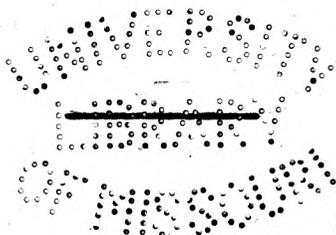


BRITISH OUTLOOK ON AMERICA

1800-1850

by

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PREFACE

The British Outlook on America offers an interesting field for study and one in which there is a vast amount of material both in books and periodicals. This subject has been treated in such works as The English Traveller in America 1785-1835 (1922) by Jane Louise Mesick and American Social History as Recorded by British Travellers (1934) by Allan Nevins. In this study, however, the material for most of the observations and conclusions is taken from the leading English periodicals, while the two books mentioned are based more upon the books of travel.

The period of 1800 to 1850 was selected for several reasons. This first half of the nineteenth century brought out many antagonistic writings by the English and sharp retorts from the Americans. Also, the great party periodicals originated during the first decades of this century. These magazines probably influenced the reading public and molded the opinions of the British more than the books of travel. The study has been ended in 1850 largely because after that date the slavery issue overshadowed all others, and the British tended to lose interest in other aspects of American life.

INTRODUCTION

A foreign land has always attracted the interest of people everywhere and at all times; but, more especially when the foreign nation presents conditions of life entirely different from those at home. To the British of the early nineteenth century, America offered great opportunity for speculation. The question was what was the true character and condition of the United States since they had become independent and what was the future outlook for the country. Was their experiment in government proving profitable? To what extent were they educated? How were their laws administered? What progress were they making in the development of the arts? How could slavery be justified in a free country? Was there any religion without an established church? Would America be a better place to live? Did it offer economic opportunities to the people of Europe? Such were the questions that seemed to be foremost among the people of the island kingdom.

To find the answers to these questions the English public turned to the books of travel and the magazines of the period. Many travellers visited the new country and felt compelled to relate their experiences and observations;

thus there was a constant supply of reading material. In the pages of the periodicals much space was given to reviews of these books. The appetite of the English reader seemed difficult to appease.

The Quarterly Review, Blackwood's Magazine and the Edinburgh Review, three of the leading English periodicals of the nineteenth century reviewed many of these books of travel and through their comments helped to form the English opinion of the United States.

The Edinburgh Review, founded in 1802 by a group of young men, among whom were Sydney Smith, Frances Jeffrey, Francis Horner and Henry Brougham, had, at the first, the aim of wit and humor but after 1807 became the organ of the Whig party.¹ This publication from its earliest years on, took a rather fair attitude toward America and a definite stand against the school of hostile writers and travellers; often advising the English government to copy some features of America. The issue of July, 1824, contained the following statement:

There is a set of miserable persons in England, who are dreadfully afraid of everything American-- whose great delight is to see that country ridiculed and vilified--and who appear to imagine that all the abuses which exist in this country acquire additional vigour and change of duration from every book of travel which pours forth its venom and falsehood on the United

1. Walter Graham, English Literary Periodicals, 233.

States. We think the example of America will in many instances tend to open the eyes of Englishmen to their true interests.¹

When American writers remonstrated against the attitude of the English magazines, the Edinburgh immediately defended itself and charged that the Americans were over-sensitive.

The sum of it is, that in point of fact we have spoken far more good of America than ill, that in nine instances out of ten, when we have mentioned her, it has been for praise,--and that in almost all that is essential or of serious importance, we have spoken nothing but good, while our censurers have been wholly confined to matters of inferior note, and generally accompanied with an apology for their existence and a prediction of their speedy disappearance.²

The Edinburgh dealt harshly with many of the abusive English writers. For example, when reviewing Mrs. Trollope's Domestic Manners of the Americans, it was loud in criticism and charged that she did not picture all of America nor did she truly represent the English people.³ The Stranger in America by Charles William Janson was described as a large, ill-arranged volume, poorly thrown together.⁴ Of Travels in America by Thomas Ashe, the

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1. Edinburgh Review, XL (July, 1824), 427.
 2. Jane Louise Mesick, The English Traveller in America 1785-1835, p. 282.
 3. Edinburgh Review, LV (July, 1832), 521.
 4. Ibid., X (April, 1807), 103.

Edinburgh said it "forms the most comprehensive piece of national abuse we ever recollect to have perused."¹

Among books receiving praise by the Edinburgh was Notes on a Journey in America by Morris Birkbeck. This, the magazine praised as a most interesting and instructive book that revealed the progress of the western region of the United States.²

A reading of the reviews in the Edinburgh will substantiate its claim of presenting a fair and just stand toward America. However, in the question of slavery it made no allowances.

The Quarterly Review represents the typical Tory magazine of nineteenth century England. This periodical, created in 1809, grew out of opposition toward the Edinburgh. Walter Scott, Robert Southey and others, disgruntled by criticism in the Edinburgh, conceived the idea of a rival publication.³ The Quarterly was definitely the champion of the old order in England.

Whatever tended to decrease general respect for the established order, the Church, the monarchical form of government, the laws, the King, and the landed aristocracy was evil.⁴

1. Edinburgh Review, XV (January, 1810), 442.
2. Ibid., XXX (June, 1813), 120-122.
3. Graham, 241-244.
4. Ibid., 245.

Thus its stand against America can readily be explained. Any favorable reports on the democratic institutions in America might create a desire for reform in England.

With the earliest issues of the Quarterly the reviewers found occasion to abuse and insult the United States. In the November issue of 1809 a review of Abiel Holmes' American Annals appeared and was the basis for a severe criticism of religion, manners, the courts, travel and literature in the new country. The people were pictured as living in a semi-savage state with no refinement except in the large cities.¹

The writers in the Quarterly appeared to be looking for the ridiculous and the exaggerated in the travel books of the period and copied these in the pages of their magazine. The worst descriptions of inns, people, court scenes and homes attracted the reviewers and were repeated for the subscribers.

Any traveller who dared to voice admiration for America was loudly discredited by the Quarterly. In reviewing Morris Birkbeck's Notes on a Journey in America, the magazine denied his praise of many favorable features and belittled the author. The review ended with the statement:

1. Quarterly Review, II (November, 1809), 319-337.

What ever New America may have gained by the name Birkbeck having ceased to be found in the list of citizens of old England, the latter has no reason to regret the loss. Many more of the same stamp may well be spared to wage war with the bears and red Indians of the 'back woods' of America.¹

When Mrs. Trollope's book appeared the Quarterly praised it highly.

This is exactly the title page we have long wished to see, and we rejoice to say that, now the subject has been taken up, it is handled by an English lady of sense and acuteness, who possesses very considerable power of expression and enjoyed unusually favorable opportunities for observation.²

This was quite in contrast to the judgment of the Edinburgh. Many other English travellers attacked Mrs. Trollope's work and refuted many of her statements.³ The treatment of this book offers a good example of the biased opinion of the Quarterly.

However, by the 1820's the Quarterly changed and seemed a little less harsh in its treatment of America. The issue of October, 1823, carried the following:

Whatever may be our anticipation, our wish is, that such measure as may best provide against the existing evils and dangers of their society may be adopted in good time; that the Americans may strengthen their general government, not weaken it; consolidate the local ones, not divide them;

1. Mesick, 295.

2. Ibid., 292.

3. Ibid., 293.

that they may become more and more enlightened, more and more religious, more and more virtuous, more and more worthy of their parentage; rivalling us in arts, science, literature, and whatever conduces to the general good, and that this may be the only rivalry between us.¹

In the issue of September, 1835, a stronger change was noted.

Let us hear no more than,--at least, let us hear nothing in harsh, contemptuous, or arrogant language about the petty circumstances which may happen to strike an English eye--as offensively characteristic of the people of America in their interior domestic intercourse among themselves.²

Blackwood's Magazine, which began in 1817 as the Edinburgh Monthly Magazine, was at first uninteresting, but after the sixth number the name, as well as the subject matter, was changed and it attracted men of letters.³ As compared with the Quarterly and the Edinburgh, Blackwood's Magazine did not deal with the subject of America to a great extent. Generally it was very fair in most of its comments.

In the issue of March, 1819, an article appeared on the subject of learning and the arts in the United States. Although beginning with the statement that "learning, in its limited and appropriate sense, is not to be found in

1. Quarterly Review, XXX (October, 1823), 40.

2. Mesick, 298.

3. Graham, 274-275.

America,"¹ the writer goes on to explain that the conditions of living in the new country were not conducive to the development of literary talents, but

the Americans are equal to any people whatever, ancient or modern, as is fully proved by their ingenuity in the mechanic arts, their commercial enterprize, their activity in the field, their acuteness at the bar, and their eloquence in the senate.²

In the same article great hope was expressed for the future of science in the United States.³

In 1824, Blackwood's pleaded for more and better material on the subject of America and complained that no true picture could be gained from the works of such writers as Ashe, Fearon, Faux, Hall and Miss Wright, who would not have been recognized as writers on any topic in their own country.⁴

Blackwood's criticised the other periodicals for the stands they had taken.

We believe that the everlasting contradictions of the Edinburgh; and the unqualified foolish, open rancour of the Quarterly, have done much evil, and little good to the great cause of the British Empire--so far as America is concerned; that both journals have so far overdone whatever they have undertaken for, or against that country,

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1. Blackwood's Magazine, IV (March, 1819), 639.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid., 647.
 4. Ibid., XVI (December, 1824), 617.

that no reasonable man of this, who is anxious for sound information, upon the subject, can put any confidence in their representations.¹

American travel literature was greatly in demand by the English reading public and many of the visitors to the States recorded their experiences and observations to satisfy this demand. Some expressed a reluctance to writing but felt called upon to inform the people of the true state of affairs.

The travellers of the first quarter of the nineteenth century seemed more interested in America as a field for investment. This was an unhappy period in Great Britain, the Napoleonic wars and the industrial revolution were upsetting the country and America offered a release from trouble.²

Henry B. Fearon was typical of this period. In 1817 he came to America "to ascertain whether any, and what part of the United States would be suitable for . . . residence."³ Two others, well known of this period, were Morris Birkbeck and George Flower, who came to Illinois just after the War of 1812 and undertook to settle land there. Two books written by Birkbeck, Notes on a Journey

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1. Blackwood's Magazine, XVI (December, 1824), 619.
 2. Allen Nevins, American Social History as Recorded by British Travellers, 11.
 3. Mesick, 4.

in America from the Coast of Virginia to the Territory of Illinois (1817) and Letters from Illinois (1818) aroused much interest in England and brought many settlers to the Illinois region.¹ Such men were of the practical middle class and found nothing so very repulsive in the hardships of American life and the inconvenience of travel.

A representative of the malicious type of this period was William Faux, who recorded exceptional cases of violence and dishonesty. Blackwood's called him

a simpleton of the first water, a capital specimen of a village John Bull, for the first time roaming far away from his native valley--staring at everything and grumbling at most.²

Another of this group was Charles William Janson, who came to America to make his fortune, failing in this, he gave vent to his feelings in a book of severe criticism.

Other books of interest to the English during the first twenty-five years of the nineteenth century were, Resources of America (1818) by John Bristed and Views of Society and Manners in America (1821) by Frances Wright D'Arusmont, better known as Fanny Wright. The first of these was an account of the agricultural, commercial, financial, political, literary and religious conditions in America, written by a lawyer. The author of the latter

1. Mesick, 5.

2. Nevins, 17.

book is well known in American history. Early in life, Frances Wright became interested in America and made her first visit here at the age of twenty-three. However, it was not until her second visit that she attracted attention. At this time, 1824, she established a settlement on the Nashoba river in Tennessee, to teach slaves and prepare them for life as freemen. This experiment proved a failure and she returned to Europe. Later she again appears in America in the colony at New Harmony, Indiana, and as a lecturer in many cities on slavery, and female suffrage.¹

In the second quarter of the nineteenth century the type of British travellers changed more to the upper and professional classes who sought new sights and experiences in America and brought more unfavorable books. These more conservative Englishmen wished to stop the reform movement and refuted the writers who painted a good picture of democracy.

