

AMERICANS IN ENGLAND: 1835-1860

ANNA JANNEY DE ARMOND *

When Margaret Fuller Ossoli visited Abbotsford in September of 1846, she remarked that in the previous year five hundred Americans had "inscribed their names in its porter's book."¹ Even though we are aware of the popularity of Walter Scott in America in the period before the Civil War,² it may well astonish us today to realize that such a number of our countrymen, a hundred years ago, should have made the long pilgrimage to his home. It is not surprising that, once in England, they should have sought so famous a shrine, but rather that so many American tourists should have been in England at all. In 1845 the ocean voyage itself was cause for deliberation: again it is Margaret Fuller who tells us of a trip from Boston to Liverpool (as a matter of fact, a record-breaking voyage) of ten days and sixteen hours,³ in what the modern traveller would consider meagre comfort. More typically, Bayard Taylor spent twenty-eight days on the ocean in 1844, and he sailed, how unpleasantly one may surmise, in the hold of the *Oxford*; ⁴ while the Websters' homeward journey from Portsmouth to New York consumed thirty-five days and was actually dangerous.⁵ Moreover, judged by nineteenth-century standards, a trip to Europe was expensive. One could, of course, ship as Taylor did, or like Olmsted—though his reasons were not financial—make most of the tour, once landed, on foot. But to the ordinary American family, like Taylor's, or to the typical American community, like that which sent the Reverend John A. Clark in quest of his health,⁶ a trip to Europe must have seemed a luxury. Yet, in spite of difficulties, it is clear from such evidence as the porter's book that the number of Americans who visited England towards

* Department of English.

¹ Ossoli, p. 137.

² See George Harrison Orians, *The Influence of Walter Scott upon America and American Literature before 1860*, Urbana, 1929.

³ Ossoli, p. 119.

⁴ Taylor, pp. 23, 29-30.

⁵ Webster, p. xx.

⁶ The Reverend Mr. Clark travelled in Europe by the "kindness" of his congregation, to whom he appropriately dedicated his book. See his "Dedication" and "Preface."

the middle of the last century was very considerable. In addition, the number of travel-books written about that time indicates that Americans not only went to England, but that many of them were willing, even eager, to express their opinions of it in print—and that people at home were willing to read what they wrote.

The reasons for their trips were various. Perhaps Hawthorne put his finger on the basic one when he noted that "no people on earth have such vagabond habits as ourselves,"⁷ and, more particularly, that "we have still an unspeakable yearning towards England."⁸ Ostensibly, however, gypsy blood and nostalgia were only partly accountable for the many travellers. The Hawthornes themselves and the Bancrofts went on matters of government. Daniel Webster travelled primarily for relaxation, "but he also had some prospect of disposing of his extensive real estate holdings in the Middle West."⁹ Emerson and Mrs. Stowe were invited to lecture in England. For William Wells Brown, Europe was the final step in a flight from slavery. John W. Corson's trip was admittedly a "professional tour," and Dr. Valentine Mott, also, was principally interested in medicine and surgery. Several travellers were in search of health: for example, the Mr. Clark already mentioned, the Reverend J. T. Headley, and the brother who accompanied Frederick Olmsted. Olmsted himself went abroad chiefly to learn something of English farm-life and agricultural methods and problems which might be useful or interesting to the American agriculturist. Horace Greeley crossed the ocean for the benefit of "the habitual readers of *The Tribune*,"¹⁰ especially to describe for them the opening of the Crystal Palace. Some, indeed, had no apparent motive but the excellent one of pleasure: for instance, the Reverend Dr. Choules, who wished to revisit his native land, and the three youngsters who accompanied him; Bayard Taylor, who was born evidently with the desire to travel; and probably a good many others.

It is not strange that the social group to which our travellers belonged was rather limited. With scarcely any exceptions they were of the Eastern seaboard, mostly from the neighborhoods of New York and Boston and Philadelphia. Nearly all, moreover, were professional men and women. Many were primarily writers: in addition

⁷ *Our Old Home*, p. 25.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

⁹ Webster, pp. xii-xiii.

¹⁰ Greeley, p. iv. Margaret Fuller's letters from Europe were also originally written for the *Tribune*. See Ossoli, p. v.

to the most obvious, Mrs. Sigourney, Henry Theodore Tuckerman, and Miss Sedgwick. The clergy was amply represented; the medical profession somewhat less. President Felton of Harvard and President Durbin of Dickinson were among the travellers, as well as Jacob Abbott, known both as educator and as children's writer. Greeley was a journalist, Olmsted a landscape-architect, and Bayard Taylor was to become a literary man and a diplomat. Almost universally, in other words, they were of the upper social level—not wealthy people, even as wealth was counted in their day, but of that class in nineteenth-century America which had the strongest ties of culture with Great Britain. It is probably the familiarity with things British, the sense of the continuity of English and American culture, plus what Lowell calls "the artistic want of . . . background" in America,¹¹ that explains the "unspeakable yearning" mentioned by Hawthorne. Possibly it is the cause of Tuckerman's asserting with a curious mixture of dismay and pride that "Tennyson and the Brownings have a hundred American to one English admirer."¹² Perhaps it makes clear why Miss Sedgwick, on seeing her first cathedral, says, "There is nothing in our land to aid the imperfect lights of history. Here it seems suddenly verified!"¹³ Inexorably, it seems, our wanderers were drawn back to the "old home."

I. Some Clergymen and a Physician

The Reverend A. Cleveland Coxe¹⁴ most certainly realized this sense of cultural unity when he stated at the beginning of his substantial volume of *Impressions* that they "presuppose, on the part of the reader, a familiarity with English subjects, and with the geography, history and literature of England."¹⁵ He went so far, in fact, as to assert, "To enjoy England one must be an American. . . ."¹⁶ His book, solid and rather pedantic, as may befit what was originally contributed to the New York *Church Journal*, is in many ways a typical travel-book of the period. In his preface he admits that he records the "pleasures" of England and emphasizes deliberately the bright side of the picture; his is essentially, we see at once, a return

¹¹ *Leaves from my Journal in Italy*, p. 113.

¹² Tuckerman, p. 231.

¹³ Sedgwick, p. 38.

¹⁴ Arthur Cleveland Coxe (1818-1896) was one of the most eminent Episcopal clergymen of his day. His *Christian Ballads* (1840) appeared in many editions in both England and America.

¹⁵ Coxe, p. v.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

to the past and a sentimental journey. At the very beginning, for instance, he is deeply moved by the prospect of treading "the hallowed pavement of an ancient minister [*sic*]";¹⁷ he praises the vicar who discoursed about "the olden time" and "was no admirer of the Crystal Palace, and all that sort of thing";¹⁸ he upholds the appropriateness of modern buildings constructed "in the true academic style of Cambridge and Oxford."¹⁹ Throughout his travels, indeed, he is faithful to the conception of Old England which he has acquired at home among his books and engravings.

In spite of the words of his preface Mr. Coxe was much given to the guide-book manner: the Tower, the House of Commons, in fact almost any notable building or person brought forth a minute and painstaking account, often interlarded with quotations or observations from his reading. It is characteristic that he covered England very thoroughly; he spent a considerable time in London, where he saw everything from "Chaucer's Tabard" to the Tunnel and the Great Exhibition, and he traversed many miles of the provinces, going as far afield as North Wales, which was comparatively unfrequented by American travellers, and to Scotland and the Isle of Wight as well. It is very like him to say of Chester, after he had given the cathedral his first attention, "The other ecclesiastical objects of the town were duly visited,"²⁰ though, to do him justice, he was punctilious in all his sightseeing, not in ecclesiastical objects alone. Moreover, all that he saw he recorded most systematically: in his travels through the Cotswolds, for instance, we can follow him step by step with a map, and each cathedral which he saw he anatomized. Socially, likewise, he went through the prescribed course: he was presented at court,²¹ he dined at the Mansion House,²² he waited on the Archbishop at Lambeth,²³ and so on through a long list of conventional activities.

Where Coxe rises above the conscientious tourist, he is more an individual, though an annoyingly short-sighted one. As he himself stoutly asserts, he is "a hearty and earnest member of the Anglican Church,"²⁴ so earnest, in fact, that he bristles with prejudices against Protestant and Roman Catholic alike. He finds excuse to attack

¹⁷ Coxe, p. 11. The "minister" was Lichfield.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 165 ff.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 238 ff.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

the English Roman Catholics not only in discussing Newman's oratory, where comment is relevant though gratuitous,²⁵ but also in telling of his descent to the Thames Tunnel.²⁶ The objection to the Protestants is linked with his almost fanatical Toryism: he opposes "the superficial views of Macaulay" and condemns "those bold, bad men" who slew Charles I,²⁷ while of the House of Lords he says that "so virtuous an aristocracy has never been seen elsewhere among mankind" and demands that it shall not degrade itself to accept "every momentary *Credo* of Ministers and Commons."²⁸ Such views, indeed, invalidate much of his comment on English life—for example, his dismissal of what most other travellers recognized as a serious and fundamental problem when he says, "I was now among the collieries, but had no desire to know anything about them. . . . England is alive to the spiritual and temporal destitution of her poor. . . ." ²⁹ The only other conviction of equal potency with these, apparently, was that which kept him from visiting the charming Park and Abbey of Newstead because he could not bring himself "to make a pilgrimage to the scene of those orgies for which it is chiefly distinguished." ³⁰

In fairness one must admit that, though Coxe is often tedious and sometimes preposterous, he has virtues. His fund of information is large and flexible: "seldom," he says of his rambles in London, "was I in want of associations," ³¹ and the comment might have been made with equal justice in connection with almost any part of his trip. Too, his enthusiasm for England is perfectly genuine, and we are less likely to shrug aside his belief that she is "the hope of the world" ³² when we remember that Emerson, a far wiser man, asserted that "England is the best of actual nations." ³³ Moreover Coxe sometimes writes well; for instance, he makes an excellent comparison between Tintern Abbey and Fountains ³⁴ and describes the Armory of the Tower of London as "a complete property-room of the Waverley novels." ³⁵ He is honest enough, also, to admit an error when he sees that he has been wrong: "Having frankly confessed my prejudices

²⁵ Coxe, pp. 22 ff.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 35. He attacks Macaulay more violently on p. 244.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 291.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 320.

³³ *English Traits*, p. 299.

³⁴ Coxe, p. 289.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

against the Crystal Exhibition, I must now as frankly own that I am ashamed of them," he says, acknowledging his "folly" in deliberately missing "the pageant of the opening."³⁶ As a whole, however, the book remains an example of the considerable number of painstaking but essentially lifeless and provincial travel-books that came out of the period before the Civil War. Coxe saw with exemplary completeness the externals of England—its cathedrals, its inns, its great men, its government, its dinner-parties, even (though he looked the other way) the dirt and misery of its streets. But it is hard to believe, after reading his book, that he took back to America much more breadth of understanding than he brought away from it. His was a well-stocked but conventional mind; his *Impressions* is its natural product.

Of a different stamp from Coxe was the Reverend J. T. Headley,³⁷ whose few chapters on England in *Rambles and Sketches* reveal a more observant and critical attitude. Headley realized, for one thing, the futility for American readers of the guide-book method; of Warwick he says, "I will not describe the castle, with its massive walls and ancient look, for the impression which such things make does not result from this or that striking object, but . . . the history they altogether unroll, and the images your own imagination calls up from the past."³⁸ He had also, it seems, fewer preconceptions in favor of England than Coxe; indeed he was inclined sometimes to speak of it in uncomplimentary terms. To him the nobility was "luxurious" and "profligate";³⁹ the members of the House of Commons were "uncouth and ill-bred in their behaviour";⁴⁰ and, he informs us, "Victoria, as Queen of England, is a very plain woman, while Victoria, a milliner, would be called somewhat ugly."⁴¹ The English to him seemed supercilious in trivial matters, as in their treatment of him on the Channel boat,⁴² and criminally neglectful of larger social issues, such as the misery of the London poor.⁴³ The censoriousness of such remarks does not mean that the Reverend Mr. Headley did

³⁶ Coxe, p. 64.

³⁷ Joel Tyler Headley (1813-1897) began his career as a clergyman but became best known as a historian.

³⁸ Headley, pp. 237-238.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 219.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 196-197. Most of our travellers praised Victoria's appearance; Miss Sedgwick, however, agreed with Headley. (See pp. 61-62.)

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 178.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 210-211, and *passim*.

not see the beauties of England; like nearly every other traveller before or since he praised the landscape, and his comment on Westminster Abbey loses nothing in effectiveness by its brevity.⁴⁴ Beside Coxe, however, he is conspicuous as one whose interest was at least as much in the present as in the past and as one also who had left his rose-colored spectacles at home.⁴⁵

The most intelligent and well-balanced of the clergymen was Dr. John P. Durbin,⁴⁶ the second volume of whose *Observations in Europe* deals with Great Britain and Ireland. Although there is very little comment in his book on the lions which absorbed the attention of Mr. Coxe, we do not get the impression that Dr. Durbin was lacking in a sense of the past, but rather that he did not care, in writing, to retrace old ground since he found plenty of material for his pen in modern England. He begins well, with a good picture of the approach to London by the Thames,⁴⁷ and his comments on Daniel O'Connell a few pages later reveal a moderation and objectivity which neither Coxe nor Headley seems to have possessed.⁴⁸ He was interested in all sorts of things—the London docks; the Duke of Wellington, to whom he was not partial;⁴⁹ Christ's Hospital; the comparison of St. Paul's with St. Peter's;⁵⁰ the state of Methodism in England;⁵¹ the Duke of Atholl's tree-planting.⁵² When the riots of August, 1842, began he hastened to Birmingham to see for himself what the conditions among the workers really were.⁵³ Travelling through the English countryside, he came to the conclusion that American farmers might learn much of beauty and productiveness from the English custom of planting trees among the fields.⁵⁴ He admittedly avoided description of the Highlands, and he remarked with considerable truth that associations rather than intrinsic beauty, in which they are sur-

⁴⁴ Headley, pp. 203 ff.

