. Public Opinion,- a tyrant, sitting in the dark,

wrapt up in mystification and vague terrors of obscurity; deriving power no one knows from whom; like an Asian monarch, unapproachable, unimpeachable, undethronable, perhaps illegitimate,- but irresistible in its power to quell thought, to repress action, to silence conviction..." (Sober Thoughts on the State of the Times, Boston, 1836.)

She noticed this withering influence of Public Opinion even in the administration of religion, and bitterly complains of " the great mischief that arises from the fear of opinion which makes the clergy keep aloof from the stirring questions of the time."

She had nothing but praise for the few clergymen who did dare to challenge popular prejudice and to disseminate from the pulpit what she considered the drastic elementary truth. Above all, she loved and admired William Ellery Channing, the Unitarian preacher, whom she regarded as one of her closest friends, in the United States. She devoted a long chapter to him in her book, Retrospect of Western Travel, remarking that " of all the public characters in the United States, he is the one in whom the English feel the most interest." His thoroughly abolitionist sermons had put him in such bad odor with the Southern slaveholders and their Northern friends, that he could not, at that time, have set his foot within the boundaries of half the states without danger to his life. He upheld Garrison when that great fighter was the most generally detested man in Boston. He was fearless and upright and human. He conceived his mission as a preacher to be the liberation of men's minds from servile conceptions of God. He declared that the Bible was " a book written for men in the language of men, and its

meaning to be sought in the same manner as that of other books." And he was fond of books and of writers. In Europe he had known Wordsworth and Coleridge. His own brother, Edward Tyrrel Channing, was a writer and a student of Greek and Roman classics; for years he had been an editor of the famous North American Review - the first creditable literary magazine in America.

There was a good deal in common between Harriet Martineau and Dr. Channing: the love of literature, the liberal convictions, and the Unitarian faith - though religious issues were becoming less and less prominent in Harriet's intellectual life. Both, moreover, were rebuffed, even menaced, by a hostile and reactionary society.

During Miss Martineau's preparations for her last journey in the United States, she received drastic warnings from all sides: Do not come if you like your life! On steam boats, in deserted streets, even in hotel lobbies, incited ruffians would lie in wait for her. She would be recognized by her famous trumpet. In some places - Cincinnati, for instance - plans were afoot to have her prosecuted, while along the Ohio River she stood a good chance of being lynched and hung on the wharf before respectable people could come to her rescue. But she was really more afraid of the "respectable people" than of the ruffians. For she was informed, by many trustworthy observers, that the lynching mob, in Boston and other places, was entirely composed of gentlemen. The poor rarely participated in those outrages, Harriet insisted. In one of the recent riots the only working man involved had been a truckman who saved the victim.

She had loyal and influential friends, here and there, who kindly offered her protection. But she did not want a guarantee of safety only for her own person. In Detroit she obtained the promise of the Governor of Michigan that he would protect, "to the utmost of his power", every Abolitionist within the boundary of his State.

In Cincinnati, she was not prosecuted but had a delightful time. "All the parties I was at in Cincinnati were very amusing, from the diversity of the company and in the manners of the natives of the East and West." She visited Mrs. Trollope's bazaar where a concert was taking place - the first concert ever offered to the society of that city. She was horrified by the taste of her compatriot, and denounced the bazaar as "the great deformity of the city."

Happily, it is not very conspicuous...From my window at the boarding house, however, it was only too distinctly visible. It is built of brick, and has Gothic windows, Grecian pillars, and a Turkish dome, and it was originally ornamented with Egyptian devices, which have, however, all disappeared under the brush of the whitewasher.

One of the people with whom she made friends in Cincinnati was Miss Harriet Elizabeth Beecher, "a lady eminent for learning and talents, and for her zeal in the cause of education". The father of this extraordinary girl, the Rev. Dr. Beecher, was the president of Lane Seminary, near Cincinnati. A Calvinistic Puritan of the stern, fanatic type, he considered His Holiness the Pope as "the Antichrist", and Rome the scarlet monster lady of the Apocalypse. One of his violently anti-Catholic sermons had so incited his hearers that they plundered and burned a convent,

confounding the poor nuns with the scarlet lady and treating them accordingly. His gifted daughter was shortly to become the bride of the Rev. Calvin E. Stowe, active in the same Seminary. Harriet, as she chatted with Miss Beecher could hardly have foreseen that this earnest young woman was to be the greatest single force in the awakening of popular and world wide sentiment for the Negro cause. It was still fifteen years before the sensational publication of Uncle Tom's Cabin, first contributed in serial form to The National Era.