The most hotly discussed book of this period was Domestic Manners of the Americans by Frances Trollope which appeared in 1832. After a financial failure in England, this energetic woman attempted a business venture in Cincinnati. This, too, failed and she returned home disgusted with America.²

1. "D'Arusmont, Frances," Dictionary of National Biography, XIV, 70-71.

2. Nevins, 159.

Two other writers of this period who wrote uncomplimentary accounts of America were Captain Basil Hall and Thomas Hamilton. Captain Hall grumbled over the inconveniences of travel and made little honest effort to learn the true conditions of the country. Hamilton assumed a more friendly attitude but "found in American institutions and experiences only a dangerous precedent for possible imitation by England."¹

However, not all writers of books of travel of this second period of the nineteenth century were abusive in their treatment of America. In two volumes by Charles Augustus Murray which appeared in 1839, the author denied many of the charges against the United States made by others. Although he disliked some traits of the Americans, he made an honest effort to find good ones to balance.²

Another fair treatment America received during the period of abuse was Harriet Martineau's Society in America (1837). The author made a thorough study of the country, residing months in each section and visiting all types of homes.³

1. Mesick, 14.

2. Nevins, 133.

3. Ibid., 136.

Obviously it must have been difficult for the Englishman to form a definite picture of America from these conflicting accounts written by the English travellers, when each insisted that he was telling the truth. How could the English readers reach a decision on the democratic government of the United States when one writer predicted its immediate downfall while another advised the English to copy some of its features. The religious condition would have been hard to generalize with the contrasting reports. In the fields of slavery, education and the law more uniform decisions could have been reached by the readers.

CHAPTER I

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

The democratic government of the United States was a subject of great concern to the Englishmen of the early nineteenth century. This attempt to solve the old problem of government was an object of dismay to some and a ray of hope to others. To one group of English nothing good could possibly develop. "Time will show whether a people can be powerful without an efficient government; whether they can be prosperous without a liberal expenditure."¹ The writers and travellers who followed this trend of thought looked for and found much to criticize in the American commonwealth. Their prophecy, and possibly their hope, was the dissolution and downfall of the Union. On the other side there were some writers who expressed great admiration for the American government, found features that could be adopted to an advantage in England, and wished for its successful continuance.

Their republican form of government in its hardy attempt to solve out and out the old problem of ruling all by all, is necessarily the most striking object of hope and contemplation that modern politics have ventured to purpose.²

1. Quarterly Review, XXX (October, 1823), 40.
2. Edinburgh Review, XL (June, 1829), 474.

The position of the president of the United States was thought, by some writers, to be one of the outstanding weaknesses of the government.¹ The restrictions placed upon the president's power were the outgrowth of hatred for the king during the colonial period. When the federal constitution was drawn up the framers were still irritated by the actions of the English monarch and were determined to prevent the repetition of such atrocities.² Thus the power of the chief executive was far too weak. That the Americans were conscious of this defect was recorded by one observer. George Washington, Alexander Hamilton and others saw this fault and foretold troubles that would arise.³ The realization of this weakness was cited as the cause for Washington's retirement from public life. He had seen that he was unable to stem the torrent of party strife with his limited power.⁴ Captain Hall in his Travels in America made the following observation:

the legislative and executive branches of the government are in point of fact, absolved by Congress. In England there is a well known saying that the king can do no wrong; in America the maxim is nearly inverted, for it would seem as if the president could do no

1. Quarterly Review, XXI (January, 1819), 3; J. S. Buckingham, Slave States in America, 168; T. Hamilton, Men and Manners in America, 57.
2. Quarterly Review, XXI (January, 1819), 3; Hamilton, 57.
3. Quarterly Review, XXI (January, 1819), 3.
4. Ibid., X (January, 1814), 497.

right. In America, the power of the chief magistrate--the constitutional executive of the country--has been gradually abridged, till his actual authority for good or for evil has been almost annihilated. In that country, therefore, the executive is deprived almost entirely of the power of action, but still he is held responsible. In England, the executive virtually possesses great authority, but is nominally free from responsibility.¹

The term of four years for a president was considered far too short a period of time to permit any permanent and farsighted policies. The president was forced to consider only the present and not the future.² With the view of reelection the executive was conscious of the passions and prejudices of the majority and was tied down with promises and pledges.³

The president's relation to the cabinet was another check on his power. He bore the responsibility of the cabinet yet the selection of the members was checked by the Senate. Thus his full authority was again limited. In choosing cabinet members, often the president would try to conciliate the larger and more influential states through the appointment of one of their citizens.⁴

1. Quarterly Review, XLI (November, 1829), 426.

2. Hamilton, 63.

3. Ibid., 61.

4. Ibid., 62.

Even though the power of the president was considered weak, the character of the American executive was considered of great importance, and could influence the character of the nation. In 1824, Blackwood's Magazine reviewed the first five presidencies.

Washington's administration was praised, as was his character. The period was a reflection of his cautious and simple actions. Seriousness and deliberation marked every move of the government. Adams had adopted a more adventurous and theatrical policy which was the temper of the man himself. Praise was given to the ability and mentality of Jefferson, but his experimental disposition was said to have turned the entire United States into a laboratory and had kept the country upset. Extraordinary changes took place in economy and legislation, so that he had left the country a puzzle and problem to the world. The fourth president, Madison, was blamed for the War of 1812. Although some people questioned his desire for this conflict, the English writer referred to an opinion that Madison had written in the Federalist regarding the extended power of a president during a war. Thus he could have forced the issue in order to increase his own power. Monroe was described as an old-fashioned man, living a quiet and simple life in the White House.¹

1. Blackwood's Magazine, XV (May, 1824), 508-510.

The fear that the president would be bothered by a large number of office seekers probably was voiced in Great Britain, as Miss Martineau denies this charge and judged it greatly exaggerated. Only a small part of the population were interested in public offices, all others were too busy with their own occupations; America offered too easy a chance of making a living.¹

The character, education and ability of the members of Congress was viewed with horror and amusement by some of the English writers. A few of the members were reported to be men of property and family background, a few of talent; but the majority were "men of the people", otherwise men who could appeal to the passions of the populace.²

This man of the people was one who frequents grog-shops, smokes his segar, and harangues the populace with violent and inflammatory abuse of the hostile faction.³

One writer told of a man who had married a free, black woman in the West Indies, had several children by her, robbed and left her and had gone to the United States. Here he had married another wife and had been elected a

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1. Harriet Martineau, Retrospect of Western Travel, I, 55.
 2. Quarterly Review, XXI (January, 1819), 2.
 3. Ibid., X (January, 1814), 501.

member of Congress.¹ Hamilton reported the men in the House of Representatives to be well dressed but the large proportion were vulgar and uncouth, and entirely below the European standard of a gentleman.² Farmers, shopkeepers and country lawyers could not possess any knowledge of public business; they could easily be influenced by a few able and scheming men.³ The quality of the speeches in Congress portrayed the ignorance of the speakers: attempts to use classical and literary phrases resulted in misquotation and mispronunciation.⁴ Members of the Senate were reported to conduct themselves with a great deal of dignity and to be well informed in public matters. Even though they sometimes talked nonsense, their actions betrayed sincerity and prudence. Such men as Livingston and Webster would have done honor to any assembly.⁵

The English blamed the poor quality of congressmen partly on the frequency of elections in the United States. The membership of Congress was changed too often. As soon as men became acquainted with the routine of affairs, an

1. Quarterly Review, X (January, 1814), 501.
2. Hamilton, 31-32.
3. Quarterly Review, XLI (November, 1829), 427.
4. Hamilton, 97.
5. Ibid., 109.

election came along; a majority went out and new ones came in. Thus there was constantly a majority of unqualified members in the houses of legislation.¹ The law excluding from Congress all men holding any other public office was also judged, from the English viewpoint, to be devised to exclude men of education and training.²

The meager pay of six dollars a day for members of Congress was not enough to attract able men and only incited men of less means to seek the positions. Such men would waste government money and make many blunders.³ Since many of the legislators were from the profession of law, only those whose practice was very small could afford to leave their homes and live in Washington on that small an income.

The lawyers were combining their public office and their profession. To get into Congress would insure a practice. Since each individual in the house had his own desk, he could carry on his trade there.⁴

The regulation that members of Congress must be residents in the state from which they were elected was another objectionable feature of the American government. This was thought to promote a strong sectional feeling

1. Quarterly Review, XLI (November, 1829), 428.

2. Ibid.

3. Buckingham, 134.

4. Quarterly Review, XLI (November, 1829), 427.

and narrow the choice of the electors. Jealousies were kept alive, thus disrupting the Union. A congressman was absolutely dependent upon his constituents and could not work for the interests of the entire nation. If a man followed an independent course, he was soon back in private life. Many talented men were thus prevented from election. In England a member of Parliament was not dependent on any section and could advocate what he considered best for the entire country.¹

With such a low opinion of the personnel of the legislators of the United States, the English looked for and found examples of unbusinesslike procedure in the law-making bodies. The arguments were rated as commonplace, juvenile and shallow. The speeches were full of set phrases and eloquent expressions, but entirely meaningless.² The whole procedure was considered a gross waste of time and a reflection upon democracy. Each member was aware that he must be prominent in debate or give up his hopes for reelection. Thus long speeches of eighteen to twenty hours were not uncommon. Hamilton reported:

In the House of Representatives, yesterday, Mr. Tompkins occupied the whole day with

1. Hamilton, 50-54.

2. Quarterly Review, XLI (November, 1829), 427.

the continuation of his brilliant speech on Indian questions, and is in possession of the floor tomorrow.¹

One question would branch off into another until it was impossible to remember the original topic of discussion. For example, a discussion on the payment of a debt to President Monroe ran into an argument on the character of Monroe, the selfishness of the state of Virginia and the Louisiana purchase.²

An example of the commonplace debate in Congress was one over the painting, and placing in the capitol a picture of the Battle of New Orleans. Since this matter came up while Jackson was a candidate for the presidency, party strife resulted. The debate occupied the greater part of two days. Sectionalism entered over the selection of the artist, each section had a favorite son. Other battles of American history, both naval and military were brought up as worthy subjects for paintings. The conclusion of the observer was:

I would defy any imagination, however active, to form a just conception of the rambling and irritating nature of a debate in Congress, without actually attending the House of Representatives.³

1. Hamilton, 78.

2. Ibid., 85.

3. Quarterly Review, XLI (November, 1829), 430-431.

One conclusion was that the speeches were a means of prolonging the sessions of Congress, in order to remain in Washington as long as possible. Since most of the details of government were assumed by the state governments, Congress had little to do outside of the regulation of commerce and foreign affairs.¹

At times the peace of the House might be disturbed by too much brandy, probably introduced by a representative of the western states where "grog is cheap and its influence mighty."² Under such conditions true republican freedom was asserted by exchanges of blows and abusive language. One argument in Congress between a Mr. Lyon of Vermont and a Mr. Griswald of Connecticut resulted in Mr. Lyon letting fly a volley of tobacco spittle into the eyes of Mr. Griswald. An attempt was made to expel Mr. Lyon, but after a committee considered the motion for fourteen days, it was killed by a lack of the necessary two-thirds majority vote. However, Mr. Griswald settled the score himself by administering a severe flogging to Mr. Lyon in the House.³

The English could not understand the exclusion of the cabinet members from Congress. They were not able to

1. Hamilton, 80.

2. Quarterly Review, X (January, 1814), 502.

3. Ibid., 501.

defend their measures, nor give advice. Even if they did not vote, it was thought that they should be allowed to speak.¹

The bicameral Congress, copied after the English Parliament was a wise adoption, yet it was not as proficient. Unlike the House of Peers, the Senators were only temporary and thus could not act independently to check hasty legislation.²

The frequency of elections in the United States was judged to be not only damaging to the quality of Congress but also a disturbing influence in the country. A large part of every year was taken up with electioneering, and used time that could be devoted to productive industry. People were not steady in their political beliefs. Pernicious men had the opportunity of working upon the minds of the people and causing discontent. Again, local interests were dominant at the expense of the entire nation.³ Everywhere the foreigner travelled he heard political discussions, among all classes, by both sexes, in the home, in the church and on the street. More interest was shown in the candidate than in the principles he represented.⁴

1. James Stuart, Three Years in North America, II, 46; Hamilton, 64.
2. Hamilton, 55.
3. Buckingham, 117-120.
4. Quarterly Review, XLI (November, 1829), 432.