⁴⁵ Headley does not compare, however, in disillusionment with the Reverend John A. Clark, whose conclusion on seeing York Minster was that "Protestants have no use for cathedrals" since "they are not designed for the glory of God, but for the gratification of men" (II, p. 313)! Mr. Clark is as violently Protestant as Coxe is Anglican, and even more tedious and narrow-minded.

⁴⁶ John Price Durbin (1800-1876) was a Methodist minister, an eloquent preacher, and the president of Dickinson College.

⁴⁷ Durbin, pp. 10-11.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-23; p. 28.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34; pp. 34-36. He had seen St. Peter's earlier in the same trip.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 5.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 169.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

passed by Italy and Switzerland, make them interesting to most travellers.⁵⁵

On the evils of England—the overflowing wealth coupled with the direst poverty, the lack of a solvent lower middle class, the problem of unemployment, and so forth—Dr. Durbin was plainspoken, but never iconoclastic. He wanted to get at causes and to find real remedies, such as, perhaps, the abolition of the laws of primogeniture and entail, the re-adjustment of the tax burden, and a national system of education.⁵⁶ In an admirable comparison between such problems in England and in America he anticipated by fifty years one of the points of the “frontier thesis,” for he says:

The great excess of our soil over our population acts like a safety-valve to our manufacturing operatives, and effectually prevents the production of such a population as the operatives of Great Britain.⁵⁷

He commented on the Church of England, confessing an initial prejudice in its favor but asserting its need of a housecleaning;⁵⁸ and, though he himself was unsympathetic to negro slavery, he endeavored to clear up the misconceptions which, he felt, had been created in the English mind by abolitionist agitators.⁵⁹ Finally, he makes a most interesting statement concerning the attitude of England towards America: while the English people are disposed to feel friendly towards Americans as individuals, to American institutions all but the Liberal party, and especially the press, are actively hostile. “They do not fear the spirit of propagandism from America—we are too remote for that—but the *example* of successful Republicanism.”⁶⁰ In all, Dr. Durbin’s book is surprisingly readable considering its age and his comparative obscurity; it is not a mere guide-book but the record of an observant eye and a vigorous mind.

John W. Corson, a physician from Brooklyn, is the most agreeable of the medical travellers.⁶¹ He saw Europe during intervals snatched

⁵⁵ Durbin, pp. 171–172.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 14.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 204. T. B. Macaulay in “Letter to a Correspondent in America” (May 23, 1857) makes an observation very similar to Dr. Durbin’s. Compare Emerson, below.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 21.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 309–311.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 295. Compare the precisely similar opinion of Horace Greeley, as stated on pages 88–90 of his book. Compare, also, Mrs. Bancroft (March 17, 1848): “The discussion of French matters reveals to me every moment the deep repugnance of the English to republican institutions” (p. 170).

⁶¹ Dr. Valentine Mott in the section of his book which deals with Great Britain concerns himself exclusively with medical matters.

from work in the hospitals of Paris, Vienna, and London;⁶² but that very fact may account for the pleasantness of his remarks about Great Britain. His method is often impressionistic: he imagines himself and the reader standing on Blackfriars' Bridge, from which he points out the sights of London,⁶³ or in Hyde Park, when Victoria and Albert and Wellington pass by,⁶⁴ or at a session of the House of Lords⁶⁵—all of which he makes vivid. He speaks of the "rich, finished aspect" of the English countryside,⁶⁶ of the thorough comfort of an English home—"comfort is truly an English word,"⁶⁷ of the efficiency and speed of the English railroads, rushing along over the country "at the rate of from forty to fifty miles an hour, and leaving an impression very much like this sentence."⁶⁸ He recognizes that the chapel of Henry VII is the gem of Westminster Abbey and that the scenery around Windermere is "bewitching";⁶⁹ while of "queenly Edinburgh" he says, "There is no city in Europe that, from its situation, is so imposing. Prague comes nearest it, but lacks the view of a mountain on the one hand and ocean on the other."⁷⁰ Understandably, since his book concerns holiday matters, Dr. Corson does not discuss the serious and problematic aspects of English life. There are brief accounts of meetings of the Evangelical Alliance in London and of the British Association for the Advancement of Science at Oxford,⁷¹ but otherwise he writes simply of "loiterings." There are, however, two long lectures—one on "European Charities" and the other on "Foreign Hospitals and Schools of Medicine"—which were delivered after his return to America, which indicate that Dr. Corson was not blind to contemporary problems. As a whole, however, his book throws a favorable light on England; he not only feels affection for its people and its countryside, but he recommends, in closing, that American medical students turn their attention to the growing schools of London, Edinburgh, and Dublin rather than to those of the continent exclusively.⁷²

⁶² Corson, p. iii.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 267 ff.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 276-278.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 266.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 271.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 280.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 274 and 285.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 287. I was interested to see that Dr. Corson is the only traveller to make what seems an obvious comparison: "In the new part of the town the streets are wide and magnificent, though almost as primly regular, in places, as those of the Quaker city of Philadelphia" (p. 288).

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76, 281-282.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 396.

II. Abolitionists

Of the four travellers already discussed some were interested in social problems and some were not, but none really had an ax to grind. The two whom we shall now consider, however, were crusaders to the bone and their very presence in England was the result of their connection with a cause.

Mrs. Stowe crossed the Atlantic at the invitation of the Glasgow Ladies' New Antislavery Association for a lecture-tour intended to cap the sensational success of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and make Britain yet more aware of the abolitionist point of view. Because of her uncertain health many of the addresses were delivered by her husband, the Reverend Calvin E. Stowe, and, perhaps fortunately, her book of "memories" refers only occasionally and obliquely to the real business of the journey. On account of the nature of her trip, however, Mrs. Stowe's contacts with English life were unusually broad: she was recognized alike by commoner and noble; she was equally welcome in a Scottish peasant's cottage,⁷³ in the middle-class home of Joseph Sturge, or amid the splendor of Stafford House. She went everywhere and met nearly everyone: there was a "family evening" at Lord John Russell's⁷⁴ and dinner at his country-seat;⁷⁵ at Sir Charles Trevelyan's breakfast-party she was seated between Macaulay and Milman⁷⁶ and talked also with Hallam; Cruikshank called on her;⁷⁷ at the Lord Mayor's dinner she chatted with the Dickensses;⁷⁸ the Duke of Argyle engaged her in conversation on various American writers in whom he was interested;⁷⁹ she was acquainted with Lady Byron, who was also deeply concerned in the cause of negro emancipation, and with Mrs. Jameson and Samuel Rogers. Indeed the list of the people whom she knew and the places to which she had entrée might be extended for pages. Probably no other of our travellers, not even Emerson or Webster, had a greater or more generous reception in England than Mrs. Stowe.

It is pleasant to note that her extraordinary celebrity did not in the least turn her head. Her book is an entirely unaffected record, agreeably varied in subject matter and in tone. Since the purpose of

⁷³ See, for example, Stowe, I, p. 138.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, I, p. 326.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, II, pp. 55-59.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, II, p. 5.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, II, p. 10.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, I, p. 266.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, I, p. 275.

her trip was serious and since she was interested in all sorts of social problems, it is natural that she should discuss not only the negro question but also such similarly pressing matters as model lodging houses,⁸⁰ reforms in the dressmaking and millinery trades,⁸¹ the management of the Sutherland estates, "an almost sublime instance of the benevolent employment of superior wealth and power,"⁸² and the temperance⁸³ and the pacifist⁸⁴ movements. In spite of her absorbing concern with human betterment, however, Mrs. Stowe does not impress us as either gloomy or fanatical. She admits that she likes fun, even the word *fun*, partly because of its "good, hearty, Saxon sound."⁸⁵ She is inclined to optimism, perhaps because she was so warmly and understandingly received and because the upper-class society in which she chiefly moved was genuinely humanitarian.⁸⁶ Moreover, *Sunny Memories* is a great deal more than the record of a social conscience; it is one of the most attractive of our travel-books.

Because of poor health and the constant demands on her time and strength, Mrs. Stowe saw a rather limited portion of Great Britain. In addition to the larger cities, many of which she visited in the course of her lectures, she came to know little but the Scottish abbey country, the Warwick and Stratford-on-Avon neighborhood, York and Fountains, and various country estates. But what she saw she thoroughly enjoyed and wrote about with flavor. In her observations on scenes and buildings, for instance, she seldom uses minute description; instead she is apt to throw out a brief but provocative comment—for instance, when she says that the builder of Melrose must have been "a Mozart in architecture."⁸⁷ And instead of the ponderous historical explanations in which some writers indulge, she sums up Warwick the King-maker, for example, by commenting that he "showed as much talent at fighting on both sides and keeping the country in an uproar, as the modern politicians in America."⁸⁸

⁸⁰ Stowe, chap. 28.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 26.

⁸² *Ibid.*, I, p. 313.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 172, 271, and *passim*.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 248-250.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 273.

⁸⁶ See especially, *ibid.*, I, p. 326: "It seems to me that the better and more thinking part of the higher classes in England have conscientiously accepted the responsibility which the world has charged upon them of elevating and educating the poorer classes. In every circle since I have been here in England, I have heard the subject discussed as one of paramount importance." Compare Mr. Coxe's similar assertion but altogether different tone.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, I, p. 159.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, I, p. 228.

From the beginning, like many other Americans, Mrs. Stowe felt quite at ease in Britain and experienced the "thrill and pulsation of kindred,"⁸⁹ and when she departed it was like leaving home to say farewell to "Old England, the mother of us all."⁹⁰ She was warm, too, in her praise of the English people.⁹¹ Yet her attitude was objective as well as sympathetic; she was prepared to approve, but she retained the independence of her judgment. In Scotland she enjoyed alike the familiar "little glimpses into family circles"⁹² and speculating on the reason why her enthusiasm for Walter Scott met with small popular response.⁹³ She regretted that American literature, unlike English, had "very little traditionary lore to work over";⁹⁴ yet when she visited Speke Hall, with its tapestried door and ghostly lady, she wondered what Nathaniel Hawthorne, not some British writer, would do with such a setting.⁹⁵ She was suspicious of too much worship of old masters simply because of their age,⁹⁶ and in the Dulwich Gallery she said to her husband, "'Now choose nine pictures simply by your eye, and see how far its untaught guidance will bring you within the canons of criticism.'" ⁹⁷ Yet she could speak with spontaneous admiration of the "enchantment," "the wild, poetic beauty" of the ruins of Bothwell Castle.⁹⁸ She remains an agreeable companion-in-travel, in short, because her interests were broad, her mind was receptive, and her attitude towards England neither apologetic nor overcritical. The two aspects of her as a traveller, those which give her book its variety, are best summed up in a little episode which she recounts. She and some of her friends were driving along over pleasant country roads to Stratford.

So, as we rode along [she says], our speculations and thoughts in the under current were back in the old world of tradition, while, on the other hand, for the upper current, we were keeping up a brisk conversation on the peace question, on the abolition of slavery, . . . in fact, on all the most wide-awake topics of the present day.⁹⁹

⁸⁹ Stowe, I, p. 18.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, II, p. 432.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, for example, II, p. 133.

⁹² *Ibid.*, I, p. 170.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, I, p. 69.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, I, p. 184.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, I, p. 35.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 278-279.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, I, p. 279. Compare her comments on the paintings in Warwick Castle, I, pp. 235-236.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 60-61.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 195-196.

William Wells Brown is a representative, and a very creditable one, of the race which Mrs. Stowe was striving to set free. His account of his sojourn in England is influenced, inevitably, by the facts that he himself had been a slave and that his education was self-acquired. He went to Europe first as a delegate to the Paris Peace Conference of 1849, and thereafter spent five years in Great Britain, not on a begging mission, but as a lecturer on abolition. Ultimately he was redeemed from slavery by an English friend and, since it was at last safe for him to do so, returned to America, leaving England reluctantly but with the conviction that he could best serve his people in the United States.¹⁰⁰

The most individual aspect of Brown's discussion of England is his comments on the relative status of the negro in America and the laborer in Britain. It was customary for anti-abolitionist Americans to reply to disquieting British remarks on the slavery situation by accusing the pot of calling the kettle black. Dr. Durbin, for instance, said flatly that the working people of England *were* slaves and that their condition was worse than that of the American negro.¹⁰¹ It is significant that Brown, who was certainly not unaware of the misery of England's poor, expressly repudiates this idea. "Whatever may be the disadvantages that the British peasant labors under," he says, "he is free. . . ." ¹⁰² He refers also, more than once, to the difference in the treatment of the negro in even the Northern states and Canada from that in England,¹⁰³ and in the story of the meeting of Lady Byron and Ellen Craft he rises to passionate indignation against "every half-bred, aristocratic, slave-holding, woman-whipping, negro-hating woman of America," ¹⁰⁴ with whom the poet's widow is pointedly contrasted.

Quite apart from his comments on the slavery issue, Brown has much to say about England. His sightseeing, of course, was intermittent, so that his book has no particular pattern or continuity. He

¹⁰⁰ The facts of his life are taken from the "Memoir" and the closing pages of the book.

¹⁰¹ Durbin, p. 311. Durbin is only one of many Americans who use this argument.