It may seem surprising that Harriet Martineau, who described and criticized so many aspects of American life, failed to give a detailed and comprehensive report of American literature. She mentions only in passing the literary men whom she met. Her acquaintance with Emerson occurred in the period immediately following his resignation as sole pastor of Second Church, in Boston, and preceding his second marriage to Miss Lidian Jackson. She found him "yet in the prime of his life ... Great things are expected from him, and great things, it seems, he cannot ~~but~~ do, if he has life and health to prosecute his course. He is a thinker and scholar."

We must remember, however, that at the time of Miss Martineau's journey American literature, as a whole, was not yet "in the prime of life", but rather in a state of groping and preparation. The few writers whose importance was generally recognized, such as Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper, owed their new American laurels largely to their European success: they were hailed at home on their return as famous men from abroad, and their reputation

here was moreover apt to be far from stable. The celebrated author of The Last of the Mohicans suffered a serious falling-off of popularity when he came home, in 1833, after a stay of seven years on the other side. People were annoyed by his constant complaints about the low intellectual and moral standards, the general greed for wealth which he claimed to have found in this country. During Harriet Martineau's visit in the United States, he came out with a satirical novel, The Monicins, which made but little impression.

Washington Irving, whom Fanny Kemble praised as "always simple, understanding, kindly, and good," was almost regarded as an English author. Dietrich Knickerbocker's History of New York was extremely popular in Britain, John Murray had brought out an edition of the Sketch Book in London, and was the first publisher of Bracebridge Hall and Tales of a Traveller. It was well known that the great publishing house has paid 3000 guineas for the copyright of Irving's Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus. He had travelled in Europe as a very young man, later had spent some time in Spain, and still later, in 1830, received a medal from the Royal Society of Literature, while in London as secretary of the American Legation.

There was William Cullen Bryant, who had not yet acquired his patriarchal beard, but was a mature man and poet, already famous as a result of Thanatopsis and his didactic poem The Ages, which rises to a glowing paeon on the new race to be brought forth out of America. But most of the lasting representatives of

nineteenth century American literature were still ignored or not yet fully recognized by the public. Lowell was a Harvard student and had just started his literary career as a poet laureate of his class. Hawthorne had published some insignificant sketches and was to become the editor of the equally insignificant American Magazine For Useful and Entertaining Knowledge, in Boston. Longfellow was a young man of twenty-seven, at the time of Harriet's arrival, and owed the beginning of his reputation to some articles on foreign literature which he had written for the North American Review, after his first trip to Europe.

How could a foreign visitor, at that early date, grasp the problematic greatness of Edgar Allan Poe, then connected with the Southern Literary Messenger, constantly intoxicated by the alcoholic drinks by which he was to be destroyed, and by his rhapsodic feeling for Virginia Clemm, his cousin and future wife, whom he would destroy.

How could she know that a young man from Brooklyn by the name of Walt Whitman, teaching in country schools, learning the printer's trade - was harboring in his heart and brain the sweeping rhapsody of the New World.- Who of all the men and women she interviewed could have told her about another unknown schoolmaster, Herman Melville? It was 1834, and seven more years had to pass before he would embark on a New Bedford whaler, attracted by faraway seas and islands, the silent, monstrous majesty of the White Whale not yet dreamed of.

It was not with an eye to poetry and new literary values that an intelligent European observer came to the United States at that

time. A serious-minded visitor such as Harriet Martineau inspected the New World with the definite purpose of studying social institutions, practical achievements, economic systems. She visited prisons, insane asylums and hospitals, literary and scientific organizations, slave markets, court rooms and factories, nautical schools, institutes for the blind, temperance societies, political meetings, libraries, deaf and dumb asylums, plantations, cemeteries, and the hiding places of fugitive slaves. Her long book on Society in America includes chapters on almost every conceivable subject - except poetry. She wrote about political parties, the apparatus of government, morals and politics, the allegiance to law, regional prejudices, the political non-existence of women, and the citizenship of colored people. She formulated definite opinions concerning agriculture and commerce, transport and marketing, the morals of economy, the problems of industrial labor. She wrote about education, and religion, and a great deal about women. She found that Americans in their treatment of women had fallen below, not only their own democratic principles, but the practices of some parts of the old world.