The election of the president overshadowed all other elections and disturbed the entire nation. Governors, senators or constables were all considered on the ticket with the president. No thought was given to the fitness of the candidate.¹

The British showed concern in the American's choice of the president. Blackwood's Magazine reviewed the candidates for the election of 1824. John C. Calhoun, although he had been Secretary of War and a member of Congress, was considered far too young and impetuous. If elected he would probably attempt high-handed measures and introduce many new policies instead of completing the plans of his predecessor. The chief objection raised against William Crawford was of a moral tone. It was said that he had killed a man in a duel. If elected, he would not have great influence abroad. John Quincy Adams was clearly the choice of this English writer. As a man of letters, and experience in European courts, he would command respect. The fact that his father had held the position of chief executive was feared would hinder his election in a democratic country. The possibility of the election of General Jackson was looked upon with horror. If elected, a complete revolution was predicted. Offices would be filled with rash and adventurous men of his type.

1. Quarterly Review, XLI (November, 1829), 432.

The American people were advised to let this man remain in the army. Next to Adams, Henry Clay seemed to be the choice of the English. He, also, was well known abroad and could contribute to the reputation of the government.¹

Even though American political campaigns were spirited affairs, the elections were found to be very quiet. One witness in New England wrote that he found nothing out of the way; no drunks nor any disturbances.² Some Americans of good reputation were reported to have verified these conclusions. Chancellor Kent of New York, a respected lawyer, had said:

Though the competition between candidates is generally active, the zeal of rival parties sufficiently excited, the elections are everywhere conducted with tranquillity.³

Dr. Dwight of Yale declared that he had never known of a shilling paid for a vote.⁴

The use of the written ballot was criticized by Buckingham, as it enabled fraud. He found that it was easy for party leaders to substitute one set for another.⁵ On the other hand, James Flint thought the ballot much

1. Blackwood's Magazine, XV (May, 1824), 508-510.

2. Stuart, I, 238.

3. Ibid., 241.

4. Ibid., 240.

5. Buckingham, 120.

superior to the English system of viva voca. Where the ballot was used, he found elections completed in one day without disorder. While in Louisville, Kentucky, where he saw the English system used, the polls were kept open for three days, and within one hour he saw three fights.¹

The use of the caucus in American politics was both praised and condemned. One writer thought it natural and wise that men of talent and knowledge should carry on the business of an election.² Others thought the caucus out of place in a democracy as it took the election out of the hands of the people and gave it to an oligarchy of congressmen.³

Party spirit in the United States, although violent during elections, was soon quieted down. At the time of Lafayette's visit the country had been torn up by the contest between Adams and Jackson. The newspapers had been filled with violent attacks of both parties, yet in a day a complete change took place. Both groups vied with each other to show honor to the guest, and associated together peacefully.⁴

1. Stuart, I, 242.

2. Edinburgh Review, XXXI (December, 1818), 135.

3. Quarterly Review, XXI (January, 1819), 3-4.

4. Stuart, I, 253.

Contradictory statements were made by the English regarding universal suffrage in the United States. By some it was looked upon as a farce and was the exception, not the rule. The existence of slavery in twelve of the states deprived great numbers of the right of suffrage. Property qualifications excluded others. As in Virginia, one must possess a freehold estate in order to vote; or in New England, a real or personal estate.¹ However, the Americans were adroit at getting around some of these qualifications.

Every freeman in America, . . . is a voter, and everyone is free who declares himself to be worth fifty pounds; none thinks of boggling if required to swear to this qualification; none more expert at an evasion or equivocation than a citizen of the United States; besides a man must be of little value if he is not worth fifty pounds.²

One writer objected to the principle of universal suffrage as

it gives efficiency and perpetuity to anti-social conspiracy of poverty against wealth, of cunning against wisdom, of knavery against integrity, and of confusion against order.³

Only those who had an interest in the land should have influence in the country.

1. Edinburgh Review, XXXI (December, 1818), 200.

2. Quarterly Review, X (January, 1814), 501.

3. Buckingham, 121.

The Edinburgh Review praised universal suffrage.

Whatever may be the evils of universal suffrage in other countries, they have not yet been felt in America; and one thing at least is established by her experience, that this institution is not necessarily followed by those tumults, the dread of which excites so much apprehension in this country.¹

Popular representation was discredited by the English writers. It was styled as a great fraud, when actually the representatives were chosen by a small number of electors, many of them not chosen by the people but by other electors. The Turkish method of calling a leader to his post by acclamation was deemed better than the American system.²

The provision in the constitution allowing slaves to be partially counted in representation was held an unfair situation and gave the slave states greater influence.³

The exclusion of the clergy from membership in Congress, enforced in eight of the states, disfranchised a respectable and important class. This was not liberty and freedom.⁴

The inevitable dissolution of the United States was predicted by some of the English writers. The weakness

1. Edinburgh Review, XXI (December, 1818), 134-135.

2. Quarterly Review, XXI (January, 1819), 501-502.

3. Hamilton, 49.

4. Buckingham, 122.

of the government; the caliber of the official; the discord brought on by party strife; the misguided efforts of the legislators were all contributing causes. Others developing out of sectionalism were noticed.

The great extent of territory had broken down community interests. America would have been better off if she had stayed along the Atlantic coast. Jealousies had sprung up and already four large divisions had appeared, namely: the New England states, the Middle States, the Southern and Western. Another division between slave and non-slave states was rapidly developing. In each of these divisions morals and habits were unlike. The people of the North were industrious, those of the South were not. Their attitudes toward labor were opposite. The productions and occupations of the regions were different. A quarrel between the commercial and manufacturing and agricultural regions had already reached the point where candidates for public office were openly advocating one group or the other.¹ In Congress this spirit of sectionalism was always flaring up. Members were constantly on the alert for any measure detrimental to their section.²

Examples of discord among the states were cited by the writers and travellers as evidence of a lack of unity.

1. Blackwood's Magazine, XVIII (September, 1825), 355-363.

2. Hamilton, 111.

Kentucky and Virginia had quarreled over land.¹ A decision of the Supreme Court relating to National Banks had aroused the antagonism of several states.² The Missouri question had nearly produced a civil war in America, and the election of 1824 had left great discord.³ In the 1820's the quarrel between Georgia and the central government over the Creek Indian lands had shown the thought of disunion in the minds of some people.⁴ However, Miss Martineau wrote that this sectional spirit was not voiced by individuals, as she met few people who desired a dissolution of the Union. She judged the peaceful settlement of the treaty of South Carolina to nullify the tariff as evidence of the American ability to hold together.⁵

The division of the nation into states was an advantage to the local interests of the people and took care of some of the differences.⁶ If the general government had been left to manage all affairs, difficulties would arise. Public offices would soon be held by a

1. Blackwood's Magazine, XVIII (September, 1825), 363.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., 363-365.

4. Ibid., 366-368.

5. Martineau, 77-79.

6. Ibid., 33.

certain class. Problems of a local nature would be delayed and the federal government would be overworked. Examples of the expediency of this division were given. Massachusetts had annihilated lotteries, Connecticut had passed an act to save corn fields from crows, Maryland had authorized a geological survey. For the federal government to deal with such problems would be a waste of time.¹

One of the greatest advantages the Americans enjoyed was a freedom from all holdovers of feudalism and the evils of old governments as found in Europe. Citizens enjoyed freedom.

If a man finds a partridge upon his ground eating his corn, in any part of Kentucky or Indiana, he may kill it, even if his father is not a Doctor of Divinity.²

A man was privileged to follow his trade in any part of the country and among all classes.

If a citizen of the United States can make a shoe, he is at liberty to make a shoe anywhere between Lake Ontario and New Orleans; he may sole on the Mississippi, heel on the Missouri,--measure Mr. Birkbeck on the little Wabash, or take the length of Mr. Munro's foot on the banks of the Potomac. But woe to the cobbler, who having made Hessian boots for the alderman of Newcastle, should venture to invest with these coriaceous integuments, the leg of a liege subject at York.³

1. Martineau, 65-68.

2. Edinburgh Review, XL (July, 1824), 430.

3. Ibid., 430-431.

The low cost of the American government was another advantage cited by the English. The salary of the British ambassador was higher than that of the American president. The vice-president received less than the second clerk of the House of Commons. Other salaries were on the same scale, yet the management of the government went on very well.¹ That the English could profit by this was voiced by the Edinburgh Review.

We ought to suspend our contempt for America, and consider whether we have not a momentous lesson to learn from this wise and cautious people on the subject of economy.²

1. Edinburgh Review, XL (July, 1824), 427.

2. Ibid.

CHAPTER II

COURTS AND THE LAW

The English writers of the early nineteenth century probably paid less attention to the administration of justice in America than they did to other features of the new nation. Among the comments of those who did, criticism exceeded praise. Although America had copied the laws of England, they were often quite unlike the original.

The Supreme Court conformed more to the English idea of a court than any other part of the judicial department. The judges of this tribunal were appointed by the president with the approval of the Senate; thus removed from popular influence, and could act independently. The education and talent of Chief Justice Marshall had greatly elevated this court. However, this influence could not be permanent and it was feared that democratic fury would degrade this body as it had all others.¹ Even though this court was housed in a basement of the capitol, Hamilton found none of the violation of decency that he saw in the state courts.² The justice wore no wigs but did follow

1. Quarterly Review, XLI (November, 1829), 434.

2. Hamilton, 126.

the English custom of wearing robes. There was no notice of lounging on the bar or any other disrespectful actions. Pleas presented by the barristers were not criticized as were the public addresses in Congress.

The basis for an inferior court system was thought to be the election of the district and inferior judges.¹ This method of selection left the judges at the mercy of the people and they would naturally court the favor of the populace. Politics and justice could become too mixed. An example was given of an Irishman who had been brought to trial, on the eve of an election, for the murder of his wife. An acquittal was granted because of the influence of the Irish vote.² The excitable character of the American people rendered them incapable of selecting adequate judges. The system of popular election left no one responsible for a mistake. The British idea was that appointments should be made by a single executive upon whom the full responsibility could be placed. In order to preserve his own reputation, an executive would make selections with great concern.³

1. Quarterly Review, X (January, 1814), 505; John Bristed, The Resources of the United States of America, 179; Frederick Marryat, A Diary in America, 231.

2. Marryat, 233.

3. Bristed, 179.

The inadequate pay of judges was another cause for inferior officers.¹ The salary of a judge, when compared to the income of the leading lawyers, was too low to attract the men of the best talent.

For the sake of a few dollars the people submit their lives and properties to the decision of men of inferior intelligence and learning.²

In some cases only men of an independent income could afford to sit on the bench, thus an aristocracy was created in a land that boasted of equality.

The tenure of office was an objectionable feature of American judiciary. Federal judges held office during good behavior, but in several of the states they were elected annually.³ The provision that a judge could be removed by impeachment brought on the danger of mixing politics and justice.⁴ When party spirit was stirred up it might not be difficult to obtain the necessary majority of both houses to remove a judge of the opposite party. The law requiring a judge to retire at the age of sixty, or at any age, deprived the court of able men who had just

1. Hamilton, I, 373; Marryat, 233; Bristed, 180.

2. Marryat, 233.

3. Bristed, 180.

4. Ibid., 183.

become fully acquainted with the office.¹ It took the greater part of a man's life to acquire information and wisdom, and the Americans were shelving men just as they became useful.