¹⁰² Brown, p. 140. Compare pp. 102-104, 181, and *passim*.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 40, 312-314.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 301. Mrs. Stowe also mentions the fact that Lady Byron was the patroness of the Crafts (II, p. 107), and remarks the ease with which the Duchess of Sutherland conversed with the mulatto Miss Greenfield (I, pp. 319-320). Ellen Craft and her husband, William, were among the most celebrated of the American fugitive slaves in England during the period of the abolitionist agitation. Ellen Craft was as white as a Caucasian and evidently charming of manner. (See especially Brown, pp. 301-302.)

saw most of the lions of the day, however, and some of his remarks are worth noting, even though they often smell strongly of the lamp.¹⁰⁵ It is interesting that of all our travellers he seems to have been most aware of the importance of the British Museum, expressing his admiration of the great library and reading-room and of "the men whose energy has brought together this vast and wonderful collection."¹⁰⁶ He remarks aptly that a London fog "is the only thing which gives you an idea of what Milton meant when he talked about darkness visible."¹⁰⁷ When he sees York cathedral looming over the city of a moonlit winter night, he imagines it as "a Gulliver standing over the Lilliputians."¹⁰⁸ He is a great admirer of Byron, because of his republican principles, and he makes the customary pilgrimage to his home. He observes that it is "strange that Hamlet is always represented as a thin, lean man, when the Hamlet of Shakespeare was a fat, John Bull kind of a man."¹⁰⁹ At Tintern Abbey, "on the banks of the most fairy-like river in the world," he imagines that Shakespeare "had such ruins in view when he exclaimed, 'The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces, . . .'"¹¹⁰ But Dryburgh Abbey, in his opinion, was "a ruin of little interest, except as being the burial-place of Scott."¹¹¹

Brown is at his best, I think, not in such comments as these, where the facility of his literary associations sometimes outruns his judgment or taste, but in the thumbnail sketch. In a section devoted to the House of Commons, for instance, he swiftly puts before us in turn several of the most distinguished of British statesmen—Cobden, Macaulay, Disraeli, Palmerston, Bulwer-Lytton, and various others.¹¹² His characterization of Carlyle, too, catches the contradictions of the man very effectively.¹¹³ The book remains interesting, however, not because of any great novelty of viewpoint or distinction of style, but for extrinsic reasons. As a record it is valuable; it is a monument to persistence and achievement in the face of handicaps. As a travel-book alone it has, if no major defects, few peculiar merits.

¹⁰⁵ Brown was somewhat self-consciously well read. He refers to the fact that he must constantly read in order to make up for his illiterate youth (p. 115).

¹⁰⁶ Brown, p. 116.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 282-295.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 199-201. His sketch is worth comparing with the more favorable one of Carlyle by Margaret Fuller.

III. "Partial Portraits"

Among the curious-looking strangers whom Brown noticed at the Crystal Palace was a gentleman in a white coat and hat, with flaxen hair, and trousers rather short in the legs.¹¹⁴ Brown recognized him, in a minute or two, as Horace Greeley. The book which Greeley wrote about his trip is, he himself admitted, neither a gossip-book nor a work of literature; it was written, he tells us, from superficial knowledge, in haste, and with no idea of its enduring beyond the moment.¹¹⁵

Greeley is right; his book is superficial, and intolerably condescending as well; I am not at all sure that he realized the implications of his own statement that "traveling is useful in that it gives us a more vivid idea of the immense amount of knowledge we yet lack."¹¹⁶ For one thing, if many of our travellers were overburdened by the sense of the past, Greeley certainly was not. Of Glasgow he says, "Most of the town, being new, has wide and straight streets; in the older parts, they are perverse and irrational, as old concerns are apt obstinately to be,"¹¹⁷ while Dover he describes merely as "a very mean, old town."¹¹⁸ At Hampton Court he fails to detect any particular architectural merits, but he recommends a trip there to Americans "who have a day to spare."¹¹⁹ Westminster Abbey, he tells us, "made on me the impression of waste rather than taste"¹²⁰—chiefly, forsooth, because there were at least ten churches in New York City of larger capacity and greater convenience for the congregation! The ceremony of presentation at court called forth his heaviest irony,¹²¹ even though he conceded that the republican institutions which he preferred would be unsuitable to England.¹²² His distrust of the old and settled went so far, indeed, that he found even the English countryside, though pleasant, "nowise calculated to excite wonder or evoke enthusiasm."¹²³

The reader is disposed to ask whether Greeley saw anything in England that pleased him. What he considered worthwhile, obviously, was evidence of material progress and social improvement. He

¹¹⁴ Brown, p. 197.

¹¹⁵ Greeley, pp. iii-iv.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 304.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 306.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 99.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 295.

noticed, for instance, that grade-crossings on the Trent Valley Railroad had been eliminated;¹²⁴ he visited model lodging-houses and characteristically remarked that "the inmates are comparatively cleanly, healthy and comfortable; and *the plan pays*." ¹²⁵ In London the buildings were more substantial than those in New York; ¹²⁶ the streets were better paved, better lighted, and cleaner; the police were more efficient,¹²⁷ and the omnibuses more democratic; and the parks "beat us clean out of sight." ¹²⁸ He remarked, on the other hand, that little fruit was grown in England,¹²⁹ and he thought that an "important and profitable business" might be established in America in the production and exportation of dried fruits for England.¹³⁰

The chief purpose of Greeley's journey, as I have previously mentioned, was a survey of the Exposition. He tells of it in great detail, describing the opening and the Crystal Palace itself, and returning again and again to discuss various exhibits. Repeatedly he defends the United States against the frequent criticism that its representation was meagre; his arguments sound plausible, but he seems to protest too much. Like Mrs. Stowe he was greatly interested in social reforms, and he believed that the Exhibition heralded a new day for industry and the working-man. He attacks the British press¹³¹ and the Established Church¹³² for standing in the way of progress, but the latter at least he expects to be shaken within a few years to its centre—and the realm with it!¹³³ For labor he sees a splendid future, foreshadowed in the Crystal Palace, in which it "shall find . . . not Subsistence merely, but Education, Refinement, Mental Culture, Employment, and seasonable Pastime as well." ¹³⁴

Greeley was the type of nineteenth-century optimist who, placing too much faith in machinery and material progress, in the present and future, lost sight of spiritual values and of the lessons of the past. Emerson might almost have been thinking of him when he said, "Things are in the saddle, And ride mankind." Because of his per-

¹²⁴ Greeley, p. 38.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 50. The italics are Greeley's.

¹²⁶ Nearly every traveller remarks on the superior appearance and substantialness of English as compared with American buildings.

¹²⁷ Many travellers also mention this, noting especially the safety with which unaccompanied women may walk about the city after dark.

¹²⁸ Greeley, pp. 62-68.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 40, 121.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 54, 74-75.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 55.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

sonal limitations, Greeley's book is shallow and his picture of England distorted.

Disappointing for a different reason is Mrs. George Bancroft's *Letters from England*.¹³⁵ The fault lies mainly in its lack of detail on the people and the events which she was in a rare position among our travellers to discuss. For instance, she says,

Yesterday we had an agreeable dinner at our own house. Macaulay, Milman, Lord Morpeth and Monckton Milnes were all most charming, and we ladies listened with eager ears. Conversation was never more interesting than just now, in this crisis of the world's affairs [March, 1848]. Mr. Emerson was here and seemed to enjoy it much.¹³⁶

There is not a word of what was actually said in that distinguished company. And so it is throughout the book; perhaps for reasons of diplomatic discretion, more probably because of the hasty and personal nature of the jottings, Mrs. Bancroft tells us almost nothing of what we should most like to hear.¹³⁷

We do catch, however, the unsophisticated charm of her personality, and we learn something about the manners of aristocratic society. To Mrs. Bancroft the whole English episode was like a dream. In one of her fullest letters she describes the opening of parliament: Wellington brandishing the sword of State, the Queen reading her speech in a "flute-like" voice—all of it "more like a romance than a reality."¹³⁸ She tells of spending a day in the country with Lady Byron and "Ada," and that too is "more like a page out of a poem than a reality."¹³⁹ She felt uncertain of her accomplishments, wishing that she had "a more extensive culture" and the use of the modern languages,¹⁴⁰ and she was a little embarrassed by the custom of women's dining with arms and neck bare.¹⁴¹ She mistook the social position of her butler and maid, who seemed to her too grand for their stations,¹⁴² and she was troubled by the general inflexibility of British ways.¹⁴³ She comments casually on innumerable aspects of English

¹³⁵ The correspondence was not, of course, intended for publication, and it has also been cut, to what extent is not made clear by the editor.

¹³⁶ Bancroft, p. 169.

¹³⁷ A clew may lie in her stating (p. 37), "In short, I do, or see, every hour, something that if I were a traveller only, I could make quite a story of."

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 105-108.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 45.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

aristocratic life: on the fact that in London society no one seems to be introduced to anyone else,¹⁴⁴ on the method of carving a turkey,¹⁴⁵ on the clothes she wears to dine with Victoria and the prim formality of the conversation at dinner,¹⁴⁶ on country-house breakfasts¹⁴⁷ and London dinners,¹⁴⁸ on the means by which the *nouveau riche* get into society,¹⁴⁹ and so on. Particularly she is interested in the difference between the place of women in English and in American society: the Englishwoman, she says, has more subjects of conversation than the American, for she never sews or attends to domestic affairs, and therefore is better able to understand social life.¹⁵⁰

It would appear from her letters that Mrs. Bancroft saw a very limited aspect of English life, and of that aspect she recorded chiefly the trivialities. Her book is entertaining and has considerable charm, but it is essentially inconsequential.

We should like to have a more significant volume from William Cullen Bryant, also, on his European adventures than *Letters of a Traveller*. He was capable certainly, even if perhaps Horace Greeley and Mrs. Bancroft were not, of drawing pertinent conclusions from his experiences, but he fails almost entirely to do so. He himself was quite aware of the slightness of his work: "merely occasional sketches,"¹⁵¹ he calls it. The trips themselves were brief; the first covered about two months of the summer of 1845, while the second, of July, 1849, concerned almost completely a tour to the Orkneys and Shetlands.

Bryant's initial comments—on Liverpool, Manchester, and Chester¹⁵²—add nothing to what we already know from other travellers. The visit to the Peak which immediately follows is, however, more novel; he hears and sees his first English lark,¹⁵³ he discovers that even a "Peakerel" does not necessarily know his Walter Scott,¹⁵⁴ and he writes some effective description. It is worth noting that Bryant is obviously more interested in the art of painting than most of our travellers, especially in contemporary painting, which few Americans

¹⁴⁴ Bancroft, p. 60.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 100-103.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, for example, pp. 47-48.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, for example, pp. 56-59.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹⁵¹ Bryant, p. 3.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, letter 18.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 159-160.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 155. Compare Mrs. Stowe's remark cited above.

apparently even noticed. He remarks that Turner is a great artist, but one "who paints very strangely of late years,"¹⁵⁵ and he objects to the uniformity and lack of independence of most living British artists.¹⁵⁶ In water-colors, as distinct from oil, however, he thinks England pre-eminent,¹⁵⁷ and (this was in 1849) he praises young Hunt for his complete capturing of "pictorial illusion."¹⁵⁸ On the London parks, the prodigious height of the buildings in the Old Town of Edinburgh, the misery and unrest of the slums, and the Trossachs Bryant makes the thrice-familiar observations. Of Burns he remarks what seems obvious but was apparently seldom noted by the American visitor: he wonders why, living in the neighborhood of the sea, Burns took little, if any, of his imagery from the ocean.¹⁵⁹

Letter 51 is interesting because it deals with a part of Great Britain that no other of our travellers discovered, the Shetlands and the Orkneys. There are good pictures of the houses of the Zetland peasantry, of the peat-bogs, and especially of the precipitous cliffs of the Noss.¹⁶⁰ Bryant saw a herd of wild Shetland ponies and the remains of a Pictish castle, as well as the "Fitful Head" of Scott's novel *The Pirate*, and he had the ever-to-be-remembered experience of having to go to bed by day in the midsummer night of the northern islands.

As a whole Bryant's letters on England are commonplace and scrappy. In most of his sightseeing evidently he followed familiar paths, and he may have felt himself in no position to pass judgment on what he saw. A few passages help to redeem an otherwise disappointing book.

There are several travel-narratives of our period which are partial in a quite different sense of the word from that suggested in the previous paragraphs. Such, for instance, is Jacob Abbott's *A Summer in Scotland*, a pleasant but not remarkable account, of which the best part is the story of the trip from Oban to Staffa and Iona,¹⁶¹ which catches very well the dream-like quality of that excursion into the geological and historical past. Similarly limited in geographical

¹⁵⁵ Bryant, p. 165.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 166. This was written in 1845, on the eve of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood's revolt. Note Bryant's comment on Hunt immediately following.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 167, 402. Compare with several of Bryant's comments on painting the remarks of Richards in *Random Sketches*, pp. 33-34.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 402-403.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 197. This question has been often raised; I do not know, however, whether or not it was a common observation at the time of which I am writing. Bryant seems at least to be alone in thinking of it.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 415-417.