While women's intellect is confined, her morals crushed, her health ruined, her weaknesses encouraged, and her strength punished, she is told that her lot is cast in the Paradise of Women: and there is no country in the world where there is so much boasting of the chivalrous treatment she enjoys. That is to say - she has the best place in stage-coaches: when there are not chairs enough for everybody, the gentlemen stand; she hears oratorical flourishes on public occasions about wives and home, and apostrophes to women....In short, indulgence is given her as a substitute for justice...

Marriage and motherhood- Miss Martineau observed - may be called the sole business of American womanhood. If they have not

that, they have nothing. But even here, according to this stern judge, American females proved themselves to be dismally incompetent. Angry and pedagogical as a dissatisfied governess, she takes them to task for their inexcusable lack of experience and skill in starching and ironing, baking and soup-making. Surely housewives should at least be able to prepare a palatable dinner, especially as the gentlemen usually charge themselves with the business of marketing, "which is very fair." Find if women are excluded from all public functions and are unfortunately too spoiled and lazy for kitchen work, what remains for them to do? Charity - "doing good or harm according to the enlightenment of mind which is carried to the work",- and a rather futile concern with literature. Harriet met with a great number of ladies who read Latin, a smattering of Hebrew, or German. With the possible exception of the last, however, such knowledge seemed of little use to them, except as a harmless exercise. She did not come across a single good artist among all the ladies she saw in the United States. There was some pretension to mental and moral philosophy: "but the less that is said on that head, the better."

This is hardly flattering, nor is it really just. Her writings abound in remarks of this kind, both offensive and inaccurate, or at least one-sided. She complained about the food which she found hardly eatable- which is particularly surprising in view of her total lack of any sense of taste; about the weather which was either too cold or too hot; ("The only times when I felt disposed to quarrel with the inexhaustible American mirth was on the hottest days of summer;") about American conversation which she thought a bore.

~~Most numerous and worst pedants were the middle-aged ladies. One of them once assured her that she was quite wrong on a certain point. Everybody laughed as the matron went on with the utmost gravity to inform the party that there had been a time when she believed, like other people, that she might be mistaken. Experience, however, had convinced her that she never was - and she had in consequence cast behind her all fear of error. Harriet, with superior sarcasm, observed that the place where the lady lived, must be terribly dull, - with an oracle in it to settle everything. The worst of it was, the other continued imperturbably, that other people were not always convinced of her infallibility as she was herself.~~

~~Harriet, who repeated this story as a striking example of American complacency, having been protected as usual by her extreme vanity and her absolute lack of humour, had apparently been quite blind to the fact that the joke was on herself.~~

She was genuinely surprised and disappointed when Americans took offense at her outspoken criticism of their habits and institutions. She had an earnest desire to make friends in the United States: " Friendships are the grand gain of travel over a continent or through life..." There is a certain pathos in these words of hers, considering the large number of enemies she actually managed to accumulate in this country.

There were also people who liked and even admired her - Maria Weston Chapman, for instance, the famous abolitionist, at that time a young woman of hardly thirty. She often emphasized later her indebtedness to Harriet's stimulating influence. " I was blinded

and beguiled by the slave-holders; and she bespoke for the abolitionists, in the name of their cause, a candid hearing." More than forty years later, in 1877,- one year after Harriet's death - Maria Weston Chapman edited the autobiography of her late friend.

But not many lasting relations of this kind remained as a result of her American journey. She antagonized and insulted most of the people who had given her hospitality. Even those who had been inclined to forgive the deaf woman for her astounding social faux pas, were infuriated when they later read her two books- the literary exploitation of Miss Martineau's American impressions.

There had been a great deal of interest in what she had to say about America, and expectation ran high, not only in London but also in New York and throughout the United States. Shortly before she sailed, she had a talk with Mr. Harper, whom she called " the head of a redoubtable piratical publishing house in New York". He said:

"Come now - tell me what you will take for your book?"

"What book?" she asked, somewhat hypocritically.

And Mr. Harper: " Oh! I know you will write a book about this country. Let me advise you."

"But I don't know myself that I shall write one."

"In any case, I can tell you how easily you may do it. Considering the ground you have covered, you must have picked up a few incidents. Well, then you might Trollopize it a bit, and so make a readable book. I would give you something handsome for it. Come, what will you take?"