The American law allowing a judge to be a candidate for another public office often placed him in a disrespectful position. If defeated in an election and still continued on the bench, he might lack the confidence of the people.²

The English deplored the undignified dress of the American judges. In New York, Hamilton saw judges without wigs or gowns. Such justices could not demand respect, and he found none in the court room. Testimonies were given with the witnesses leaning over the bench. Here again the American habit of spitting was practiced profusely.³ The English placed great stress upon this need for external rites in order to give solemnity. The Americans covered their generals with gold lace, yet condemned the symbols of dignity on the part of the judges. Proper dress was not to give homage to the individual but to the law he represented.⁴

1. Quarterly Review, XLI (November, 1829), 434; Bristed, 177.

2. Quarterly Review, X (January, 1814), 505.

3. Hamilton, 34.

4. Ibid., 39.

One visitor described a judge as sitting on the bench, half asleep, with hat on, and his coat and shoes off; his heels kicking upon the railing or table which is as high or higher than his head; his toes peeping through a pair of old worsted stockings, and with a huge quid of tobacco in his cheek.¹

With the selection of judges in the power of the people; with inadequate compensation; with a doubtful tenure of office and with no dignity, the American judges were found to be an inferior class. One court was interrupted for four days by the absence of a judge, kept home by a black eye given to him by his wife; another was so drunk that he had to be led from the room; others were known to have served jail sentences.²

The scenes in American courts, described by the English, proved the charge of a lack of dignity. People appeared in court with their hats on, talked, smoked and yelled out.³

A court scene in Zanesville, Ohio, was described by a visitor:

I roamed into the Supreme Court where I saw my new friend, the Supreme Judge Wilson on the bench, in the midst of three rustic, dirty looking associate judges, all robeless, and dressed in coarse drab, domestic homespun

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1. Marryat, 233.
 2. Quarterly Review, X (January, 1814), 507.
 3. Ibid., II (November, 1809), 336.

coats, dark silk handkerchiefs round their necks Thus they sat, presiding with ease and ability over a bar of plain talkative lawyers, all robeless, very funny and conversational in their speeches, manners, and conduct; dressed in plain box coats, and sitting with their feet and knees higher than their noses, and pointing obliquely to the bench of judges; thus making their speeches, and examining and cross examining evidence at a plain long table, with a brown earthen jug of cold water before them, for occasionally wetting their whistles and washing their quid-stained lips; all, judges, jury, counsel, witnesses, and prisoners, seemed free, easy and happy. The supreme judge is only distinguished from the rest by a shabby blue threadbare coat, dirty trousers, and unblackened shoes. Thus sat all their lordships, freely and frequently chewing tobacco, and appearing as uninterested as could be.¹

The Americans did not consider jury duty as important. One writer stated that it was difficult to find an honest jury, or a respectful one. He reported one instance where the jurymen were eating bread and cheese in the presence of the judge; the foreman actually announced the verdict with his mouth full.² The English charged this type of conduct to the spirit of equality stressed in America. The men of the jury were on equal ground with the judge and took this means of proving it.

The cheapness of law in America was both deplored and praised. Too many lawsuits kept the courts crowded; trials were in progress from morning until night and none

1. Quarterly Review, XXIX (July, 1823), 356.

2. Marryat, 233-234.

of them could receive the proper attention. The accessibility of the law encouraged people to sue for hope of gain or revenge.¹ Time that could have been used in profitable production was thus wasted, and idleness was encouraged. On the other hand, one writer praised this cheapness of law, and deemed it an advantage over the condition in England.² In that country a man would rather cancel small debts due him than go to the expense of a lawsuit. The cost of the suit was usually greater than the sum contended for.

The characteristic of extravagance in America was brought out in great number of courts established throughout the nation. As the western territory was settled, new county seats were established, with judges, clerks and marshalls. Thus a continuous expense was created.

In Pennsylvania alone there are upwards of a hundred judges who preside on the bench, besides several thousand justices of the peace The number of persons, therefore, who administer justice in America, probably exceeds that of their army and navy.³

In inferior courts in the United States, the English found a lack of respect for law.⁴ Miss Martineau cited

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1. Quarterly Review, XLI (November, 1829), 434-435.
 2. Edinburgh Review, XXX (December, 1818), 138.
 3. Quarterly Review, XLI (November, 1829), 435.
 4. Martineau, I, 120; Bristed, 192; Buckingham, 286.

the abolition riots in New York and Boston; the burning of the Charleston Convent; bank riots in Baltimore; hangings by lynch law at Vicksburg; burning of a negro in St. Louis, as evidence that laws were not enforced in all parts of the Union.¹ The Americans were apt to pass over these incidents lightly. After a mob scene in Boston, a leading lawyer was reported to have said that persecution of the participants would be difficult to accomplish; if a verdict was obtained the punishment would be a small fine.² The people of England looked upon these incidents as evidence against popular government and universal suffrage. That these violations of the law were then practiced by men of the upper classes, was reported by Miss Martineau.³ Many gentlemen were known to have taken part in the mobs and riots.

Laxity of law enforcement was especially noted in the Southern cities. The newspapers of Mobile, Alabama, carried frequent accounts of murders. Buckingham copied one example from these papers:

On the night of the 2th instant, a man named William R. Harper, was killed in a tavern in Vicksburg, by a person of the name of Tippo, the keeper of the tavern. They were both drunk, and in their madness they

1. Martineau, I, 120.

2. Ibid., 130.

3. Ibid., 121.

got to firing pistols at each other in their bed room, one of the shots proved fatal. Tippo was discharged, as it was thought he had acted in self-defense.¹

In Charleston, South Carolina, many disputes were taken out of the hands of the law and settled by duels.² Gambling, lotteries, duels and murders were passed over without notice in New Orleans.³ Municipal authorities lacked the moral courage to apprehend and punish criminals, thus many escaped and crimes were repeated.

In the West, the travellers found people taking the law into their own hands. In some regions men had formed companies known as Regulators.

The regulators are self appointed ministers of justice, to punish or destroy those whom the law cannot touch, such as suspected persons, persons acquitted through false witnesses, or lack of good evidence, but whom public opinion deems guilty. Such persons rarely benefit by a legal acquittal. Whipping, death, or banishment is inflicted by these regulators. The law, in itself inefficient, permits or winks at such matters.⁴

Another group in Kentucky, known as the Rowdies, were stealing free negroes under the pretense of capturing runaway slaves.⁵

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1. Buckingham, 286.
 2. Quarterly Review, XXIX (July, 1823), 342.
 3. Buckingham, 351.
 4. Quarterly Review, XXIX (July, 1823), 357.
 5. Ibid.

Captain Marryat expressed surprise that such conditions should exist but did not condemn them too severely.¹ In young settlements where no law had been established, lynch law was necessary for protection against criminals who sought refuge in these districts. Oftentimes assistance was given to justice. For example, a man in Natchez flogged his wife to death. The only witnesses were negroes; since their evidence was not admitted against a white man, he was acquitted; then seized by a mob, tarred and feathered and turned adrift in a canoe without paddles.² Another use of the lynch law, that of not waiting for justice, was indefensible. Often this punishment was too severe and occasionally the innocent suffered.

Another charge against the Americans was their adroitness in evading the law. Various means were used to escape a law as soon as it was passed. In an act passed prohibiting billiard tables, an accurate description of a billiard table was given. Immediately an extra pocket was added, thus the law was evaded.³ In Boston a law was passed that dogs should wear muzzles. One man tied a muzzle on his dog's tail and when summoned proved

1. Marryat, 240.

2. Ibid., 343.

3. Ibid., 231.

that he had complied with the law; it was the official, who had removed the muzzle, who was guilty of violating the law.¹

The lack of uniformity in the laws of the United States was another feature criticized by the English. Crimes committed in one state were not punishable in another. This made it easy for a criminal to escape. If a man stole a horse in New York, he could cross into New Jersey and go free.² This difference in laws in the various states resulted in keeping the people separated, and weakened the Union.³

One feature of the American judicial system was praised by the English writers. Americans had simplified legal transactions and made them less expensive.⁴ Deeds for the transfer of land was expressed in about sixty words, whereas in England four times as many were used.

The Americans were also praised for their interest in legal literature. Volumes of English decisions were reprinted in the United States as soon as they appeared.⁵

1. Marryat, 232.

2. Bristed, 193-194.

3. Bristed, 195; Hamilton, I, 378.

4. Westminister Review, XVI (April, 1832), 362.

5. Hamilton, I, 375.

Legal publications in America were increasing. Several hundred volumes had been published and law magazines were current in several of the states.¹

1. Westminister Review, XVI (April, 1832), 367.

CHAPTER III

SLAVERY

On the question of slavery in the United States the British reviewers made no compromise. All voiced the one opinion that this was the greatest disgrace and danger of America. The most friendly expressed their surprise that such a condition could exist in the land of the free, and that the Americans made no effort to erase this blot from their national character.

A high spirited nation that cannot endure the slightest act of foreign aggression, and revolt at the very shadow of domestic tyranny--beat with cart whips, and bind with chains, and murder for the merest trifles, wretched human beings who are of a more dusky color than themselves, and have recently admitted into their Union, a new State, with the express permission of ingrafting this atrocious wickedness into their constitution.¹

That the Americans were aware of this existing evil was noted by the foreigners. Negro slavery was the prevailing topic in many of the inns and was uppermost in men's minds. Many deplored the condition, yet nothing was done about it. In fact, an increase in the slave population was reported by some.

1. Edinburgh Review, XL (July, 1824), 442.

The number of slaves in the United States is now about two millions, and including the free negro, the black population of America constitutes more than one-fourth part of the whole.¹

This increase had taken place in the Southern states. Georgia had doubled her number; South Carolina had increased hers in the ratio of 146 to 107; Maryland had made only a small increase. The greatest center for trade was around Charleston, for the New England states had almost abolished the evil.²

The English travellers in America were shocked at the treatment of the slaves by the people who called themselves the most enlightened people in the world. The slave was entirely at the mercy of his master. In some cases, kind treatment was noticed but the English kept in mind that it was the care of a valuable piece of property. The domestic group of slaves were described by the visitors on the plantations as the best fed, most decently dressed and best treated.³ This, no doubt, was due to the pride in having personal attendants look well, as all English people kept their servants. When slaves were employed in the fields or hired out to another for wages, the care was just the opposite. The aim here was to make

1. Quarterly Review, XXI (January, 1819), 10.

2. C. W. Janson, The Stranger in America, 368.

3. Frances Trollope, Domestic Manners of Americans, 208.

as much profit as possible with the least expense in food and clothing. The greater number were ragged and dirty. A single suit of a woolen jacket and trousers, no shirt, was the usual allowance for one year. The food consisted in the main of Indian corn and rice. The salt allowance was scanty. Scarcely any meat was provided. The worst condition of slaves was found on the rice plantations, where the work continued from daylight till dark. No holidays, except on Christmas, were allowed. Their homes were described as miserable, small huts that were white-washed on the outside, but most wretched on the interior.¹

The state of Virginia was proud of its comparative mildness of treatment and claimed that its slaves were better off than the English laborers. This was refuted by several of the English writers. A slave was punished for mere indolence while a peasant was punished by law only when guilty of a crime. The slave had no rights in the eyes of the law unless a white man testified in his favor. While in England, the testimony of a peasant had the same value as that of a judge.² If not afraid of a fine, the slave showed fear of the whip. Neither could a slave have any hope to rise above his present condition as an English peasant could. Laws of the South forbade

1. Buckingham, 133, 63.

2. Edinburgh Review, XXX (June, 1818), 126.

even the simplest instruction in reading and writing.¹ The very attitude and facial expression of the American slave showed a degraded feeling and a crushed spirit. There was little laughter and happiness, and work was done mechanically. This could not compare to the courtesy and respect shown by an English peasant.²

Although the visitors granted that there were many good masters and some slaves appeared well-treated, many shocking stories of cruelty were repeated. The very existence of laws in the Southern states against maiming a slave, such as cutting out the tongue, was evidence that such atrocities must have existed. Frequent lynching and shooting of slaves was reported. Several visitors reported witnessing floggings or noticing stripes on the bodies of the slaves. To the English this was inconsistent with American freedom.