¹⁶¹ Abbott, chapter 12.

scope is *Ins and Outs of London*, the work of W. O'Daniel of Wilmington, Delaware, a sort of unconventional guidebook of several hundred pages, full of information and, more interesting, of comment on all kinds of things—postmen's knocks, governesses, the effect of hearing *Traviata* in English, English funerals, the building of the *Great Eastern*, prostitution and suicide, British ignorance of the American Revolution, the relative merits of hotels and chop-houses, and so forth.¹⁶²

The most distinguished travel-writer, however, to limit himself, at least ostensibly, in setting was William Ware, the well-known author of *Zenobia*, who in *Sketches of European Capitals* devotes some twenty-five pages to the British metropolis. As a matter of fact, Ware allowed himself much more freedom of discussion than his title would suggest; and his essay, though brief, is really the most comprehensive and probably the most valuable of the "partial portraits" we are considering. To him London was one of the two great capital-cities of the earth, a city which the American, he said, "bids all hail! with peculiar satisfaction."¹⁶³ Like some others of our travellers, he found it almost oppressively large: as he remarked, "You become presently insensible to the beauty of Florence, to the shops of Paris, to the moral glory of Rome, but you never forget for one single moment how big London is, how multitudinous its population."¹⁶⁴ The names of London streets and squares were household words to Ware and crowded with literary associations, but particular places seemed always less interesting to him than the city as a whole:

You would rather walk up and down Piccadilly or Regent Street, and see life there, than get by heart the whole of the British Museum. . . . You are witnessing a flow of human life which there is nothing resembling anywhere else, and which is a greater thing to witness than all objects of still life whatsoever.¹⁶⁵

Again like many others Ware found impressive the wealth of London—not the affluence of the old aristocracy, but that of the rising merchant-nobility, manifested especially in the "indefinite multiplication of splendid residences."¹⁶⁶ Fitting the size of the city, too, were its parks, of which St. James's might be considered "a model for all

¹⁶² O'Daniel, pp. 73, 74 ff., 111, 359, 284, 79–80, 281, 319–322 respectively.

¹⁶³ Ware, p. 97. The other city was Rome. Compare Hawthorne's similar opinion (*Our Old Home*, p. 256).

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

the world of landscape gardening,"¹⁶⁷ though the greater ones, such as Hyde and Regent's and Victoria, he thought "too large for comfort, use, beauty, or safety."¹⁶⁸ Of the famous buildings, also, he sometimes spoke unfavorably: St. Paul's he found unimpressive after St. Peter's,¹⁶⁹ while in Westminster, spoiled perhaps, as he admits, by "the republican taint,"¹⁷⁰ he was oppressed by the great number of monuments celebrating minor poets or forgotten peers.

Like Bryant and Tuckerman, Ware was interested in the fine arts. He noted the general inferiority in England of painting to literature, and objected to the "broad, loose style" of the prevalent English school as compared with the detail and polish of the continent.¹⁷¹ Reynolds and Wilson he considered the greatest of English painters,¹⁷² but more recent artists, though wonderfully prolific, seemed to him to lack power.¹⁷³ In particular he disliked Turner, "a man of genius,"¹⁷⁴ to be sure, but one whose work, like Coleridge's metaphysics or Carlyle's prose,¹⁷⁵ left Ware confused, and for whom he predicted, in spite of Ruskin, a decline in fame. The reasons for the unfortunate state of British art were, in his opinion, that it had been made a business, a money-making device, and, more important, that religion, which had in the old days and throughout Europe "tended to enlarge and elevate and strengthen the mind of the artist,"¹⁷⁶ had lost the power to inspire great art.¹⁷⁷ In practical matters, on the other hand, Ware considered England supreme—for example, in its cleanliness, order, and safety; in the efficiency of its police and post-office departments; in the general neatness and appropriateness of English dress.¹⁷⁸ Especially he contrasted the slovenliness of New England country-dwellings with the attractiveness of the British,¹⁷⁹ and he discussed with frankness, not to say vehemence, the filthy American habit of spitting, which was not to be tolerated in England.¹⁸⁰

¹⁶⁷ Ware, p. 100.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*; he seems to be alone among our travellers in this reaction.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 106.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

¹⁷⁵ Carlyle was, in his opinion, "the Grand Corrupter of the English speech of the present day" (p. 105).

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

¹⁷⁷ It is interesting that this view, advanced a hundred years ago by Ware, has become a platitude in twentieth-century art criticism.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 107-110.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 110-112.

Ware's most serious criticisms of the English character concerned the pride of money and love of display,¹⁸¹ and the tendency to cant. He mentioned, as evidence of British hypocrisy, the widespread concern for the American negro coupled with complete indifference to "the slavery of one hundred and fifty millions of Hindoos,"¹⁸² and the English mortification that Americans, who—they could not deny—were of British blood, should have produced so little art and literature.¹⁸³ The notion of British military supremacy, also, he thought unjustified: the defeat of Great Britain in the Revolution was "disgraceful," to be accounted for "only by the operation of grand principles of republican liberty on the one side, and the want of them on the other."¹⁸⁴ Like some other American visitors, he felt that official England—that is, the press and the government—was cold, envious, and grasping, "actuated in her treatment of others by no spirit of justice or generosity."¹⁸⁵ America, he believed, had only in his own time and none too early thrown off "the weight of the English narrowness."¹⁸⁶ In the end, however, like Emerson, Ware spoke more tolerantly of the English character. To him, Dr. Johnson is the epitome of England, for the British are a people with obvious and disagreeable faults, who take "a sort of pride in inconsistency, contradictions, caprice," but whom we "cannot but honour" for their toughness of fiber and their unflinching love of liberty.¹⁸⁷ In addition, he admitted, like nearly every other critic however unfriendly, that as individuals the English make a very different impression from that which they leave as a group. "Nowhere in my own country," said he, ". . . could I have been treated with a more cordial, wholehearted hospitality."¹⁸⁸

It is clear, I think, that William Ware, for all his brevity, is a more thoughtful recorder of his impressions of England than Greeley or Bryant or Mrs. Bancroft. None of them gives, or pretends to give, a complete picture; but Ware certainly, within the limits of his single essay, attempts most successfully to convey to us a conception of what lay below the surface of the England which he visited.

¹⁸¹ Ware, pp. 113–114. Other travellers give a precisely opposite opinion, for example Emerson.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 115.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 120–121.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 123–124.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 124, note.

IV. Some "Scribbling Women"

Catherine Maria Sedgwick had decidedly more fame in her own day than she has at present, but her book of travel-letters, though sentimental, remains a pleasant one. It resembles Mrs. Stowe's more than any of the others—in its "sunny" tone and in the fact that, like Mrs. Stowe, Miss Sedgwick met a considerable number of celebrities, even though she speaks of having had but brief "opportunities for social intercourse."¹⁸⁹ Her stay in Britain was, however, short—from June 4 to July 11, 1839—and she saw only that part of the country which lies between Portsmouth and London.¹⁹⁰ She frankly admits, moreover, that she has "only seen the outside," and that she has observed "no details of the vices of any class"¹⁹¹ nor seen the manufacturing districts and the "dark lanes and holes of London."¹⁹²

Like many other American visitors Miss Sedgwick found her arrival in England almost a homecoming. "When I touched English ground I could have fallen on my knees and kissed it," she tells us;¹⁹³ and as she and her party walked the quarter-deck of the *Victory*, it was a "thrilling sight" to them to mark the place where Nelson fell—Nelson, "the type of all gallantry, fighting for liberty against the world."¹⁹⁴ In Portsmouth, she says, "the passing equipages appear to us the originals of Cruikshank's illustrations. . . ."¹⁹⁵ But though she and her friends "seem to have passed from the fresh, bright youth to the old age of the world,"¹⁹⁶ all is familiar and beloved. The first real excursion is to "Eden" or "paradise"¹⁹⁷—in less hyperbolic terms, to the Isle of Wight. There she hears her first cuckoo, sees her first peasant cottage, finds her first churchyard-epitaph;¹⁹⁸ she makes pretexts for talking to people¹⁹⁹ and learns almost at once of the inevitable lower-class British struggle for bread: "Strange sounds these to our ears!"²⁰⁰ Wisely she avoids competing with the guide-books; at Carisbrooke Castle she truly remarks, "Nothing, I know, is

¹⁸⁹ Sedgwick, p. xi.

¹⁹⁰ Though she says (p. 120), "We mean, next year, to travel over it [*i.e.*, England], to see the country . . .," I have found no letters concerning this projected trip.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 111.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 25, 26 respectively.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

more tiresome than the description of old castles which you get from such raw tourists as we are . . . ; but I wish I could do up my sensations and send them to you.”²⁰¹ Later, at Southampton, she experiences the “luxury of an English inn” which “has never been exaggerated and cannot be overpraised,” while at Winchester cathedral she feels “overwhelming emotions.”²⁰² After a day or two in a delightful country-house and a visit with Miss Mitford, her group went on to London.

In the city Miss Sedgwick assiduously visited the usual things and made the usual comments: she was confounded by the extent and grandeur of London; she looked at the docks and warehouses; Westminster Abbey, in her opinion, was worth crossing the ocean to see; the parks reminded her that “the utilitarian principle, in its narrowest sense, has too much to do in our country.”²⁰³ She went to Covent Garden to see Macready’s version of *Henry V*, and, though she and another woman were alone, to her surprise and pleasure they were not even stared at.²⁰⁴ At the Italian opera she caught a glimpse of Victoria, “a plain little body enough.”²⁰⁵ There were, in turn, the British Museum, Hampton Court, Windsor Castle, and all the other sights. Her social contacts, as well as her sightseeing, were reasonably extensive. She had breakfast at Samuel Rogers’, of whom she speaks in most complimentary terms and at whose home she met Macaulay.²⁰⁶ She made the acquaintance of Barry Cornwall, paid many visits to Joanna Baillie, had tea at Carlyle’s, and spent an evening at Mr. Hallam’s.²⁰⁷ She met, at one time or another, Jane Porter, Milman, Lockhart, and Sir Francis Chantrey—the last of whom she made the error of calling “Mr.” Chantrey, to his evident amusement.²⁰⁸ And Mrs. Jameson was her intimate friend.²⁰⁹

It is not surprising that Miss Sedgwick’s impression of England was generally favorable. As an American, she had access to various social worlds,²¹⁰ and like Mrs. Stowe’s or Mrs. Webster’s,²¹¹ her

²⁰¹ Sedgwick, p. 34.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 38.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 52, 57, 54. On the parks compare William Ware immediately above.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 61. Compare Headley.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 78–81.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 91, 82 ff., 92–93, 93–94 respectively.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 98–99.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

²¹⁰ Compare Headley’s comment on his experience on the Channel boat.

²¹¹ Mrs. Webster’s diary records several meetings with Miss Sedgwick in London society. (See pp. 21, 45, 47.) Miss Sedgwick (p. 93) speaks of Webster’s being known in England as “the great Western.”

contact with the aristocracy was entirely happy. Of a dinner at "L—House" she remarked, "Lady L. was courteous, not condescending. . . . The modes of English life are identically our own. . . . I perceived nothing of the studied stillness [*sic*] we have heard alleged of English society."²¹² The highest rank, indeed, seemed to her to have the best and most informal manners, while those farther down the social scale were the ones inclined to be either servile or supercilious.²¹³ She found, also, a strong family resemblance between the English and the New England character,²¹⁴ but Londoners of her circle were mostly very ill-informed about American life and not particularly interested in it. A bishop, for example, inquired whether there were any theatres in America; a cultivated Englishwoman essayed to comfort her by remarking that in time America would doubtless have fine large trees like those in England; the most prevalent reason among the English for desiring to visit America seemed to be the wish to eat canvas-back ducks; and she found, to her distress, that "Mrs. Trollope's vulgar caricatures" were widely accepted as typical of America.²¹⁵ She saw in England great wealth, not always combined with judicious use of it;²¹⁶ she praised English orderliness—the cleanness of the streets and the efficiency of the police;²¹⁷ she was pleased with the independence and opportunity for intellectual cultivation which were accorded English upper-class women,²¹⁸ but she found the caste-system "galling, clogging, and unhealthy, from its perfect unfitness to the present state of freedom and progress in England."²¹⁹ To an American, indeed, it appears that Miss Sedgwick had good eyes and good sense. She saw England, within the admittedly narrow bounds of her experience, honestly, and she reflected her impressions clearly and agreeably.

Mrs. Lydia H. Sigourney's book is something of a novelty in that she tells the story of her travels in a mixture of prose and verse. Except for this peculiarity and the note of feminism which runs as an undercurrent through the volume,²²⁰ her work has little originality

²¹² Sedgwick, p. 87.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 113-116.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 101-103.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 108-109.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

²²⁰ For example, her praise of Hannah More as "a pioneer for her sex" (p. 351) and her almost exclusive interest, apparently, in women writers: Mrs. Hemans, "the sweetest of all poetesses" (p. 50), Miss Barret [*sic*] (p. 286), etc. Mrs. Sigourney was known as "the American Hemans."

and needs slight comment. After landing in Liverpool, she saw Great Britain quite systematically; she went first to Chester, the Lakes, and Carlisle, then to Scotland, and finally south by way of York, Sheffield, and Warwick to London. Her impressions, like her tour, were conventional: she contrasts the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh, she praises the beauty of the location of Dryburgh, she finds it "impossible to be disappointed" with York cathedral, and she quotes Shakespeare's epitaph at Stratford.²²¹ In London she witnessed the opening of parliament and, unlike Miss Sedgwick, thought Victoria's face "agreeable, and her complexion very fair."²²² She made the acquaintance of various well-known people, such as Miss Baillie, Miss Mitford, Miss Edgeworth, and Samuel Rogers,²²³ and she paid a call at Rydal on Wordsworth.²²⁴ Like Mrs. Stowe and some others, she was interested in intellectual and social matters; in Liverpool, for instance, she visited a church for the blind and the Blue Coat Hospital.²²⁵ She attended the Glasgow meetings of the British Association for the Advancement of Science,²²⁶ and she discusses at some length the Normal Seminary at Glasgow, where, it would seem, an early experiment in "student-teaching" was being carried on.²²⁷ The most unusual of her experiences, however, was a visit to the "female convicts" of Newgate, of which she writes thus:

The brief pause was broken by the entrance of a lady of commanding height, and of plain garb and countenance. Every eye was fixed on her, and the dignity of her calm benevolence seemed to be felt by all. There was about her the quietude of a soul conversant with high duties, and not to be satisfied with so poor an aliment as the applause of man.