She was rather angry - especially at the tactless reference

to her colleague, Mrs. Trollope, whose book, Domestic Manners of the Americans, had achieved a sort of scandalous success. It was a most invidious comparison.

She declared that she was too high-minded to work for money - and sailed without having made a contract.

In Liverpool generous offers from various English publishers awaited her. Everybody supposed that she had returned with no end of startling material, and she did in fact have notes and stories enough for several volumes.

Both of her works, Retrospect of Western Travel and Society in America, were unfavorably reviewed in the United States; especially the latter - presenting the theoretical results of her observations - was generally regarded as a cruel breach of hospitality. Every vessel, sailing from the American shores to England, carried some embarrassing mail for Miss Martineau - letters of abuse, offensive newspaper clippings. She was characterized as a hard-boiled woman devoid of tact, taste and gratitude. She had scampered around the country, abused the kindness of Americans and then vilified everything she had seen. "Here is a woman who has waxed fat on American delicacies instead of stale bread and butter, chalky milk and slop tea- which is all she would ever get at home, having the audacity to criticize our meals!" She was accused of being a spy, an anarchic leveller, a Malthusian dragonfly.

These violent outbursts of patriotic indignation- although partly justified and understandable - were, in their own way, as

naive and one-sided as Harriet's blunt exaggerations. To describe Harriet Martineau as a thoroughly nasty woman,- seeking only journalistic sensations and the satisfaction of her own boundless vanity - is crude misinterpretation. There was in her, it is true, an element of malice, and her appalling self-assurance caused her to formulate her opinions in an oracular manner which was sometimes shocking, sometimes ridiculous. Deaf and not really able to listen, she had a habit of giving vent to anything no matter how trivial that happened to cross her mind. She expressed her most casual reflections as if they were basic axioms, often to senseless and even ludicrous effect. For instance: " The first principle of a cemetery,- beyond the obligation of its being made safe and wholesome,- is that it should be cheerful in its aspects." Or: " While the republics of North America are new, the ideas of the people are old." Here she is obviously sacrificing a complex truth for the sake of a feeble epigram.

Yet there is another and larger side to her criticism of American institutions - a truly, passionate note, indicating the seriousness of her moral endeavor and a candid striving for truth. Americans of that time were not yet willing or able to grasp the ethical impact of such warnings or reproofs - especially when they came intermingled with erroneous statements and petty taunts. In the last, conclusive paragraphs of her theoretical book, Harriet Martineau speaks of the national contentment as the most remarkable peculiarity of the American character.

If this were the result of apathy, it would be despicable: if it did not co-exist with an active principle of progress, it would be absurd. As it is, I can regard this national attribute with no other feeling than veneration.

A single sentence of this kind - outspoken, serious, and intelligent- is sufficient proof that her concern with American problems was more than sheer journalistic curiosity.

She sincerely tried to interpret America from what she believed to be the American point of view. She had cherished a certain vision of the transatlantic " model republic", and she wanted to find out how closely the facts approximated the ideal as laid down by the founders of the United States. She observed intensely, and widely, and finally drew this conclusion:

The civilization and the morals of the Americans fall far below their own principles. This is enough to say. It is better than contrasting or comparing them with European morals and civilization.

The reality of the Jacksonian era, with all its political struggles, its corruption, the permanent tension between North and South,- the America of " Gag Resolutions" in Congress to sabotage the petitions of Abolitionists, of the war against the National Bank, of vast and dubious speculations in land and railroads- the America of 1836 was indeed a far cry from the inspiring promise of the American Revolution. Slavery was a glaring symbol of this general imperfection. The Martyr Age of the United States is the title of an article published by Harriet Martineau in the Westminster Review shortly after her return. The martyrdom she referred to was that of the Abolitionists whose plight she graphically described to her British readers.