Among this free people a negro may be flogged till he expires under the lash, without any violation of the rights of man; if the flogger be tried for murder, he is rarely convicted, and if convicted, a pecuniary fine wipes off the offense.³

One traveller told of witnessing, in Kentucky, the whipping of a negro youth of about fourteen years of age. Two men were taking turns administering the lashes, while

1. Buckingham, 134.

2. Annual Register, LXI (1819), 524.

3. Quarterly Review, X (January, 1819), 154.

the boy begged them not to kill him. Afterwards, when the Englishman voiced his opinion of the act he received such answers as: "I guess he deserved all he got." "It would have been of small account if the nigger had been whipt to death." "I always serve my blasted niggers that way; there is nothing else so good for them."¹

Mrs. Hall reported many of the slaves well-treated, especially by the class she called ladies and gentlemen of the South. However, she found this class comparatively small, and some evidence of brutality among the few.² It was noted in some cases that the whippings were administered by the women of America. One gentleman of Washington was too kind-hearted to whip his negroes himself, so left it up to his wife.³

Further proof of the unhappy condition of slaves was the frequent runaway slave. The travellers noted the great number of handbills and notices in papers for the return of runaway slaves. These were a disgrace to the land of democracy. One of these directed the officers of the law to use all means for their apprehension and any person was permitted to destroy them in any way he might

1. Quarterly Review, XXIX (July, 1823), 353-354.

2. Mrs. Basil Hall, The Aristocratic Journey, 228.

3. Quarterly Review, XXIX (July, 1823), 354.

think proper.¹ Dogs were kept and trained to hunt these escaping slaves. The training of the dog to seize a negro was used as a form of amusement by one planter.² Another fact that bespoke the condition of the slave was the frequent cases of a slave attacking an overseer or master. If the slaves had been well cared for and if they were happy in their condition, these incidents would not have occurred. Buckingham in his travels in the South found negroes who had stolen cattle from their master for food for themselves and for runaways. They faced death for this act. Such was proof that they were not sufficiently fed and showed their sympathy for those who were escaping.³

The laws regarding slavery in this land of freedom were another anachronism. If administered at all, they were at the discretion of the master. Most of the laws were of a negative type. No punishment had to be registered. Manumission and instruction in reading and writing were prohibited in most of the states.⁴ The laws of the Carolinas were given as an example. Here every negro should be presumed a slave unless proved contrary; two

1. Quarterly Review, XXVII (April, 1822), 84.

2. Ibid., XXIX (July, 1823), 344.

3. Buckingham, 87.

4. Edinburgh Review, XLI (June, 1829), 486.

justices of the peace and three freeholders could put them to death in any manner; evidence against them could be without oath; any person murdering a slave was to pay 100 pounds, or 14 pounds if he cut off a slave's tongue; any white man meeting seven slaves together on a high-road could give them twenty lashes each; no man could teach a slave to read or write.¹ The laws of Louisiana had a more human and considerate tone. In that state, parents and children could not be sold separately until the latter were twelve years of age. Also the slave had some recourse to the laws. An ill-treated slave could bring his case before the local court and, if evidence of cruelty was sufficient, the master could be compelled to sell the slave to another. However, no freedom could be given to a slave unless he left the state.² This last regulation was not enforced as there were many free negroes in Louisiana.

The actual barter of human beings was shocking and heart-sickening to the travellers. These were described as scenes of horror and never failed to shock the foreigner. If he was not already convinced of the evil of the institution this was adequate evidence. Families were separated without any compunction, the whole process

1. Edinburgh Review, XLI (June, 1829), 146.

2. Buckingham, 357.

was similar to the sale of a horse. One account was typical:

The poor object of traffic is mounted on a table, intending purchasers examine his points and put forth questions as to his age, health, etc. The auctioneer dilates on his value, enumerates his accomplishments, and when the hammer at length falls, protests in the usual phrase that poor Sambo has been absolutely thrown away. When a woman is sold, he usually puts his audience in a good humor by a few indecent jokes.¹

The greatest fear of a slave was that he would be sold into the states of the deep South or to one of the rice plantations. Mrs. Trollope told of one slave who cut his right hand off in order to escape such a fate.²

Slaves in transportation from one section of the country to another were viewed by the travellers with aroused sympathy. They were reported as loaded with chains and driven along like cattle. Little regard was shown for their personal comfort. At one tavern, where the slave driver stopped to refresh himself and his horse, the poor negroes were given nothing.³

Other deplorable features were noticed by the travellers. In Maryland and Virginia where the soil was too exhausted for agriculture, human beings were bred to supply the markets of the South. Enormous profits were made

1. Hamilton, II, 216.

2. Trollope, 209.

3. Edinburgh Review, XXI (December, 1818), 147.

from this business.¹ The practice of hiring out slaves was common as proved by the number of advertisements in the papers. The money from this inhuman practice went into the pockets of the owners. The slave was looked upon as a piece of machinery.²

The existence of slavery at Washington was deemed a disgrace. While men in Congress were orating on the principles of freedom, slaves were sold nearby. Some of the men had probably been driven to the capitol by slaves. This was the most inconsistent feature in America.³

The effects of this condition of servitude upon the negro himself were degrading. He had no rights in the courts. His education was prohibited by laws. He lacked morals and principles. A negro man was allowed to have several wives.⁴ The practice of separating families broke up home relationships. His religion was controlled, as no service could be held without a white man present.⁵ The whites were known to disregard the presence of a

1. Edinburgh Review, XLIX (June, 1829), 486.

2. Buckingham, 136.

3. Hamilton, II, 141.

4. Hall, 223.

5. Buckingham, 63.

slave and discuss his faults and habits in his presence.¹
It was not a surprise to the English that the owners complained of the indolence and ignorance of slaves. Nothing was being done to elevate this race. The southerner claimed that the colored race was unfit for mental improvement, yet many of them were educated in the northern states and were supporting themselves.²

The English visitors showed the greatest concern with the effects of slavery upon the American people themselves. Holding one race in a condition of servitude developed undesirable habits and ideas among the people. "The love of command, the impatience of restraint gets the better of every other feeling and cruelty has no other limit than fear."³ One traveller referred to Thomas Jefferson's opinion to prove that the American was conscious of this evil. Jefferson had written that "The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions Our children see this, and learn to imitate it."⁴ The irritability of the Southerner, his constant readiness to fight was blamed on the slave system. The visitors reported more duels, shootings and street fights in the South than in the North.

1. Trollope, 212.

2. Buckingham, 65.

3. Edinburgh Review, XXIC (December, 1818), 146.

4. Ibid.

Not only the morals of the people but also their habits of work were changed by the existence of slavery. The visitors in the southern states reported a great amount of time spent in hunting and riding. Work was looked upon as disagreeable and degrading.

The evil effects upon the fairer sex were noted by Mrs. Trollope. The educated and refined young women on one plantation scoffed at her attention to a sick slave.¹ Such feeling showed a lack of regard for human beings.

That slavery was economically unsound was another opinion of the English writers. The condition of farms north of the Ohio River was thought to be better than that on the south side. Buckingham reported a conversation with a slave owner from Kentucky who admitted that the cost of purchase, maintenance, medical care and pay of overseers was more than the cost of hiring labor. Also, the negro would not do half the work of the white man.² The capital invested in slaves could have been converted into other businesses and the condition of the South greatly improved. If owning laborers was the cheapest method, the English could not see why it had not been tried by manufacturers and shippers. The exhausted

1. Trollope, 211.

2. Buckingham, 402.

condition of the soil in the older slave states, as Maryland and Virginia, was proof that slavery was the land-owner's worst enemy.¹

The slave-owner's life was not pictured as any too happy. There was a constant feeling of fear among them. Every precaution was taken to prevent insurrections. Large military and police forces were maintained. Bells were rung to keep the negroes off of the streets at night.² One planter, at an inn, voiced his fear of leaving his family at night without his protection from the slaves. This man at the time was suffering from poison given him by a slave.³

The free negro in the United States was of great interest to the foreign visitors. It was generally agreed that his condition in the South was not much better than that of a slave. The Southerner was afraid of the presence of the free negro and his effect upon the slave. The laws of Louisiana placed a penalty of death or hard labor upon any one creating discontent among the free negroes as well as the slaves.⁴ Anyone with the least tinge of colored blood was an outcast. Most of the

1. Buckingham, 202.

2. Ibid., 63.

3. Edinburgh Review, XXX (June, 1818), 125.

4. Ibid., LVI (January, 1833), 476.

Southern states tried to keep free negroes out, thus many of them found their way to the North. Here a contradiction existed as to their treatment. Mrs. Wright reported churches and schools open to them, and equal protection given by the law.¹ The larger group of visitors reported the opposite condition. One reported a barber refusing to cut a negro's hair for fear of losing his other customers.² In Ohio a negro had no political rights, could not bear witness against a white and was generally annoyed by the whites.³ Another traveller in New England reported schools for negroes shut up or torn down. Here they were forbidden to eat in inns with the whites. Colleges were closed to them.⁴ In general the English visitors' opinion was that the free negro was an oppressed race in America.

Most of the English writers raised little hope for the abolishment of the system of slavery. True, it had been eliminated in some states but this was due to the unprofitableness of the institution. The method of abolishment was criticized. The state of Pennsylvania, for example, had passed an act to go into effect in three

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1. Frances Wright D'Arusmont, Views of Society and Manners in America, 73.
 2. Quarterly Review, XXI (January, 1819), 129.
 3. Ibid., 565.
 4. Martineau, II, 144.

years, thus giving the owners time to sell or transport their slaves into the South.¹ The Southerners were reported as conscious of the evil but would not tolerate any loss through emancipation. Also the number of newspaper articles in Southern papers attested the growing fear of the abolition movement. These articles written by judges and presidents of colleges attempted to justify the existence of slavery by Biblical references.² With the whole press, public opinion and legislatures of the South against emancipation, little hope was given. One writer was convinced that the evil could only be eradicated by a great and terrible revolution.³

The writers themselves offered little solution of the problem. Unqualified emancipation was not advocated. To do so would ruin the South economically and endanger lives and property.⁴ The negroes were unfit for freedom. Some suggested gradual education.⁵

All writers and travellers agreed that if America was to prosper and be respected by other nations this disgrace must be stopped. How could she call herself

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1. Hamilton, 221.
 2. Buckingham, 59.
 3. Hamilton, 227.
 4. Trollope, 364.
 5. Mesick, 147.

enlightened or boast of freedom, yet hold another race in servitude.

The existence of slavery in America is an atrocious crime, with which no measures can be kept . . . for which her situation affords no sort of apology . . . which makes liberty itself distrusted, and the boast of it disgusting.¹

In a study of British Travellers' Version of America Negro Slavery by Kassie M. LeHew, slavery is revealed as one of the dominant interests of the English visitors during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. From this study it may be concluded that the British travellers viewed the institution of slavery, not only as degrading to the slaves, the owners and the poorer whites who lived in the midst of the system, but also as a great sectional and national issue facing the people of the United States. These are the same opinions voiced by the reviewers of the books of travel in the periodicals of this period.

1. Edinburgh Review, XXI (December, 1818), 148.

CHAPTER IV

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS

The English traveller and writer of the early nineteenth century showed a keen interest in the people of the United States. How had the environment of a democratic government changed these off-spring of the British? Many stories had been told of the brutality and wildness of these people. The English travellers gave varying reports on some features, but in general agreed on others.

In the larger cities of the East, life was found to be very similar to that of the cities in England. A traveller in New York, Boston and Philadelphia found the manners, luxuries and conveniences of a European city and had very little criticism. The greatest oddities of living were found in the South and the West. However, most of the visitors seemed attracted to the South, perhaps because of an intense interest in the condition of the slaves, and also the reputation of southern hospitality.

Unfortunately for the reputation of the Americans, most of the travellers formed their opinion of the American character from men in taverns, on stages and on the boats. Except in the South, they had little insight into American homes.

One of the first observations made by several visitors was that the Americans were possessed with a great amount of curiosity.¹ As soon as a traveller arrived, he was beset with questions and treated in a shockingly familiar manner. The people were said to be restless until they knew everyone's business, and a foreigner was advised to have a set of answers ready. This habit was found more general in the New England states and in the West and least noticed among the well-bred people in the larger cities and in the South. Some visitors were very tolerant toward this inquisitiveness, especially among the people of the remote regions where life was lonely and communication difficult, but more often they resented the interferences.