This was Mrs. Fry.²²⁸

The interweaving of poetry and prose in the book deserves a word. The poetry, usually blank verse, ordinarily begins the chapter; the prose which follows is sometimes interspersed with transitional quotations from the previous poem.²²⁹ The verse is competent metrically; indeed it is too fluent, and the application of it occasionally reminds us of the eighteenth-century tendency to turn anything and everything

²²¹ Sigourney, pp. 105-106, 114, 140, 179 respectively.

²²² *Ibid.*, p. 285.

²²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 323-327.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 32-34.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 92-94.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 304.

²²⁹ For example, see the section on Chatsworth and Haddon Hall.

to poetic account, as a typical example will indicate:

. . . Many a curious thing
Was shown us too at Sheffield, ornaments,
And thousand-bladed knives, and fairy tools
For ladies [*sic*] fingers, when the thread they lead
Through finest lawn; and silver richly chased,
To make the festal board so beautiful,
That unawares the tempted matron's hand
Invades her husband's purse.²³⁰

Margaret Fuller was a more striking personality than either Miss Sedgwick or Mrs. Sigourney. Her letters from Great Britain cover only about three months and are mere chronological jottings of her observations, but they make good reading. She enjoyed the usual sightseeing, but she was at least equally interested in social projects, such as the mechanics' institutes of Manchester and Liverpool,²³¹ which she was inclined to discuss more fully than guide-book matters. Moreover, her individuality appears on nearly every page. Though she went, for instance, from Liverpool to Lancaster by railroad, she remarks pointedly on that "convenient but most unprofitable and stupid way of travelling."²³² Around her was the "cultivated loveliness" of the English scenery, impossible for an American even to imagine. Like Mrs. Sigourney she called on Wordsworth, but she regretted that she could not see him against a wilder and more romantic background than Rydal Mount and that his habits of seclusion kept him ignorant of the great needs of the world.²³³ In connection, also, with her Lake Country visit she paid her tribute to Harriet Martineau.²³⁴ In Scotland she went to the familiar places; she commented at some length on Scott and on Burns, and concluded that, though both were important to her, Burns "was much the rarer man";²³⁵ she called upon De Quincey and, in spite of finding his remarks somewhat trite, admired his eloquence and his urbanity.²³⁶ The stage-coach in which she rode to Perth was more to her liking, even in the rain, than the railroad had been; and she enjoyed her trip into the Highlands.²³⁷ She was benighted on Ben Lomond, a story

²³⁰ Sigourney, p. 145. Mrs. Webster comments in more prosaic fashion on the making of Sheffield ware (pp. 135-136).

²³¹ Ossoli, pp. 121-122.

²³² *Ibid.*, p. 128.

²³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 131-132.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

which she tells very effectively;²³⁸ and while the Trossachs disappointed her a little,²³⁹ the wildness of Glencoe was a delight.²⁴⁰ Back in Glasgow she was reminded by the squalid misery and degradation among the working people of the *Inferno*.²⁴¹ And so on, by various stages and with various comments, to London, "in itself a world."²⁴² Aside from sightseeing and visiting a model prison at Pentonville, her most interesting experiences there were meeting Joanna Baillie, for whom she had an almost extravagant admiration as one who rose above the ordinary feminine limitations,²⁴³ and talking with Carlyle, who, though he has "awakened thousands," she says, "does not converse—only harangues."²⁴⁴ The sketch of him is, in fact, excellent, catching both his mannerisms and her reaction to them; her final judgment may be found in the words: "He is not exactly like anything but himself."²⁴⁵

The book, as I have previously suggested, is full of passing comment. Margaret Fuller approved of the British custom of opening picture-galleries and museums to the public;²⁴⁶ she was encouraged to find men at work in the kitchen of the Reform Club, because she hoped to see cooking and washing transferred to the care of the stronger sex!²⁴⁷ England, she remarked, housed the political exile, but taxed him to death;²⁴⁸ and she wondered what could be more excruciating than an English opera.²⁴⁹ Her attitude as a whole, indeed, was alertly critical, though never carping. Like nearly every other traveller, she revelled in the external beauty of England—the landscape, or York minster, "that dream of beauty realized";²⁵⁰ but she was not taken in by the character of John Bull. "He is prone to the most solemn humbug," she said, "generally of the philanthropic or otherwise moral kind."²⁵¹ He has learned much of his appreciation of his own greatest poet, Shakespeare, from the Germans.²⁵² And the social problems which he is facing are enormous.²⁵³

²³⁸ Ossoli, pp. 154–156.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 159–161.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 170.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 171–172.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 183–184.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 166.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

In a later section of her book Margaret Fuller adds to her travel-record a comment on the American traveller in Europe. According to her there are three species: first, the servile American, who goes abroad to squander money and indulge his tastes, who belongs to a class with "all the thoughtlessness and partiality of the exclusive classes in Europe, without any of their refinement, or the chivalric feeling."²⁵⁴ Then there is the conceited American, the provincial, who knows everything before he goes, to whom all the etiquette or ritual of Europe seems silly because he does not understand its origin and meaning. Yet he is not beyond hope: "add thought and culture to his independence, and he will be a man of might."²⁵⁵ Finally, there is the thinking American, who knows the advantages of the new world, but who wants to bring back to it every good thing of the old which will bear transplanting, and who, therefore, studies the history of the old. Thus, she concludes, the thinking American in Europe "can only become more American."²⁵⁶

Margaret Fuller, it is plain, belonged among the thinking Americans.

V. *A Pair of Novelties*

The novelty-book, as well as the more serious work of recognized or would-be writers, is frequently a measure of popular interest. It has already been pointed out that Mrs. Sigourney's book has an element of newness in her combining verse and prose to make a continuous travel-account; but more striking are such works as *Young Americans Abroad*, which is expressly suggested by its editor as a gift-book for children and young people at Christmas-time,²⁵⁷ and the travel-narrative of the young man who punningly calls himself "Mr. Dunn Browne." The novelty of the first of these lies in the fact that it was mainly written by three children²⁵⁸ who, in 1851, crossed the ocean with their tutor, the Reverend Dr. Choules,²⁵⁹ for what must have been designed by their families as a combination of education and holiday. The boys were Weld French, James A. Robinson, and George Vanderbilt of New York, and their ages were sixteen, four-

²⁵⁴ Ossoli, p. 251.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 251-252.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 250.

²⁵⁷ Choules, p. 4.

²⁵⁸ There are occasional letters by the tutor, who also, though he had been born in England, obviously considered himself an American.

²⁵⁹ They sailed on the same boat, incidentally, as the Reverend Mr. Coxé, with whom we are already acquainted.

teen, and twelve.²⁶⁰ They wrote to their friend Charley Dustan, who remained at home, and—though there is some evidence of censorship near the source—the letters generally seem very fresh and genuine.

The geographical scope of the book is limited. After landing in Liverpool, the four travellers spent nearly all of their time in London, except for two trips to the west, chiefly to visit Dr. Choules's old home in Bristol, and a jaunt to Chester. The boys, however, not only were indefatigable sightseers; they also possessed an astonishing fund of information. George, for instance, says, "I have read so much concerning London, that I am pretty sure I know more about it than many boys who have heard Bow Church bells all their lives,"²⁶¹ and we are quick to admit that he is probably right. Moreover, they took their touring seriously; the day before they are to go to Windsor, James concludes his letter by saying, "I feel pretty well acquainted with its history and associations, but I shall spend the evening with George in brushing up my information."²⁶² They discuss the important monuments in rather guide-bookish fashion, which is not unnatural, but add delightful touches: they tell of getting a trio of haircuts in a one-time palace of Henry VIII,²⁶³ and of buying hot-cross "bunns" on Good Friday morning from children who cry them through the streets,²⁶⁴ and they comment on the fact that they are conspicuous in London because all the English boys wear hats instead of caps.²⁶⁵ They are among the very few travellers who note that in English towns and villages every house has its name;²⁶⁶ on the other hand, they confirm the rather widespread opinion that even well-educated British people are often unacquainted with American life.²⁶⁷

They brought to their travels enormous gusto: George was so excited when he reached London that he did not know what he wanted to see first;²⁶⁸ at the Tower he wondered whether men had not been stronger in the old days than in later times since they were able to wear coats of mail.²⁶⁹ They spent "hour after hour" in the British

²⁶⁰ Whether respectively or not, I cannot say. From the tone of the letters I am inclined to place them in the order indicated.

²⁶¹ Choules, p. 36.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 126.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

Museum,²⁷⁰ and to have seen Wellington was the next best thing to having seen Napoleon himself.²⁷¹ They attended at Almack's a huge Fourth of July entertainment, given by George Peabody for Abbott Lawrence, and stayed up long past midnight among a crowd of celebrities;²⁷² and they went bathing at Weston-super-Mare, which, they thought, had air like Newport but no such swimming as at home.²⁷³ In a concluding letter Dr. Choules added his observations on what they had seen: he was glad to return to America because he had found no other place where there was so much genuine equality, and in England especially was a restless anxiety in obtaining the mere necessities of life. Like Dr. Durbin, he believed that there was as much suffering among the working-class in Great Britain as among the slaves of America; yet he defended the aristocracy against the frequent charge of being self-indulgent, vicious, or unfeeling.²⁷⁴ As a whole, of course, *Young Americans Abroad* has no great purpose and no special value, but it is an interesting souvenir, containing both entertaining comment and intelligent observation.

Samuel Fiske's book is deliberately provincial, a gay and flippant account of his *Experiences in Foreign Parts*, originally contributed to the *Springfield Republican*.²⁷⁵ The novelty began with his landing in England; weary with nine days of beating up the Channel against the wind, Fiske and three companions chartered the pilot's boat, left their ship, and landed on September 23, 1855, at Torquay, Devonshire! He was the only one of our travellers to visit that delightful part of the English coast, and he evidently appreciated both its natural beauty and the "cultivation" which had been bestowed upon it.²⁷⁶ He resembled other tourists, however, in his praise of English inns, "the most comfortable place in the world next to your own home."²⁷⁷ Bristol he dismissed irreverently as "dirty, smoky, old, dilapidated,"²⁷⁸ and at Bath he had trouble finding lodgings, but managed to put up over night and to taste "two or three . . . villanous [*sic*] flavors" of water.²⁷⁹ On the way to London he had to ask eleven railway em-

²⁷⁰ Choules, p. 87.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 331-335.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 340-341.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 367-368.

²⁷⁵ It is impossible to avoid comparison with the later, much greater work of Mark Twain in *Innocents Abroad*.

²⁷⁶ Fiske, pp. 9-10.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 11; cf. p. 263.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 14. Contrast Choules, who, perhaps because it was his old home, speaks enthusiastically of it.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

ployees the gauge of the Great Western road before he could get an answer, and then the man had to measure the track!²⁸⁰ Whereas nearly all the other travellers were astonished by the size of London, Fiske said flatly that it was *too* big;²⁸¹ the Thames, on the contrary, was a "muddy, narrow, insignificant stream."²⁸² The London guide was an automaton, who took American "*sixpences*" through Westminster or American "*shillings*" through the Tower and sold St. Paul's "in small parcels to suit purchasers."²⁸³ What he liked best about London were the parks,²⁸⁴ but Buckingham Palace—to which, he remarked, he had not been invited—was "a large, substantial, plain, comfortable-looking, three-story house, a very respectable tenement for the queen or any one else."²⁸⁵ Later, when he visited Scotland, he found the Scottish lakes "so so" and Glasgow "a tolerably well-built city,"²⁸⁶ though the old town of Edinburgh was "as shabby as a New England deacon's every-day hat."²⁸⁷ Like almost everyone else he paid a visit to Abbotsford,²⁸⁸ but, unlike the others, he attended the Jedburgh border-games, of which he gives an interesting description.²⁸⁹

Though Fiske's book is obviously a *jeu d'esprit*, it contains beneath its tone of banter some good observations and more genuine feeling for England than he would perhaps have cared to admit. He admired, for example, Oxford and Cambridge, especially King's College Chapel; and in connection with the college dining-halls, he made the same shrewd comment as Hawthorne on the importance to the Englishman of his dinner.²⁹⁰ He commented justly on the immense richness and solidity of public works, and the appearance of wealth in England.²⁹¹ Best of all, on his return to England from the continent, he paid it his highest compliment:

England is the only country in the world that is all finished, . . . the scaffoldings taken down and the rubbish picked up. There are no odds and ends lying around loose, no out of the way corners where the work has been slighted, nothing any where

²⁸⁰ Fiske, p. 18.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 25.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 21.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 22, 23.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 25, 264.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 280.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 270.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 272-275.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 266. Compare Hawthorne, below.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 263.

but will bear the closest inspection. It doesn't make any difference which direction you take for an excursion into the country. Go down to the south-west to the region of Plymouth and Exeter and Bath, and you will think yourself in the loveliest part of England and of the world. Go on up to Stratford on Avon and Warwick Castle and Kenilworth, and you will find it hard to believe such beauty can exist anywhere out of paradise besides . . . go anywhere, take any train. . . . You can't go amiss. Wherever you go you will be thankful you took that particular direction rather than any other.²⁹²

Even the jester succumbs at last to the spell of England.