A definitely Christian pathos prevails - not only in that title, but in other parts of Harriet Martineau's writings. This may sound paradoxical, considering the somewhat shallow rationalism

and materialism that seem characteristic of her spiritual attitude. ~~About twenty years after her memorable journey to the United States, she translated "freely" into English the works of Auguste Comte- founder of the "positive" system of philosophy. He believed in the supremacy of reason and knowledge - a knowledge no longer baffled by the inscrutable, triumphantly advancing toward a comprehensive perception of the universe. His rationalistic gospel was la Religion del'Humanité . His hope and belief was that the positive or scientific stage of the human spirit would gradually and definitely succeed the dark period of theological and metaphysical thinking. One of his philosophical masters was St. Simon, greatly in vogue in France after the Restoration. Auguste Comte enthusiastically embraced the socialist elements of St. Simon's philosophical system, while neglecting the religious impact of his doctrines. Yet there are obvious connecting links between St. Simon's religious Socialism and Comte's scientific Positivism.~~

There is a religious, if not a mystic pathos - although often hidden- in the humanitarian passion of most pre-Marxian socialists and reformers. Their firm belief in the perfectibility of man would make little sense, unless they consciously or unconsciously conceived of man as being by nature and mission, somehow connected with and responsible to an eternal Being, representing the principle of Good as such and in its perfection. All belief, indeed all interest in human progress is necessarily and fundamentally religious.

Reformers believe in miracles. The various reformers of the early nineteenth century thought that they could save mankind

absolute chastity, the wearing of peculiar garments,
through special diets, water cures, Mesmerism, Free Love Colonies, spiritualism, or land reforms. ~~Some American women were obsessed~~ with the idea that the wearing of semi-masculine garments would improve their lot - an odd move called "Bloomerism." Another organisation, the Shakers formed communities of 200 to 300 industrious persons, all engaged in agriculture and useful manufactures, paying no rent, having no costly vices, living peacefully together like brothers and sisters. ~~Marriages were forbidden.~~ Rationalism, traditions of the philosophy of Enlightenment, and mystic trends - a leaning "back to the lost paradise" - strangely meet and interpenetrate. It is remarkable that Robert Owen, the "found of the English Labor Movement", in his later years shifted from an immature socialism to spiritualism. As to Harriet Martineau, she became interested, not only in Auguste Comte, but also in Mesmerism: she wrote a series of Letters dealing with those half-scientific, half-mystic experiments.

All of these people were crusaders, passionately fighting for some gospel believed to be "modern", "progressive", and "scientific". They were brave and naive; sometimes they were obtuse and displayed utter ignorance of the complexity and incalculable depths of human nature. If people would only eat vegetables and release the Negro slaves, - they supposed -, mankind must shortly find its way back to the Golden Age.

It may seem unfair to connect the Abolitionists - those stern and reasonable fighters - in any respects with certain groups of hysterical or ignorant reformers. In this comparison, however, we

have no intention of vilifying the heroic efforts of those valiant men and women, nor of belittling their constructive influence upon the developments of this country. We are attempting simply to indicate the spiritual and ethical entity of tendencies and moods that are seemingly incoherent. It makes little difference whether the particular axioms and methods of certain groups or individuals were sensible or absurd. The fact remains that all these intellectual and political endeavors of young bourgeois society were nourished from the same spiritual sources, and were all directed toward one goal. The double source of that religious-rationalistic pathos was both the Christian faith, especially in its Puritan version, and the militant, Utopian message of the French and American revolutions, spiritually prepared by Rousseau and Voltaire. The ultimate aim is to better mankind, to bring it nearer to God, to make it perfect- by enlightenment, and by re-organizing its earthly conditions and increasing its material dignity.

A woman like Harriet Martineau, despite the limitations of her intellectual vision and the weaknesses of her character, participated in this noble endeavor and through her entire life continued to work according to those traditions and inspired by that aim. Like most people, she was not thoroughly good. But she believed that under certain conditions man might be made so. She misunderstood in many respects American life and people. Her vehement criticism lacked moderation and tact. Yet her fundamental attitude is by no means anti-American nor even un-American, corresponding as it does to some of the most venerable American traditions.

At one moment, at least, she assumed the imposing stature of the great American fighters: when she fearlessly risked her life for the cause of abolition at that Boston meeting.

This deaf preacher of progress often bored people with the shallow stream of her eloquence, and was not always able to hear the scornful laughter provoked by her talkative arrogance. Sometimes, however, her ear trumpet - which she manipulated not without a certain coquettish grandezza - became a magic instrument in her hands, and the garrulous oracle grasped the great meaning of a whisper, secret and remote. Her dull ears grew clairaudient, and she understood, for a few inspired seconds a message that she had frequently simplified or distorted - the vast promise of American life.

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