A charge of rudeness was made by a few visitors. At one inn, the traveller reported that his landlord and family sat, uninvited, with him. The children, imitating the freedom of the father, would seize the stranger's drink and often snatch a bite from his plate. All of this went on without any correction from the parents.² Along the roads some visitors found the Americans unwilling to aid in time of trouble. While travelling from Lancaster to Chambersburgh, one writer, having the misfortune to

1. Quarterly Review, X (January, 1814), 515; Janson, 19; Hamilton, I, 119.

2. Quarterly Review, X (January, 1814), 516.

break a part of his wagon, was refused help by a blacksmith.¹ Another time when a wagon was overturned and the visitor asked for help "the human brutes refused it without first being paid for their trouble."²

This charge of rudeness was noticeable among the serving class, who did not meet the standard of the English visitors. In the inns and boarding houses some of the travellers loudly complained against too much equality of this class and a lack of manners. One girl at a boarding house pointed with her finger to direct a stranger and the ostler refused to awaken a boarder.³ To the English this was evidence of lack of proper training. Mrs. Trollope reported difficulty with servants in her home, especially in keeping them separate from the family.⁴ One writer blamed this rudeness on the harsh manner of some English travellers and advised them to adopt a more respectful attitude themselves and not to expect too many services; in return they would receive courteous treatment.⁵

1. Quarterly Review, XXVII (April, 1822), 77.

2. Ibid., 79.

3. Ibid., 76.

4. Trollope, 44.

5. Stuart, I, 122.

To offset this charge of rudeness some examples of American hospitality can be found among the writings of the English. Frances Wright found several people who would leave their business to direct a stranger.¹ In the South this spirit of hospitality was more evident. The homes of the planters were open to the travellers and great effort was made to entertain them.

The spirit of equality in America was another generalization of the English. The ease of meeting men of high position greatly surprised the stranger. Stuart visited freely with President Jackson and found him most unaffected and unreserved.² Doctors, lawyers, merchants, clerks, mechanics and congressmen all seated at the same table supplied further proof of equality.³ To find captains, majors, colonels, driving their own wagons, keeping taverns or working behind the counter was more than the English could understand. The nearest approach to the English country gentleman was the planter of the southern states. He

blazes for a few months in the year in great affluence, keeps horses and carriages and livery servants, but as this is generally the produce of his crop in anticipation, he retires upon pork, hominy and Johnny-cake, smokes 'segars', drinks sangaree made of

1. D'Arusmont, 22-24.

2. Stuart, II, 79.

3. Quarterly Review, XXVII (April, 1822), 85.

peach brandy and lounges the whole day on a sofa attended by a negro wench to flop away flies.¹

The intelligence and good appearance of the servant class placed them on an equal footing with others and often the visitor found it difficult to distinguish them.²

To the conservative Englishmen this lack of equality was not only a surprise but a deplorable feature of the American life and they were harsh in their denunciation. The Quarterly Review could foresee no advantage in this equality.³ The more friendly Edinburgh Review, on the other hand, praised this feature of American life. No class was abused by those in authority. The justice on the bench was respected and obeyed while performing his duty, but as an ordinary citizen he could not treat his least wealthy neighbors with contempt.⁴

Business was conceded to be the main interest of the Americans. Mrs. Trollope complained that this topic entered into all conversations and was evidence of a low tone.⁵ Bristed found this interest in all classes, farmers, soldiers, legislators, physicians and even clergymen.⁶

1. Quarterly Review, X (January, 1814), 513.
2. Stuart, II, 464.
3. Quarterly Review, X (January, 1814), 513.
4. Edinburgh Review, XXXI (December, 1818), 142.
5. Trollope, 259.
6. Bristed, 455.

It was the main subject of discussion at dinners and parties, thus interfering with social life. Here again the men of the South were the exceptions to the general rule. Their chief interest was less in money than in the pleasure they could get out of it. The New Englanders were the most shrewd business men.

This desire for gain led to the charge of dishonesty among the people of the United States. The large amount of cheap land in the country made speculation easy. A clever land-jobber would sell the same piece of land three or four times, and have an abundant supply of patents, grants and deeds. A member of Congress had called the vocation of land-jobbing as swindling on a large scale.¹ One traveller told of seeing men planting trees on rocky soil in order to make it attractive. This was called the art of cooking up land.² The Edinburgh Review took a fair attitude toward these examples of speculation and pointed out that such treatment might just as well be found among the merchants of England. Also, any person who was so eager to buy land that he would not wait to investigate deserved to be swindled and ought not complain.³ The practice of appropriating land, followed by

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1. Quarterly Review, X (January, 1814), 514.
 2. Janson, 271.
 3. Edinburgh Review, X (April, 1807), 112.

the squatters in the West, appeared unscrupulous to the foreigner. In Pennsylvania a proprietor heard of several settlers living on his land, and when he went out to investigate he was warned at the point of a rifle to stay away.¹

The bankruptcy laws of the several states made it easy for a man to get out of paying debts. If a uniform law had been followed throughout the nation, a creditor would have had more security. To declare one's self bankrupt was a mere matter of form in the United States. In 1802 in Virginia, a Mr. John Proudfit was declared bankrupt, but in six months he was back in business again with a valuable stock of goods.² This laxity of the laws of insolvency in America had created a poor reputation for American credit abroad.

One Englishman living in America complained about the practice of passers-by helping themselves to fruit, or taking corn or hay to feed their horses. He applied to the justice of the peace but was told not to bother with so small a matter. The Edinburgh Review excused this practice as a proof of abundance of good crops and of good neighborliness, not the dishonesty of the people.³

1. Quarterly Review, XXVII (April, 1822), 83.

2. Janson, 252, 253.

3. Edinburgh Review, VII (October, 1805), 37.

The Americans themselves were conscious of shrewdness among the people, especially the Yankees. Men of the West and South reported Yankee peddlers selling wooden nutmegs, common sheep with a merino fleece sewed on, and clocks that would not run.¹

Another natural consequence of abundance in America was the extravagance of the people; both in public and private life there was reckless spending. Women were never taught the principles of economy and men would not practice them, thus children brought up in idleness and extravagance would perpetuate these characteristics. Bristed claimed that the city of New York far surpassed cities of Europe in its rate of expenditure and, also, that living expenses were at least one-third higher than in London. The people had fallen into "habits of personal and family expenses, far surpassing those of the corresponding classes in Europe."²

That the Americans lived in a constant state of activity and excitement was concluded by the foreign visitors. Participation in the government and the busy stir of an election kept the whole mass of population constantly on the alert. The restlessness and activity of the people was also evidenced in the westward movement.

1. J. E. Alexander, Transatlantic Sketches, 247.

2. Bristed, 456.

Even while doing well in one part of the country, they would break up their establishments and move westward. On the route toward Ohio, the traveller was constantly in view of groups of emigrants moving to the land of promise.¹

Another conclusion of the British was that the Americans were vain and talkative. Their vanity was said to surpass that of any other nation except the French. This vanity appeared in their conversations, newspapers, speeches, and books. Congress was reported to have debated three days upon the question that America was the most enlightened nation in the world.² The Edinburgh Review, which assumed a friendly attitude in most cases, warned the Americans of this fault. As yet, they had not reached any great stage of advancement, the only thing they had to be proud of was their descent from the English and as yet they had done little to assert this honor.³ That this national vanity was only natural was voiced by one friendly visitor. The same charge could be made against any other nation. If the Americans were vain they had inherited this vanity from the British.⁴

1. Bristed, 427.

2. Quarterly Review, XXI (January, 1819), 24.

3. Edinburgh Review, XXXIII (January, 1820), 79.

4. Frances J. Grund, The Americans in Their Moral, Social and Political Relations, 16-17.

The Englishmen found talk cheap in America but some judged it to be of an inferior quality. Public speaking was rated as trite and childish and a gross waste of time, especially in the law-making bodies.

American eloquence has its own peculiar feature, it is not British eloquence; it is neither so dignified, chaste, nor learned, but it is bolder and more rapid in flight, and more impassioned in style and manner. It somewhat resembles the Irish, but it is less laboured and artificial.¹

Long speeches in Congress were reported, some lasting eighteen to twenty hours. The style of speaking was loose, rambling and inconclusive, and more for the purpose of individual glory.²

Some personal characteristics of the American people were criticized by the majority of visitors. The excessive use of tobacco, accompanied by the habit of spitting, was frequently referred to in the writings.³

Judges, lawyers, politicians and parsons, doctors and merchants, army and navy, from the president of the United States down to the pauper in the almshouse, smoke and chew tobacco, and abundantly eject its concocted juice in all places, at all times and under all circumstances.⁴

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1. Blackwood's Magazine, IV (July, 1824), 96.
 2. Hamilton, 78-79.
 3. Bristed, 450; Trollope, 12, 15; Buckingham, 466; Hamilton, 190.
 4. Bristed, 450.

Such was the opinion of one traveller. Another reported the practice of smoking was found among the very young boys. In Salem, Massachusetts, a newspaper account told of the death of one youth of twelve brought on by the excessive use of cigars. Also a boy of four was said, by his father, to smoke three or four cigars daily and that he would even steal them.¹ In colleges the habit of smoking was thought to occupy too much time and encourage laziness. Very few travellers, even the most friendly, failed to voice an opinion on this universal habit of smoking.

The excessive use of ardent spirits was a contradictory subject among the English reviewers. One group reported drunkenness as prevalent in America. In the South, the visitor learned of slingers and eleveners. The slingers were those who craved drink the first thing in the morning; the eleveners took theirs at eleven o'clock.² The conclusions on drinking made by the travellers were based on observations of men in the public houses where excesses could easily be noted. At the time of the repeal of the whiskey tax, one visitor found the rooms, the stairs and the yard of an inn covered with men

1. Janson, 304-305.

2. Ibid., 307.

dead drunk.¹ The extent of the liquor business was reported by some writers as further proof of drinking in America.

Half as many tons of domestic spirits are annually produced as of wheat and flour; that in the state of New York in the year 1825, there were 2264 grist mills and 1129 distilleries for whiskey.²

In New York City there were 3000 houses licensed to sell liquors, besides many other places selling it illegally. This unfavorably compared with the larger city of London where there were scarcely 4000 liquor houses.³ Southern cities were found to be the largest drinking centers.

Grog-shops of the common order abound at every corner of every street . . . and in all of them numbers of well-dressed young men are to be seen smoking cigars and drinking wines, spirits and cordials, at an early hour of the day.⁴

Blackwood's Magazine took issue with this charge of beastly drunkenness. If the people were such drinkers how could a tavern keeper afford to place decanters of whiskey on the tables and sideboards where it was accessible to all? The fact that liquor was plentiful in America discredits the charge. People seldom drink to excess that which is cheap. The rarity of an object

1. Quarterly Review, X (January, 1814), 521.

2. Ibid., XLI (November, 1829), 439.

3. Edinburgh Review, XXI (January, 1819), 9.

4. Buckingham, 287.

makes it desirable. At American dinners a great amount of water and tea was drunk, therefore the Americans could not possibly be such drunkards as described by some writers.¹

The foreigners noted the growth of the temperance movement in the United States and the influence of its societies. At the end of the year 1829 there were already formed more than one thousand of these groups with a membership of more than 100,000, and were growing rapidly. Many distillers had been stopped. In general public opinion had been aroused.² Legal restrictions were reported in some states as the result of the efforts of both the press and the people. In Tennessee dram shops were not licensed; in Rhode Island, the law prohibited the sale in less quantities than a gallon.³ In 1832 an order had been issued prohibiting the issuance of spirits to troops of the United States Army and the introduction of it into forts, camps or garrisons.⁴ This restraint in a land of freedom was ample evidence that the Americans were not universal drunkards.

1. Blackwood's Magazine, XVI (December, 1824), 629-630.

2. Grund, 182.

3. Buckingham, 419.

4. Grund, 187.

The visitors who found an excess of drinking in America claimed that this led to an indulgence in fighting, particularly in the South. The practices of gouging, kicking and biting often marked these fights. Gouging was the practice of turning an antagonist's eyes out of their sockets. One writer reported the pride some men took in this art.