VI. "Views a-Foot"

Though Margaret Fuller preferred the stage-coach or walking to the railroad, and though all of our travellers covered many a mile on foot, only two deliberately choose to make walking-trips in Great Britain. Bayard Taylor was forced to walk because he did not have enough money to do anything else, though it is likely that he genuinely preferred that kind of travel. The account of his trip, as a nineteen-year-old boy, to the Old World is one of the most enduring of American travel-books. It is not that he makes any very noteworthy observations, but that he conveys with remarkable success the freshness of his own perceptions. He was well read without being burdened with knowledge,²⁹³ and he had a quick eye for natural or man-made beauty and a facility in expressing what he saw. His account of the descent from Ben Lomond, for instance, is admirable; every detail is exactly right—the rushing streams, the desolation, the stolid but fierce-looking Highland cattle.²⁹⁴ His enjoyment of what he calls "*Scott-land*" is infectious,²⁹⁵ and the inevitable visit to Abbotsford is varied by the episode of wading the Tweed.²⁹⁶ He saw the perfection of Melrose, the delicacy of the stone-work and the lightness and grace of the windows;²⁹⁷ and he heard the ominous murmur of discontent among the miners of Newcastle.²⁹⁸ Into his week in London he crammed as much as possible of the usual sightseeing, though—as he admits—he made no acquaintances.²⁹⁹ He was inter-

²⁹² Fiske, pp. 261-262.

²⁹³ Compare, for example, Coxe or Brown.

²⁹⁴ Taylor, pp. 50-52.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

ested alike in the Tunnel or the efficiency of the police and in Westminster, which, he thought, was "worthy of a special pilgrimage across the deep."³⁰⁰

Taylor's sojourn in Great Britain was very brief—from July 29 to August 22, 1844, and again for six weeks in the spring of 1846, during which time he was almost entirely engaged in earning his living. He does not, therefore, have a great deal to say about England, but nearly everything that he tells us is worth reading.

Frederick Law Olmsted probably agreed with my estimate of Taylor, for in his preface he acknowledges his indebtedness to *Views a-Foot* for the practical advice and information which it gave him. The period covered by his book is, like the English part of Taylor's, short; between his landing in Liverpool and his arrival in London, where he closes his account, scarcely a month elapsed. Yet his record stretches to almost four hundred and fifty pages of minute observation on all manner of things English. Perhaps because his was a walking-trip which left him long, quiet evenings in country inns or cottages, he was able to be most precise and complete in his picture.³⁰¹ But, as he says in his lengthy account of Liverpool, he and his companions did not "make a business of sight seeing";³⁰² he preferred to write about "the general aspect of the town, rather than show up the lions."³⁰³ Everywhere, too, he "met and conversed with all classes, except the nobles."³⁰⁴

From the start Olmsted sets down the most various kinds of observations. He describes the different types of boats in Liverpool harbor, down to the details of their rigging; he compares the docks with the "shabby log-wharves" of New York; he comments on the familiar appearance of the policeman, "thanks to Punch"; he mentions the fact that in England no gentleman carries his own luggage; he discusses the problem of prostitution in sea-port towns; for several pages he considers the kinds of building material used in the city houses; he notes that women engage in trade more than in an American city and remarks on their dress, general appearance, and independence³⁰⁵—indeed he writes with such amazing fullness on so many

³⁰⁰ Taylor, p. 84.

³⁰¹ Olmsted himself tells us (II, p. 149) that he wrote up his account after an interval of two years. Perhaps he expanded his original notes in preparing them for publication.

³⁰² Olmsted, I, p. 67.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, I, p. 217.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 46-48, 50, 52-54, 55-57, and 61-63.

topics that one wonders how he had time to do anything except write. It is only after a good many pages that the travellers get their knapsacks strapped on and really begin their tramp, emerging from a country railroad station into the loveliness of an English May, with hawthorn hedges and farm-houses and a church-spire and a "real (unimported) Hereford cow."³⁰⁶ And it is from this point on that Olmsted is most individual and therefore most interesting, for—unlike any other of our travellers—he tells us of the rural working class. Much of what he discusses, to be sure, concerns only the specialist in agriculture; his notes on manures, rotation of crops, drainage, types of plows, and such matters take up a great part of the book. But his remarks on the English farmer are enlightening and of general interest.

He found most of the countrymen glad to talk, especially to Americans, who were, to many of them, as unlikely beings as natives of the Pacific islands might be. Once, in fact, he met a villager who could hardly be convinced that they were from the United States because he had not thought that foreigners could learn to speak the English language so well!³⁰⁷ The conversation of the farmers was usually a complaint against the burden of taxes and tithes, and more than one wanted to emigrate to America, particularly after talking with Olmsted and his party. The speech of all but the lowest social order was, class for class, better than that of Americans, and Olmsted noted with pleasure the use of quaint archaisms such as "lad" and "lass."³⁰⁸ Nearly everyone was interested in those details of American life which differed from his own—for example, that we burn hard coal and build wood fires and eat such strange foods as griddlecakes.³⁰⁹ Olmsted found the laborer, as distinct from the owner, usually as degraded as the city operative, often unable to read or write, earning perhaps a dollar and a half a week for his entire family, with frequently nothing to eat but dry bread and the invariable beer or cider.³¹⁰

In addition to the discussion of the farmer, Olmsted commented on the places which they visited,³¹¹ usually with justice if without any

³⁰⁶ Olmsted, I, p. 87.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, I, p. 93. Miss Sedgwick, incidentally, tells of two similar episodes (p. 46), and the present writer had an almost identical experience as recently as 1939.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 95-96.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, I, p. 104.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 101 ff.

³¹¹ The trip took him, first, south by the Welsh border, and then east, along the coast and to London.

particular originality. His picture of the view from the walls of Chester is good;³¹² his criticism of Salisbury Cathedral—as failing, within, in massiveness and grandeur—seems to me sound;³¹³ his description of Wallop as “a most poetical hamlet”³¹⁴ and his remark that Winchester, for all that it seems low and heavy, makes a strong and lasting impression are, I think, justified.³¹⁵ Finally, Olmsted’s comments on the British attitude towards America are worth noting. He found that the common folk, the uneducated class, scarcely knew the difference between America and Russia,³¹⁶ but that the great mass of well-informed people looked on the United States much as the Atlantic seaboard looked, during the same period, on California: that is, as “a wild, dare-devil, younger brother with some most dangerous and reprehensible habits, and some most noble qualities, a capital fellow, in fact, if he would but have done sowing his wild oats.”³¹⁷ Few Englishmen whom he met failed to sympathize with our Revolutionary War;³¹⁸ on the other hand, he found the British grossly misinformed on the matter of slavery.³¹⁹ The importation of American food-stuffs into England had caused some anger among the farmers against America;³²⁰ while, on the contrary, among the reading-class the works of the best American writers were everywhere known and accepted.³²¹ Generally, it seemed to Olmsted, British respect for the United States was surprisingly high and information about it surprisingly correct.

Neither Taylor nor Olmsted is among the most important writers of our group: Taylor’s account is too brief, and Olmsted’s is too specialized and detailed.³²² Each of them, however, because of the manner in which he travelled, saw England in a somewhat different light from the ordinary visitor; Olmsted, particularly, left a record that has no parallel among our other books.

³¹² Olmsted, I, pp. 111 ff.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, II, p. 136.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, II, p. 146.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, II, pp. 149–150.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, I, p. 220.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, I, p. 217.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, I, p. 221.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, I, p. 222.

³²¹ *Ibid.*; compare Taylor’s pleasure in finding a bookstore in Edinburgh full of American books (p. 66).

³²² For example, his listing of the prices of staple foods in Liverpool or of the provisions for quarantine there. Such details add to the value of the book for reference purposes, but greatly reduce its readability. (See I, pp. 66–67.)

VII. Emerson

Late in 1846, Emerson received what he calls an "irregular application" from England proposing that he come there to lecture.³²³ He was evidently not very eager to go, but Lidian encouraged him and he himself felt the need of a new intellectual stimulus. Accordingly, he sailed for Liverpool in October of 1847. Unlike our other travelers he has left us no formal account of his journey, but from his journals and letters we can discover with a considerable degree of accuracy what he did and can find plenty of evidence of his point of view on various matters.

The lectures themselves Emerson found a great burden; they were a duty to be discharged rather than a pleasure. Otherwise he apparently enjoyed his trip: "What reconciles me to the clatter and routine is the very excellent opportunity it gives me to see England."³²⁴ "I see houses, manufactories [*sic*], halls, churches, landscape, and men."³²⁵ "My journeying has furnished me new materials."³²⁶ "My admiration and my love of the English rise day by day," he writes home to Lidian;³²⁷ and "I leave England with an increased respect for the Englishman. His stuff or substance seems to be the best of the world," he tells Margaret Fuller on his departure.³²⁸ Like Mrs. Stowe he was welcomed by many people: through the Bancrofts³²⁹ he was introduced to the most distinguished men of the day, but society really lay open to him in advance. With characteristic, though inconsistent, exactitude he catalogues in his journal the most important people whom he met on his trip³³⁰—a who's-who of the intellectual world of Great Britain a hundred years ago. He tells us, naturally, more than anyone else of our group about Carlyle; he is the only one to give us a good sketch of Tennyson,³³¹ of whom his most memorable remark is: "Take away Hawthorne's bashfulness, and let him talk easily and fast, and you would have a pretty good Tennyson." He puts Jeffrey—"very talkative, very disputatious, very French"—into nine pithy lines,³³² and he praises Lady Byron

³²³ Cabot, *Memoir*, II, p. 494. Compare *English Traits*, pp. 25-26.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 511.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 508.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 550.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 511.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 555.

³²⁹ *English Traits*, p. 292.

³³⁰ *Journals*, VII, p. 489.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 444-449.

³³² Cabot, II, p. 523.

because she never mentions her husband "and lets the world discuss her supposed griefs or joys in silence." ³³³

For the rest, Emerson makes comments often not very different from those of other Americans. York minster, he thinks, is "beautiful beyond belief"; ³³⁴ he says that he rides everywhere "as on a cannon-ball . . . at twice the speed and with half the motion of our cars." ³³⁵ He remarks frequently on the poverty and the unrest throughout England. ³³⁶ Of the metropolis he says, "The most wonderful thing I see is this London, at once seen to be the centre of the world," ³³⁷ and he notes that "Everything in England bespeaks an immense population. The buildings are on a scale and size out of all proportion to ours." ³³⁸ To this comment he adds, however, what few other travellers seem to have realized: "Most of the differences between American and English, are referable to dense population here, and will certainly be lost as America fills up." ³³⁹ Contrary to Olmsted, he believes that "more people speak English correctly in the United States than in Britain," ³⁴⁰ and like Mrs. Bancroft he discovers that "People eat the same dinner at every house in England." ³⁴¹

It is not in the random comments of letters and journals that Emerson makes his most individual contribution to the literature of the American in England, but rather in a book which he wrote seven years after his return: *English Traits*. Different from any other book which we are considering, this is neither a consecutive account of travels in Great Britain nor a group of "sketches." Instead, as the title suggests, it is a study of the English character, based on both observation and reading, as well as on a good many years of quiet thought. There is very little, indeed, to tie it to a particular journey to England, though there is one chapter devoted to the first trip ³⁴² and though he tells us of a jaunt to Stonehenge with Carlyle, and, in the chapter called "Personal," mentions various people whom he knew and recounts particularly his second visit to Wordsworth with Harriet Martineau. ³⁴³ Chiefly, however, the book discusses such large

³³³ Cabot, II, p. 549.

³³⁴ *Journals*, VII, p. 376.

³³⁵ Cabot, II, p. 509. Miss Sedgwick thinks that the British railroads "seem to have been devised for our uncultivated lands and gigantic distances" (p. 48).

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, II, pp. 506-507, 527; *Journals*, VII, p. 354; and *passim*.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, II, p. 527. Compare Hawthorne, below.

³³⁸ *Journals*, VII, p. 352.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 356. Compare Durbin, above.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 434.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 487. Compare Bancroft, p. 56.

³⁴² In which, characteristically, Emerson points out that there is very little in his diary concerning places (*English Traits*, p. 5).

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 294-298.

topics as "Race," "Wealth," "Truth"—titles which sound entirely familiar to the reader of Emerson's essays.

It is impossible, without very extensive quotation, to give an adequate idea of the range of Emerson's commentary. In order to account for certain peculiarities of the English character, he goes backward in history to the Celts and the Norsemen. In discussing English literature he turns from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* to the Cambridge Platonists, from Guy of Warwick to John Locke. In the chapter called "Aristocracy" he gives statistics on the relative number of landowners in England in 1786 and in 1822, and discusses the Selwyn correspondence. Similarly throughout the book he brings together a quantity of information and observation on the most diverse phases of English culture. The scope of the book is vastly greater than that of any other with which we are concerned, and the manner is characteristic of Emerson alone. The conclusions which he reaches on particular subjects are generally temperate: in the aristocracy, for example, though its members have serious faults, he can see much that is of social value—their tradition of fine manners, their making of gardens and bringing together of great works of art, and their patronage of distinguished men.³⁴⁴ The universities, despite the fact that they discourage genius and are woefully conservative, do their work most creditably: "Oxford sends out yearly twenty or thirty very able men and three or four hundred well-educated men," and healthier men, too, than our American colleges.³⁴⁵ As for the English Church, she is to be pitied rather than condemned: "She has nothing left but possession."³⁴⁶ The London *Times* has all the potentialities of a great leader of popular thought, but it allows itself to suffer all the limitations of the ruling classes.³⁴⁷ And contemporary British writers, in spite of their splendid heritage, have lost the "commanding view" of life that makes for great literature.³⁴⁸

Emerson admits, at the very beginning of his book and with entire frankness, the difficulty which faces an American in making a social or moral judgment on England; it is like the trouble "the sheriff finds in drawing a jury to try some cause which has agitated the whole community and on which every body finds himself an interested party."³⁴⁹ Moreover, as he repeatedly says, the Englishman is a

³⁴⁴ *English Traits*, pp. 186-190.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 210-211.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 230.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 272.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

composite, England itself exists by contradictions,³⁵⁰ and the English "have great range and variety of character."³⁵¹ Still Emerson is able to discover some common and basic factors. One is "pluck," the belief in the right of the individual to have his personal opinions, even his eccentricities, and his duty to stand up for them.³⁵² Another is the hatred of equivocation and of show,³⁵³ the love of what is massive, durable, but unpretentious.³⁵⁴ A third is what he deftly calls the "little superfluity of self-regard,"³⁵⁵ the conviction that what is British is necessarily best. It is this trait, Emerson believes, that makes the English dislike the structure of American society.³⁵⁶ The attitude towards wealth is also, it seems to him, significant: poverty is a reproach,³⁵⁷ the Crystal Palace was not considered honest until it paid,³⁵⁸ and the ordinary Englishman has no wish to appear to be wealthier than he is.³⁵⁹

Emerson's final estimate of England is, as we should expect from what has gone before, high, even though he was apparently never touched by any of the real warmth of feeling for it which moved many a lesser man. As he says in a letter to Margaret Fuller, "My respect is the more generous that I have no sympathy with him [the Englishman], only an admiration."³⁶⁰ To Emerson both England and the English character seemed faulty, even vicious: there was little democracy in Great Britain; crime and poverty abounded; in some places the racial stock was plainly degenerate; British foreign policy was manifestly unjust; the English were essentially provincial in their point of view; Britain was grossly materialistic.³⁶¹ Yet, despite these serious and palpable blemishes, there was a "plenitude of English nature"³⁶² which led Emerson to conclude that "only the English race can be trusted with freedom,—freedom which is double-edged and dangerous to any but the wise and robust."³⁶³ "The

³⁵⁰ *English Traits*, *passim*. See, for example, pp. 50, 94.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, "Manners."

³⁵³ Contrast the opinion of William Ware.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, "Truth."

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 150–151. Compare other travellers who note the same thing.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 156. But contrast Greeley on the Palace and social-reform.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.* Contrast Ware, but compare also the traveller who notes with shocked surprise that a wealthy Englishwoman will talk casually of not being able to "afford" this or that.

³⁶⁰ Cabot, II, p. 555.

³⁶¹ *English Traits*, pp. 299–304.

³⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 302.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 304.

American system," he reminds us, "is more democratic, more humane; yet the American people do not yield better or more able men, or more inventions or books or benefits than the English."³⁶⁴ The test of worth in a nation, as in an individual, is at last pragmatic; Emerson's ultimate approval is unmistakable: "The power of performance has not been exceeded,—the creation of value."³⁶⁵

VIII. Tuckerman and the Hawthornes

In *Our Old Home* Hawthorne mentions Tuckerman's *A Month in England* as

a fine example of the way in which a refined and cultivated American looks at the Old Country, the things that he naturally seeks there, and the modes of feeling and reflection which they excite. Correct outlines may avail little or nothing. . . . Impressions, however, states of mind produced by interesting and remarkable objects, these, if truthfully and vividly recorded, may work a genuine effect. . . . Give the emotions that cluster about it, and, without being able to analyze the spell by which it is summoned up, you get something like a simulachre of the object in the midst of them.³⁶⁶

What Hawthorne says here is highly important in connection with his own work, but it is also applicable, though to a less extent, to Tuckerman, whose book started the train of reflection.

A Month in England is a series of essays, not, like Emerson's, on aspects of the English character, but on such topics as the "Old and New," a contrast between Liverpool and Chester, and "London Authors," which tells us of a pilgrimage to their homes and haunts. The book is written with much more polish and conscious artistry than most of those we have been considering, but it adds little to what we already know of England from our previous travellers. Tuckerman is among those who tend to be unfriendly. Perhaps because he did not see very much of Great Britain, he speaks of its rural scenery as lacking in variety, in "picturesque relief":³⁶⁷ "It is from our sympathy with the mind of the country that her landscape often wears an occult charm."³⁶⁸ He notes the desperate state of English labor and

³⁶⁴ *English Traits*, p. 307.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.* Compare p. 299, quoted above, p. 41.

³⁶⁶ *Our Old Home*, p. 306.

³⁶⁷ Tuckerman, p. 72; cf. p. 168. To my mind Emerson's description of England as a "pocket Switzerland" seems much more true, indeed particularly apt (*English Traits*, p. 42).

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 241. Compare Durbin, above.

the poverty of the slums.³⁶⁹ The British lionizing of Uncle Tom seems to him due to the predominant English characteristics of "combateness and self-esteem," in addition to the desire to reproach America; ³⁷⁰ like other travellers he was forced, in connection with the slavery issue, to correct British ideas of American geography and the powers of Congress.³⁷¹ Moreover, he found that the Englishman had "a gross love of brute force inconsistent with high civilization."³⁷² The adulation of Wellington, but recently dead, was, it seemed to him, the result of the Duke's having had "a sublimation and concentration of those qualities which insure the material well-being, and the respectability of the nation."³⁷³ Art, he thought, was an exotic plant in England because of the prevailing emphasis on comfort and utility,³⁷⁴ and he found less taste for music in England than in America, though church music was an exception.³⁷⁵ Like Margaret Fuller he commented on the hard lot of the foreign exile in England,³⁷⁶ and his picture of the old-school merchant was not a complimentary one.³⁷⁷

On the other hand, there were many things which Tuckerman enjoyed: old Chester; Oxford, "the scholar's paradise," where "the poetry of academic life is . . . concentrated";³⁷⁸ Kenilworth; the "positive sublimity in the spectacle of a home nine hundred years old";³⁷⁹ Turner's paintings, which he thought "magnificent productions";³⁸⁰ and so on. His conclusions, though more briefly stated, are not unlike those of Emerson;³⁸¹ he finds the English character contradictory, but the key, he thinks, is its energy, its will, developed by the self-reliance which has been forced on it by circumstance. The stranger, he believes, leaves England with two conflicting impressions—one of the nation as a whole, towards which his attitude may very possibly be unfavorable; the other of its people, for whom he probably feels warm sympathy and high respect.³⁸²

³⁶⁹ Tuckerman, pp. 77, 130-131, and *passim*.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 118-121.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 132.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 230-231.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 143-144.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 200. Hawthorne was oppressed rather than delighted by this phenomenon; compare Holgrave's attitude towards old houses in chapter 12 of *The House of the Seven Gables*.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 181. Contrast Ware.

³⁸¹ His book was three years earlier than *English Traits*.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 236-243.

Each of the Hawthornes left a record of the years they spent in Great Britain. Sophia's book, which was not published until after her husband's death, is simply a journal. That it was altered very little when it was printed is indicated, for example, by the fact that she always refers to Mr. Hawthorne as "Papa." It is an agreeable account, but chiefly interesting in comparison with his, beside which it seems much more spontaneous and enthusiastic. Frequently her comments supplement what he has to say, for instance, in her discussion, at the time of their visit to Lincoln, of the difference between the Greek and the Gothic conceptions of art.³⁸³ Sometimes she agrees with him; sometimes she does not: at Peterborough, for example, she is more impressed by the façade than her husband, and whereas he does not care for the painted roof, she admires it.³⁸⁴ As in Hawthorne's books, there are frequent references to the children, especially to Julian, who was old enough to take walks with his father and to revel in the knights in armor whom they saw in the Peterborough market-place.³⁸⁵ She gives the original version of an episode which Hawthorne used later in *Our Old Home*—telling how she went to church in Mauchline and had to sit through six sermons; her husband, perhaps doubting the credulity of his readers, changes the number to four!³⁸⁶ About the Highlands she remarked, "Papa mourned after wooded mountainsides; but I was content with the sublime form without any drapery."³⁸⁷ Her delight in England, indeed, was much less temperate than his; when they were about to leave for the continent, she exclaimed, "What a country is Great Britain! Every atom of it is a jewel."³⁸⁸ Her book is undeniably pleasant, but slight.

In contrast with his wife's brief and casual record, Hawthorne's *English Notebooks* make up the fullest single account of the American in England within our period.³⁸⁹ They put before us what Haw-

³⁸³ Mrs. Hawthorne, p. 35.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 71-74. Compare *English Notebooks*, p. 481: "certainly I should prefer the oak of its native hue, for the effect of the paint is to make it appear as if the ceiling [*sic*] were covered with imitation mosaic-work, or an oil-cloth carpet." It should be added, however, that Hawthorne was, in all, deeply impressed by Peterborough, hating "to leave it undescribed" and "reluctant" to depart (p. 485). (All page references to the *English Notebooks* are to Randall Stewart's edition.)

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 85. Compare *English Notebooks*, p. 485.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 128-131. Compare *Our Old Home*, p. 239.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 170. Compare *English Notebooks*, p. 517.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

³⁸⁹ Professor Stewart has noted that they comprise more than 300,000 words and were written "when Hawthorne was at the height of his powers" (*English Notebooks*, p. v).

thorne saw and thought, at work and at leisure, during more than four years. *Our Old Home* is simply a culling from the notebooks of what he considered best, or at least what he preferred to publish. As Henry James has said, it is "most delectable reading,"³⁹⁰ a book in which exquisite lightness of touch is combined with maturity of judgment. As literature it is the finest work produced by our travellers; in addition, it joins sympathy with objectivity better than any other, even than Emerson's.

It is not necessary, for our purpose, to consider the two volumes separately, since one grew out of the other and since both alike show Hawthorne's attitude towards England. It should be remembered that Hawthorne was in Great Britain on regular business; consequently, he had only intermittent occasions for sightseeing and fewer opportunities than many visitors to move in fashionable and literary circles. It is likely that Hawthorne was too shy or too aloof to care greatly for the company of the lions; though Professor Stewart has shown that "Hawthorne's social and convivial instincts suffer serious abatement in Mrs. Hawthorne's edition [of the *English Notebooks*]"³⁹¹ and has made clear that Hawthorne was not so churlish about accepting invitations as has been often believed, nevertheless, considering the number of years that he was resident in Britain, the list of distinguished people whom he knew is small. It is clear from the notebooks that the time he had free from the business of the consulate was largely spent in family excursions; certainly, for whatever reasons, he preferred his obscurity to hobnobbing with celebrities.

During their vacation trips, however, Hawthorne saw a great deal of both the country and the people, and he writes of them admirably. No other traveller, for instance, gives so complete, so convincing a picture of what at one time or another concerns nearly every one of them: the chapter in *Our Old Home* called "Glimpses of English Poverty" is the summing up of what Olmsted and Emerson and Tuckerman and innumerable others have said; and the tone of it is grim, unrelieved by extenuation or any false hope. Hawthorne's description of the lower Thames is excellent, recalling familiar scenes from *David Copperfield* or *Great Expectations*.³⁹² Of a different kind are his remarks on the Lake District. His first reaction to Rydal Water was somewhat contemptuous: "It certainly did look

³⁹⁰ James, *Hawthorne*, p. 144.

³⁹¹ *English Notebooks*, p. xix.

³⁹² *Our Old Home*, p. 290.

very small; and I said, in my American scorn, that I could carry it away bodily in a porringer.”³⁹³ But he tells us, too, of climbing a hill behind the Lowwood Hotel at dusk in “the great, misty company of pikes and fells,” and finding Windermere stretched out below him “like a strip and gleam of sky, fitly set among lovely slopes of earth. . . . I think [he says] there can hardly be anything more beautiful in the world.”³⁹⁴ Again and again he praises the English countryside—and, almost uniquely, the English weather, of which he says, “there are a few weeks of incomparable summer, scattered through July and August, and the earlier portion of September, small in quantity, but exquisite enough to atone for the whole year’s atmospherical delinquencies.”³⁹⁵

The English cathedrals Hawthorne admired greatly. He thought York “the most wonderful work that ever came from the hands of man.”³⁹⁶ At Lincoln he noted especially the architectural details, describing them to perfection as “miracles of stone-work twined about arches, as if the material had been as soft as wax in the cunning sculptor’s hands.”³⁹⁷ He realized instantly the fault of the interior of Salisbury, the “common, colorless daylight, revealing everything without remorse,”³⁹⁸ but he could recall no other cathedral with so fine a site. He, with Mrs. Hawthorne, was among the few travellers who saw and appreciated Peterborough. Indeed, from the extent and intelligence of his commentary and from his own frequent statements of his interest in it, there is reason to believe that the English cathedral had more significance for Hawthorne than for any other person whom we have discussed. Often, in the course of his books, he mentions his feeling, for example:

I am weary of trying to describe Cathedrals; it is utterly useless; there is no possibility of giving the general effect Cathedrals are almost the only things (if even those) that have quite filled out my ideal, here in the old world. . . .³⁹⁹

³⁹³ *English Notebooks*, p. 165. Compare Mrs. Hawthorne: “The lake surprised me by its extreme smallness,—in America we should never think of calling it a lake; but it receives dignity from the lofty hills and mountains that embosom it, and I thought it was irreverent in Mr. Hawthorne to say he ‘could carry it all away in a porringer’” (Lathrop, pp. 318-319).

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

³⁹⁵ *Our Old Home*, p. 259.

³⁹⁶ *English Notebooks*, p. 544.

³⁹⁷ *Our Old Home*, p. 179. I wish there were space here to quote the admirable passage in which he compares York and Lincoln, and explains his preference for Lincoln (pp. 182-183).