The combatants pride themselves upon the dexterity with which they can pluck out an eye, bite off a nose, or break a jaw with the kick of their foot.¹

One man in North Carolina kept his teeth sharpened with a file and boasted of the number of noses, ears and cheeks he had torn.²

Amusements and pleasures in America were not noticed to any great extent by the travellers. A lack of games, especially among the school boys, was reported by one traveller. Cricket, football and quoits appeared to be unknown.³ The theatre was mentioned in nearly all of the larger cities visited by the Englishmen. Mrs. Trollope concluded that the productions were generally poor and not very popular with American people.⁴ Janson gave an account of misconduct in a theatre in Baltimore as typical

1. Quarterly Review, X (January, 1814), 522.

2. Edinburgh Review, X (April, 1807), 113.

3. Ibid., XL (July, 1824), 442.

4. Trollope, 175.

of the reception of drama throughout the country.¹ The actor, Tyrone Power, reported well-filled theatres and very respectful audiences, even in New Orleans, which was reported to be a boisterous city.²

The women visitors reported on balls, parties and banquets they attended in the cities. Mrs. Hall was quite pleased and described the entertainments as very elaborate in most cases. On the other hand, Mrs. Trollope complained of the lack of dinner parties, especially those of mixed groups. In Cincinnati she found it very dull to be separated from the men and forced to discuss clothes or last Sunday's sermon with the women.³

A complaint was made by one visitor on the lack of public gardens and pleasure grounds in the cities. If these did exist they were overlooked by the average traveller as little mention is made of them. One park in New York and the public mall in Boston were the nearest approach to the European idea of amusement centers.⁴ In the South the people had more time for pleasures; here the traveller attended assemblies, concerts, balls and plays. For the men there was the excitement of hunting or horse

1. Janson, 265.

2. Tyrone Power, Impressions of America, II, 119; 173.

3. Ibid., 173.

4. Grund, 39.

racing. Although frequently judged as immoral, the city of New Orleans was the haven for pleasure lovers.¹

Gambling houses were abundant; theatres were well attended.

Habits of eating in America were generally criticized by the visitor. The use of the fork was held unnecessary and Mrs. Hall judged it an act of respect and attention when she was provided with a silver fork at dinner.² The knives were made with large blades and rounded points in order to convey food to the mouth. Using the knife would not attract attention except to a stranger. Haste in eating was another complaint against America.³ Meals were not social affairs. One traveller gave a description of a tavern dinner attended by doctors, lawyers, merchants and other men of good position.

Negroes are stationed at each door of the dining room, and when the second bell announced that all is ready, they turn the key and scamper for their lives, . . . a general rush is made by the hungry company who were eagerly waiting outside, and without ceremony they commence a general attack upon the smoking board.⁴

Even though the food was consumed hastily most foreigners were loud in their praise of quality and quantity.

1. Buckingham, 351; Hamilton, 209; Power, 223.

2. Hall, 73.

3. Hall, 275; Buckingham, 467.

4. Quarterly Review, XXVII (April, 1822), 85.

Mrs. Hall frequently refers to good dinners and refreshments at parties. At one dinner she reported "boiled turkey, roast chicken, asparagus, peas, potatoes, rice custard and sweetmeats, all admirably dressed and nicely served."¹ Hamilton stated that "in America, a traveller's sufferings are rarely connected with the table. Go where he may, he finds abundance of good and wholesome food."²

Funerals in America were a curiosity to the English. Too much pomp and expense was one charge against them.³ It was noted that a law had been passed in Massachusetts prohibiting the common practice of presenting a scarf to every guest who attended. In South Carolina, the burying of the dead was usually accompanied by a large banquet. In New England the practice was to send out notices inviting the people to the home of the deceased, where food and drink was provided. After the services a long procession accompanied the body to the grave. The hearse in America was rude as compared to that used in London. Often the dead were carried upon men's shoulders.⁴

The land of democracy had noticeably affected the youth. Too much freedom was allowed; children were not

1. Hall, 221.

2. Hamilton, 5.

3. Buckingham, 79.

4. Janson, 429-431.

taught to obey. "The consequence was, great precocity of manners in both sexes, and very often early marriages."¹ Much more freedom was allowed the American youth of both sexes than in Europe. In America they mingled freely in all social events. The Englishmen seemed astonished that parental authority was lacking in the question of marriages. At a New York debating club one of the questions considered was the right of a father or mother to interfere in a marriage. The decision reached was "That in a free and enlightened republic, children are at liberty to marry whom they please, without any interference on the part of the parents."² This lack of parental authority had affected the education of the youth, as it was almost impossible to keep a boy in school.

The position of women was one criterion the English used to determine the morals of America. On this subject a general conclusion was made that in all parts of the United States, from the wealthiest to the poorest, women conducted themselves admirably and were held in the highest regard. However, the fact that they did not mingle freely with the men, lessened their influence upon the general tone of society. Frances Wright remarked that it

1. Buckingham, 127.

2. D'Arusmont, 75.

would be impossible for women to stand in higher esteem than they do in the United States.¹ When speaking of the gradual relaxation of morals in the United States, Bristed did not include women. "In no country under a canopy of heaven do female virtue and purity hold a higher rank than in the United States."² No attacks upon the virtue of women were found in the writings of the English. The only criticism of the female population was the part they took in the treatment of slaves. They were deemed good housewives and excellent mothers.

The American characteristic of excitability was found in women as well as in men. One writer in comparing the nature of women in America with those in England said:

Either an English woman or an American woman would go to the scaffold with a beloved one; but the female American would go there in a delirium; the English woman deliberately, like a martyr.³

The visitors were not insensitive to the female face and figure.⁴ The general observation was that many beautiful women were seen in America. Preference was given to those of Baltimore and the South. It was lamented by the writers that this grace and beauty failed at an early

1. D'Arusmont, 423.

2. Bristed, 79.

3. Blackwood's Magazine, IV (July, 1824), 96.

4. Hamilton, 15; Buckingham, 75; D'Arusmont, 32; Grund, 31.

age, more than likely due to early marriages, and the burdens of a home. At the age of twenty-five the American girl began to fade. This was most noticeable in the West where a woman's life was lonely and hard.¹

The stable condition of marriage ties and the home seemed a surprise to the English visitors. Without the supervision of an established church and strict parental authority, unhappy marriages should have resulted. One visitor attempted to prove this by saving notices from the papers of runaway wives.² His observations were an exception to the general rule. The English writers found little ground for criticism of the marital relations of Americans.

Altogether the English visitors took a very fair attitude toward the Americans. Some did play up the ridiculous but by far the majority made allowances on the basis of the youth of the country. The summary made by Bristed was a fair estimate of American manners.

America exhibits a medium of manners between rude vulgarity of the lower orders, and artificial refinement of the higher classes in Europe.³

1. Trollope, 42.

2. Quarterly Review, X (April, 1814), 518.

3. Bristed, 444.

CHAPTER V

RELIGION

The non-existence of an established church in the United States was a matter of great concern to the people of Great Britain. There seemed to be many questions raised regarding the state of religion. Could these people be religious, and could their religious needs be met without a government supported church? Many English people seemed to doubt this; while some looked upon the religious situation in America as admirable.

In general, the English writers agreed that the Americans were religious, especially in the older states and in the cities. The numerous places of religious worship in the cities, and the attendance at services, were proof of the interest of the people.¹ In the western country, the attendance at revivals and camp meetings was noted by the majority of travellers. If any lack of religion was noted it was in the Southern cities where Sundays were spent in riotous living.²

1. D'arusmont, 432; Edinburgh Review, XXX (December, 1818), 145.

2. Janson, 102.

Religious toleration was both praised and deplored by the English writers. The Edinburgh Review rated America superior to all other nations in the matter of religious freedom, and unfavorably compared it to religious toleration as existed in England.¹ Jews and Christians of all denominations were found working together in harmony. All had equal opportunities and could seek any public office.² Almost perfect harmony was found to exist among the various sects in the cities; and very little rivalry was noticed in the rural districts. Individuals professing different creeds had been known to meet at the same communion table, and clergymen of different sects had assisted each other in services.³ The English people probably thought that this spirit of tolerance would create a lack of religion, and Grund made the observation that even though religion was a matter of choice he found it necessary that Americans belong to some sect or be outcasts from society.⁴

To the more conservative English this religious freedom brought on infidelity and fanaticism. Many illegitimate sects had developed along with the older orders.

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1. Edinburgh Review, XL (July, 1824), 429.
 2. Ibid.; Grund, 158.
 3. Edinburgh Review, LVI (January, 1833), 471.
 4. Grund, 158.

Presbyterians, baptists, methodists, universalists, episcopalians, congregationalists, quakers, mormans, dunkers, shakers, with a multitude of others whose names it would be unprofitable to enumerate, as it would be difficult to assign their characteristic differences of doctrine or belief, exhibit all together as satisfactory a view as can be desired of the fanatical extravagance to which the bulk of mankind would be driven . . . in the absence of a national church and an established religion.¹

No doubt the English charge of fanaticism was, in part, due to the accounts of the camp meetings found in several of the books of travel. These religious demonstrations were described with a sense of horror and amusement, and most of the travellers reported the same experiences. These meetings were attended by thousands from far and near and continued day and night, the people sleeping and eating on the camp grounds.

The friendly ministers work away, and as soon as the lungs of one fail, another relieves him. When signs of conversion begin to be manifest, several preachers crowd around the object, exhorting a continuance of the efforts of the spirit and displaying in the most frightful images the horrors which attend such as do not come unto them. The signs of regeneration are displayed in the most striking symptoms . . . women jumping, striking and kicking like raving maniacs, while the surrounding believers could not keep them in postures of decency.²

Further proof of fanaticism was the existence of unusual sects in the United States. Several of the

1. Quarterly Review, X (January, 1814), 509.

2. Ibid., II (November, 1809), 336.

travellers visited the Shaker community founded by Anne Lee of Manchester, who had taken refuge in America. This society was founded on the principle of a community of property and an equality of rights. The members were excluded from all communication with the rest of the world and the men and women lived separately. The following is an account by one visitor to the supper of this community:

There were two long tables spread, each the whole length of both sides of the hall, with benches at the sound of a horn, the males by the right hand door, and the females by the left hand door, marched into the room in double files, halted and then fronted to the table. . . . At a signal, each dropped on their knees, offered up a silent act of devotion, rose and took a seat at the table, and ate their meal in perfect silence. Then, after the very hasty meal was ended, in the same military kind of order, at quick time, the company retreated from the hall.¹

Their religious services were accompanied by such singing, dancing and shouting, as might give the impression of insanity.

Another of these fanatic groups reported by some of the visitors was a colony at Harmony, Indiana. This communistic group had been established by a Mr. Rapp and in 1825 purchased by Robert Owen. This community practiced equality of man, denied religious beliefs, divorced

1. Quarterly Review, XLI (November, 1829), 444-445.

at will and separated children from parents at the age of two.¹

From the accounts of these unusual sects in America, the English were led to believe that America was a haven for non-conformists and fanatics.

The growth of the Unitarian church in America was viewed with alarm. Their stronghold was in the northern and eastern states.² This denomination was classed as the church of the philosophers and the catch all for those of no religious belief.

Public opinion in the United States demands that everyone shall belong to some religious sect or body, and Unitarianism is in general the religion of those who have none. In France the philosophy of the eighteenth century attacked, without any disguise, both religion and ministers of religion. In America it labours at the same work, but is obliged to veil its operations under a cloak of religion. Its mantle is the Unitarian doctrine.³

Such was the opinion of one reviewer. Although their membership was small as compared to other denominations, the Unitarians were growing and their appeal was strong. The reason for their spread was thought to be the education and eloquence of their ministers and the simplicity of their services; this church had done away with

1. Quarterly Review, XLI (November, 1829), 443; XIX (April, 1818), 72.

2. Grund, 158.

3. Quarterly Review, LIII (February, 1835), 296.

ceremonies and popular beliefs and suited the democratic idea in America.¹ Dr. Channing, the minister of the Boston church was praised by those who heard him. Mrs. Hall, although disagreeing with his doctrine found his sermon very intellectual.²

The more conservative English were pleased to find the Episcopal church the leading religion in several of the Eastern states, especially among the better class of people.³ This denomination prevailed in New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and South Carolina.⁴

The lack of an established church was thought to have broken one of the strongest ties of the American family. To find parents attending different churches and children separating on Sundays was a disgraceful feature of American home life. With such a condition, parents could have no control over children, and often they grew up with no religious training.⁵

Division and dissention were found among the sects and led to an unnecessary number of churches in the United States. One writer commented that

1. Grund, 159.

2. Hall, 85.

3. Quarterly Review, XLI (November, 1829), 445.

4. Bristed, 413; Janson, 101.

5. Marryat, 203.

Unitarians are not in unity as to the portion of divinity they shall admit to our Savior; Baptists as to the precise quantity of water necessary to salvation; even the Quakers have split into controversy.¹

Thus in every town were found numerous church buildings, most of them small and poorly built.² Therefore, the religion of America could not be judged on the basis of the number of church edifices.