³⁹⁸ *English Notebooks*, p. 357.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 359.

or, more positively:

A Gothic cathedral is surely the most wonderful work which mortal man has ever achieved, so vast, so intricate, and so profoundly simple, with such strange, delightful recesses in its grand figure, so difficult to comprehend within one idea, and yet so consonant that it ultimately draws the beholder and his universe into harmony. It is the only thing in the world that is vast enough and rich enough.⁴⁰⁰

or yet again:

I admire this in Gothic architecture—that you cannot master it all at once—that it is not a naked outline, but as deep and rich as human nature itself, always revealing new little ideas, and new large ones . . . of all English things that I have seen, methinks they [the churches] are what disappoint me least.⁴⁰¹

In addition to the topics which he treats at length or turns to again and again, there are many choice details in Hawthorne's books. Like Emerson he considered London "the central spot of all the world."⁴⁰² He tells us, accordingly, much about the city—of the night view from Blackheath, of Greenwich Fair, of Westminster. Because he has often been perplexed "to imagine how an Englishman will be able to reconcile himself to any future state of existence from which the earthly institution of dinner shall be excluded,"⁴⁰³ he devotes an entire chapter of *Our Old Home* to "Civic Banquets." He remarks, incidentally, that it must be necessary to be born an Englishman in order to enjoy cricket.⁴⁰⁴ In a paragraph that fairly puts a picture before one's eyes he speaks of the inadequacy of any description of Oxford.⁴⁰⁵ At Mauchline he reflects: "I never in the least knew how to estimate the miracle of Burns's genius, nor his heroic merit for being no worse man, until I thus learned the squalid hindrances amid which he developed himself. Space, a free atmosphere, and cleanliness have a vast deal to do with the possibilities of human virtue."⁴⁰⁶ On every page of the books, indeed, there are memorable observations.

Hawthorne makes no attempt to sum up the English character or his impressions of England. In spite of what some commentators

⁴⁰⁰ *Our Old Home*, p. 153.

⁴⁰¹ *English Notebooks*, pp. 137-138.

⁴⁰² *Our Old Home*, p. 255.

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 363.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 264.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 228-229.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 242. With the last sentence compare Mrs. Stowe, I, p. 192.

have said, I do not see, however, how anyone who has read *Our Old Home* and the *English Notebooks* can fail to believe that he was deeply attached to Britain. To be sure, he is not always kind in what he says of the English, for instance:

The secret of English practical success lies in their characteristic faculty of shutting one eye, whereby they get so distinct and decided a view of what immediately concerns them that they go stumbling towards it over a hundred insurmountable obstacles, and achieve a magnificent triumph without ever being aware of half its difficulties.⁴⁰⁷

The English press seemed to Hawthorne deliberately unfriendly towards the United States.⁴⁰⁸ Often he met open ridicule of Americans and America; and there was obvious condescension in the frequent assumption that he was either an Englishman who had travelled in America or an American who had been long in England.⁴⁰⁹ Yet after four years of constant dealing with those who came for assistance to the consulate, and after the particular occasion of being packed into an omnibus with an American lady of "a bare, hard, meagre sort of deportment," Hawthorne was willing to confess a certain justice in British criticism: "I begin to agree partly with the English, that we are not a people of elegant manners."⁴¹⁰ Unlike most other travellers, Hawthorne did not enjoy the English inn, with its "great, dull, dingy, and dreary coffee-room, . . . and not a soul to exchange a word with."⁴¹¹ He attacked British insularity⁴¹² and intolerance.⁴¹³ And he admits that the British "think so loftily of themselves, and so contemptuously of everybody else, that it requires more generosity than I possess to keep always in perfectly good-humor with them."⁴¹⁴

Though Hawthorne's criticisms are specific and often sharp, his dominant tone is one of affection for England. Sometimes, one should note, his ironies are pointed, not at the British, but at humanity in general, for instance when he comments on the poor judgment of the age "in matters of personal ornament, and such delicate trifles as we put upon a drawing-room table";⁴¹⁵ or when, a little cynically

⁴⁰⁷ *Our Old Home*, pp. 46-47.

⁴⁰⁸ *English Notebooks*, p. xxiii and pp. 91-92, 632. Compare Durbin, above.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. xxvi.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 568.

⁴¹¹ *Our Old Home*, p. 148.

⁴¹² For example, *ibid.*, p. 218.

⁴¹³ *English Notebooks*, pp. 91, 97.

⁴¹⁴ *Our Old Home*, p. 17.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

perhaps, he says, "the taste for mountains and wild scenery is, with most people, an acquired taste," which "will go out of fashion in due time."⁴¹⁶ On nearly every page he shows the real depth of his attachment. On Christmas Day of 1854 he says that he thinks he has been happier than ever before;⁴¹⁷ of London he says, "I acquired a home-feeling there, as nowhere else in the world."⁴¹⁸ The English cathedral close seemed to him "the loveliest, cosiest, safest, least wind-shaken, most decorous, and most enjoyable shelter that ever the thrift and selfishness of mortal man contrived for himself."⁴¹⁹ As he travels, he notes, "Should there be nothing else along the road to look at, an English hedge might well suffice to occupy the eyes, and, to a depth beyond what he would suppose, the heart of an American."⁴²⁰ His estimate of the English character is also, in the end, affectionately tolerant—and in part rather like Emerson's:

The English character, as I conceive it, is by no means a very lofty one; they seem to have a great deal of earth and grimy dust clinging about them, as was probably the case with the stalwart and quarrelsome people who sprouted up out of the soil, after Cadmus had sown the dragon's teeth. And yet, though the individual Englishman is sometimes preternaturally disagreeable, an observer standing aloof has a sense of natural kindness towards them in the lump. They adhere closer to the original simplicity in which mankind was created than we ourselves do. . . .⁴²¹

There seems, at last, not the slightest doubt of Hawthorne's appreciation of the "old home." By nature he was critical; moreover, he often felt resentment against England. But he loved it. His enduring interest is indicated by the fact that he used the theme of the American in England in two unfinished novels, *The Ancestral Footstep* and *Doctor Grimshawe's Secret*. In addition, more than any other of our travellers, or at least in connection with a greater number of places and things, he gives us the true impression; he creates the "spell" of which he himself speaks in his comment on Tuckerman. Hawthorne is incomparably the richest and most rewarding of the travel-writers we have discussed.

⁴¹⁶ *English Notebooks*, p. 517. Compare the similar comment of Bayard Taylor, p. 72.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

⁴¹⁸ *Our Old Home*, p. 256.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 267.

Summary

What can we say, in conclusion, about the American visitor in England during the years between 1835 and 1860? For one thing, where he went is sufficiently clear. Since Liverpool was the most usual port of entry, nearly everyone saw it and not-far-distant Chester. Everyone, without exception, saw London, even Olmsted, who closed his account just as he reached the city; while one traveller, O'Daniel, devoted an entire book to it. Almost universally there was a trip to Edinburgh and Abbotsford, with the southern part of the Highlands and the Burns country frequently added for good measure. Equally, but scarcely more, likely was a jaunt to the Shakespeare country. A large number went to Oxford or Cambridge or both. Nearly everyone saw York; but fewer Lincoln and Durham, Salisbury and Winchester. The Midland manufacturing cities many passed through, though men like Coxe closed their eyes to their most significant aspects. Several visited the Isle of Wight; a much larger number the Lake District. Where the traveller did not go is, from a modern point of view, almost equally interesting. Few were attracted by Wales; still fewer, apparently, discovered the beauty of Cornwall; only Jacob Abbott saw Staffa and Iona and the northern stretches of the Caledonian Canal; Bryant went farthest afield on his trip to the Shetlands and Orkneys. Of the famous buildings Canterbury Cathedral is conspicuous for its neglect,⁴²² with Ely⁴²³ and Norwich also strangely forgotten, the last, possibly, because of its being somewhat off the main lines of travel.

The American visitors differed also in the degree to which they became acquainted with English life. Of the travel-writers considered here Mrs. Bancroft, Mrs. Stowe, Mrs. Webster, and Emerson seem to have made the greatest number of important social contacts. Others, like Olmsted, made a large number of acquaintances, but on a humbler social plane and of a temporary nature. Many of them, certainly, like Taylor or the three schoolboys, sojourned in England with few connections other than the casual ones of daily life. Yet actual entrée, or lack of it, into a particular group was not so important as it might seem. Mrs. Bancroft, as I have previously suggested, gives but a narrow view of the English scene, whereas Hawthorne's

⁴²² Mrs. Webster is one of the few who mention it, praising especially the beauty of the interior (p. 210).

⁴²³ Lowell, however, says: "I think that Ely, more than anything else, turned the scale and induced us to stay [in England] a month longer" (Scudder, I, p. 345).

picture seems complete, even though he omits nearly all the things that she records; and Taylor, in his few weeks of walking the countryside, probably learned as much as Coxe did in an equal number of months devoted to paying calls on the proper people and viewing the proper sights. They came to know England, in other words, as we should expect, in various ways and to very different degrees, depending on their social opportunities, the length of their visits, their inclinations and interests, and their shrewdness in estimating the significance of what they saw.

Generally our Americans were well informed about England and broad in their interests, dividing their attention among the multiple aspects of the country and people with considerable soundness of judgment. Moreover, the narrow materialism of Greeley or the provincialism of the Reverend Mr. Clark was the exception. A surprising number of them, indeed, belonged to a greater or less degree in Margaret Fuller's category of "thinking Americans"; and there is not one who can fairly be classified as the "servile" type.⁴²⁴ Many of them discovered, with Margaret Fuller again, "Verily these things seem more like home than one's own nursery."⁴²⁵ If they make any final evaluation, they are apt to weigh the good and the bad with reasonable impartiality; they seem at least to want to be fair—more fair, perhaps, than the English traveller in America during the same period always desired to be.⁴²⁶ In particular, though many of them, possibly with a lingering sense of national inferiority, felt doubt or distrust or even positive dislike of England as a political or social entity, very few failed to enjoy the beauty of the country and the splendor of its architecture, or to speak favorably of the English people.

From an artistic point of view one must admit that the quality of our travellers' work is, for the most part, mediocre. Many of the writers specifically disclaimed any pretensions to literary value or any appeal to posterity. A large number of the accounts are letters—some of them personal, some intended for the pages of the newspapers—admittedly written without thought of their having perma-

⁴²⁴ See above. The "servile" type is not, of course, the sort that would be likely to leave a record of his travels.

⁴²⁵ Ossoli, p. 136.

⁴²⁶ Note Hawthorne on the English traveller in America: "Not an Englishman of them all ever spared America for courtesy's sake or kindness" (*Our Old Home*, p. 17). Compare Miss Sedgwick's doubt as to whether to introduce herself and her party to Basil Hall because, she says, "as Americans, there is no love lost between us" (p. 14). Hall, like Dickens and Mrs. Trollope, was noted for his unfavorable criticism of the United States.

nent interest. Only a few have the remotest claim to belletristic importance, and one of these, *English Traits*, is rather a series of discourses than the record of a journey. I wonder, indeed, whether the really first-class travel-book is not one of the most difficult of all things to write. Nearly anyone with a good fund of information, a decent command of the language, and persistence can match Mr. Coxe. Add charm, tolerance, and a decidedly sharper intelligence, and one may produce a book like Mrs. Stowe's. But to create such a work as *Our Old Home* demands literary abilities of no mean order. Even then, perhaps, the travel-book is limited in its appeal. Hawthorne himself must have thought so, for he says:

In truth, I believe that the chief delight and advantage of this kind of literature is not for any real information that it supplies to untravelled people, but for reviving the recollections and reawakening the emotions of persons already acquainted with the scenes described.⁴²⁷

If he is right, and I believe that he is, none of these many books is so successful as his own.

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Note

The title of this essay is a rather broad one. It may be well, therefore, to indicate the limits I have imposed on the topic in order to bring it within its present bounds. It is necessary also to make clear the basis on which certain writers have been included in the discussion or omitted from it.

First, I have interpreted "England" to mean Great Britain—that is, to take in Wales and Scotland but to exclude Ireland. The distinction is purely practical: doubtless for geographical reasons the American traveller frequently crossed the borders of the countries immediately adjacent to England, but less often traversed the Irish Sea. Moreover, these visitors, like most Americans today, used "England" loosely, to mean more or less the whole island. In the second place, I have confined my study to those who actually travelled in Great Britain between 1835 and 1860, excluding such men as Cooper, who wrote extensively of his experiences in England within these dates but whose sojourn belonged to an earlier period. For the same reason I have omitted N. P. Willis, almost all of whose important work dates from English adventures previous to 1835.⁴²⁸ In

⁴²⁷ *Our Old Home*, p. 306.

⁴²⁸ Spiller, p. 382.

general, I might add, I have tried to begin at the point in time where Professor Spiller stopped in his study *The American in England*.

It is a matter of chance that there are so few major literary figures represented in this study. Oliver Wendell Holmes, for instance, concluded his first stay in Europe in 1835 and did not visit it again until 1886.⁴²⁹ Longfellow, although he comes into the period under consideration twice (in 1835 and in October of 1842), left only brief journal-comments and a few letters on his impressions of England.⁴³⁰ Lowell's first trip to Europe, in 1851 and 1852, produced *Leaves from my Journal in Italy* but left no comparable record of his English experience, while his continental sojourn of 1855 admitted only a brief visit across the Channel in August.⁴³¹ Of the American writers whom we now consider of foremost importance, only Bryant, Emerson, and Hawthorne give us significant records of travel in England during the twenty-five years with which I am here concerned.

Finally, my procedure has been obvious. I have read whatever material, important or unimportant, has been readily available. With the exception of such writings as Emerson's *English Traits* or Hawthorne's *Our Old Home*, I have not gone beyond the travel-books themselves and have made no attempt in any case to fit the English experience into the whole portrait of the traveller. Moreover, I have excluded from the discussion or mentioned but casually a good many writers whose work seems insignificant or who found no ready place in my limited scheme. I have attempted, however, to be as representative as possible, to consider a fairly large number of travellers briefly rather than a few in detail. One might write a lengthy essay on, for example, the Hawthornes alone. But I have been concerned, ultimately, with a total impression—with various specific Americans in England, it is true, but equally with the American-in-England.

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⁴²⁹ *Our Hundred Days in Europe* (1887) concerns almost exclusively the second trip.

⁴³⁰ See Richards, "Longfellow in England."

⁴³¹ See Scudder, I, pp. 344-345, and p. 381.

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