The Roman Catholics alone appeared exempt from this charge of subdivision. Their organization and central control held them together.³ Their stronghold was in the Eastern states, especially in the cities of Baltimore, New York and Philadelphia.⁴ In the West, the diligent work of the priests and the high standard of the Catholic schools were increasing their membership.⁵ Many protestant children were attending Catholic schools as their teachers were better qualified than the public school instructors. The great number of Irish and German immigrants to the United States during this period also enlarged the Catholic membership.⁶

1. Marryat, 202.

2. Ibid., 204.

3. Trollope, 90.

4. Janson, 103.

5. Marryat, 220.

6. Ibid., 221.

The Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists and Baptists were listed as the prevailing sects of the United States. The Congregationalists were most numerous in the New England states; the Methodists were scattered over the entire country but were strongest in the interior of the Southern states; the Baptists abounded in the West.¹ The Methodists were the pioneers of religion as their circuit riders and itinerant preachers fitted the needs of the unsettled regions.² The democratic system of control followed by the Presbyterian and the Congregational churches had a great appeal for the people of the Northern states.³ The idea of government by the laity suited these lovers of democracy.

Even though churches were numerous in America, the opinion of some writers was that religious instruction was lacking for the masses of the people. One estimate was that one-third of the entire population was without religious training, the greater proportion of these were in the Southern and Western states.⁴ Also, the practice of buying or renting a pew in the cities made religion very high and prohibitive for the poor.

1. Bristed, 413.

2. Buckingham, 238.

3. Marryat, 205.

4. Bristed, 408.

Many churches could not support a minister. It was also reported that atheistic groups were working in these uncared for regions. In Cincinnati a society had been formed to remedy this evil.¹ Here the federal government was helpless. If it should attempt to build a church or support a minister the state governments would rise up in indignation.² Thus the separation of church and state was demoralizing the people. One observer stated that

an immediate universal vigorous effort must be made to provide religious instructions for the nation . . . to prevent the great body of the nation from sinking down to a state of absolute heathenism.³

The scarcity of ministers in the South and West deprived many people of the services of the church. Baptism and burial services were often dispensed with; marriages performed by the justice of the peace were occasions of great festivity and devoid of any religious significance.

Some observers felt that this lack of religion was not the fault of the people as in remote places churches and ministers could not be supported. Here again, an established church would have solved the problem. Mrs.

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1. Quarterly Review, XXIII (July, 1820), 551.
 2. Trollope, 92.
 3. Quarterly Review, XXIII (July, 1820), 551.

Trollope reported asking one woman why she was ironing on Sunday. The answer was, "I beant a Christian, ma'am, we have got no opportunity."¹ The accounts of the numbers attending revivals, camp meetings and proper services in these back regions attested the religious interests of the people.

The observance of Sunday did not suit the English standard. In the South and West, the people were too lax, while in the New England states the rules were too severe. In the Carolinas, Janson found Sunday spent in "riot and drunkenness, and the negroes indulge uncontrolled in tumultuous sports and licentiousness."² Conditions in Louisiana, where the French influence was still strong were deplored. In 1814-15 the legislature of that state rejected a bill "for the better observance of the Sabbath; for preventing the defacing of churches; for shutting the stores and theatres on Sunday, and for other purposes."³ A different condition was found in the New England states where the sabbath was kept in a rigid manner much to the inconvenience of the traveller, who was compelled to spend his Sundays in a miserable tavern as the stages were not allowed to run on that day.

1. Trollope, 92.

2. Janson, 102.

3. Quarterly Review, XXI (January, 1819), 7.

Janson reported that individuals travelling on horseback were stopped as they passed a meeting house and compelled to hear a sermon relative to their sin.¹

The Puritan influence in the New England states was manifest in other ways besides the observance of Sunday and did not meet the approval of some of the English visitors, The churches, both interior and exterior were void of all beauty. The music, when restrained to psalm singing, would not add any elevating feature to the service. The regulations pertaining to dress, use of tobacco and travel on Sunday were thought to be quite in opposition to the principles of freedom so loudly proclaimed by the Americans.²

The lack of educated ministers will be referred to in the chapter dealing with education. The most friendly of the reviewers deplored this deficiency in America. The itinerant minister was too common in America, as also, was the fanatic type. One traveller saw a minister

stripped at it, taking off his coat, waist coat, and cravat, unbuttoning his shirt collar and wildly throwing about his arms; he made the maddest gesticulations, for the space of two hours, ever seen in a man professing sanity.³

1. Janson, 102.

2. Quarterly Review, II (November, 1809), 334-335.

3. Ibid., XXIX (July, 1823), 353.

This type was quite a contrast to the body of educated ministers in England, and again the lack of an established church was found unfavorable. Except in the cities the income of a minister was too small to attract men of ability. Often the minister had another business such as farming or teaching, thus the services of the church were neglected. In some rural charges the pay was reported to be as low as \$60.00 a year for an unmarried man and about twice that if he were married.¹ In the cities salaries ranged much higher, consequently the clergy there were of a higher caliber.

The clerical profession held small inducement for young men especially in the South and West where land was cheap. In 1819, Blackwood's Magazine estimated that the whole number of religious teachers in the United States was five thousand, only about two thousand of these had any education and at least one-half of this two thousand were in the New England states.² Further proof of the decline of educated ministers was cited from the records of Harvard.

Harvard College first conferred degrees in 1642; for the next succeeding eighty-eight years, one-half of the whole number educated there entered the church; but, during the

1. Mesick, 252.

2. Blackwood's Magazine, IV (March, 1819), 644.

last equal period of time, the proportion has been only one out of five.¹

Another unattractive feature of the clerical profession was the great amount of labor required of the ministers. Sermons, protracted meetings continuing from day to day, and often from week to week, put a great strain on the ministers and often undermined their health and sent them to an early grave.²

The control of the people over the minister often left him at the mercy of his congregation. He was afraid to act according to his own judgment or to voice any opinion, especially of a political nature. The ministers were changed frequently at the pleasure of the congregation. If the ministers were respected and responsible men there was no need for this interference by the laity. Marryat complained of this interference among the Presbyterians and Congregationalists to the extent that the ministers were reduced to backward and timid men, self exiled from the great issues of the time.³ This control did not fit into the picture of a free country and was no different from the control by bishops in England.

However, most visitors accorded the American minister a respected place among the people, especially the

1. Blackwood's Magazine, IV (March, 1819), 645.

2. Marryat, 209.

3. Ibid., 206.

women. Mrs. Trollope's observation was,

I think, also, that it is from the clergy only that the women of America receive that sort of attention which is so dearly valued by every female heart throughout the world. With the priests of America the women hold that degree of influential importance which, in the countries of Europe, is allowed them throughout all orders and ranks of society, except perhaps, the very lowest; and, in return for this they seem to give their hearts and souls into their keeping.¹

Although many of the English visitors of the early nineteenth century objected to the freedom of religion in America, criticized the uneducated clergy and were amused by the camp meetings, few of them denied the existence of a deep religious interest in all parts of the country. Even though the churches and church service did not follow the English pattern, the foreigners seldom failed to observe churches or services in all regions visited.

1. Trollope, 61.

CHAPTER VI

EDUCATION, LITERATURE AND THE ARTS

The American educational system received very little praise and much adverse criticism in the English writings of the early nineteenth century. Education, so essential to the advancement of any nation, was classed on a very low scale. In order to obtain an adequate education the American youth would have to attend the colleges of England where subject matter was more classical and the teachers better prepared.

In the field of elementary education in the United States the writers did not find so much to criticise, especially in the towns of the New England states. This section had taken the lead in establishing schools for the populace; other states had followed.¹ Connecticut had appropriated one and one-half million dollars for schools; Vermont had laid off a certain portion of land in every township for the support of schools.² Very little illiteracy was observed among the children of this region as these elementary schools were open to all and

1. D'Arusmont, 415; Grund, 124; Bristed, 318; Hamilton, I, 216.

2. D'Arusmont, 417.

in most cases the laws of the states compelled attendance. Some of the visitors reported good schools in the South as well as in the North. Buckingham recorded an act passed by the legislature of Georgia to establish a general system of education and to set up a board, composed of the governor, senate and fifteen trustees, to supervise education. In 1817, \$200,000 had been appropriated for the establishment of free schools.¹ The neighboring state of Alabama had set aside land to create a school fund.² Although the educational system in Louisiana could not compare to other states, a superintendent of education had been appointed and funds were set aside for free schools.³ The plan of setting aside one section of land in each township for schools, followed in the West, would assure elementary education for the new settlements.⁴

However, in thinly populated regions where the distances between homes were great, even the simplest of education was lacking. Since the inhabitants of towns formed only a small part of the population, and taking into consideration about ten million Negroes, wholly

1. Buckingham, 114.

2. Ibid., 279.

3. Ibid., 360-361.

4. Edinburgh Review, XL (July, 1824), 432.

without instruction, the English could not grant the Americans first place in elementary education and even rated them below any in Europe except Russia and Turkey.¹

Reading, writing, and arithmetic were the principal subjects taught in these elementary schools. Hamilton concluded that

reading and writing, even among the poorest class, are universally diffused; arithmetic, I presume, comes by instinct among this guessing, reckoning, expecting and calculating people.²

The lack of a study of grammar and the classics was judged to be a great defect.³

The average teacher in these elementary schools was of a very poor type.⁴ Foreign adventurers or boys studying law or divinity were the usual teachers found in these schools.⁵ As soon as other offers appeared these men left the profession; thus there was a constant change and the pupils were subjected to new and untrained instructors. The New Englanders were the best teachers; their habits of religion and their morals qualified them.⁶

1. Quarterly Review, XLI (November, 1829), 425.

2. Hamilton, I, 217.

3. Bristed, 323.

4. Ibid., 322; Hamilton, I, 218.

5. Ibid., 322.

6. Grund, 125.

Mrs. Hall termed the New England states "nurseries of learning for the whole Union."¹

The great weight of English criticism fell upon the institutions of higher learning in the United States. When compared to the older and more firmly established English universities, the American ones were judged as far inferior. The schools of the South and West were classed as the lowest. Harvard, Yale and Princeton stood higher than the others.² Harvard was the best endowed and offered the widest range of subjects, this was accredited to the thrift of the New Englanders. The University of Pennsylvania was the best outside of New England. The medical school here was highly praised.³ The student was offered a very limited range of subjects at this university; all were forced to take mathematics and chemistry regardless of their plans for their life's work.⁴

The words, university and college, were given an entirely different meaning in the United States than in Europe. Almost every city had a college but the education a youth obtained in these was rated as little beyond

1. Hall, 83.

2. Bristed, 328; Quarterly Review, XLI (November, 1829), 423.

3. Hamilton, I, 348; Blackwood's Magazine, IV (February, 1819), 550.

4. Hamilton, I, 350.



the simplest elementary knowledge. The great number of colleges reduced enrollment in all and thus made many of them financially deficient.¹ Talented teachers could not be secured, nor libraries equipped and thus an inferior group of students was attracted.

The length of time a youth spent in school was far too short to obtain even the beginning of an adequate education. Degrees of Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts were bestowed upon boys from twelve to fifteen years of age.² How could a youth master science, philosophy, logic, rhetoric, the Classics and other subjects in so brief a period, was the question raised by the English.

The aim of education in America was not classical enough to suit the English taste. The critics deplored the stress of the economical and practical side of education, especially the preparation for the counter and the counting room.³ All knowledge that could not be turned into immediate value was neglected. The classics were studied with the view of passing college entrance examinations; therefore, the student learned just enough for this purpose and did not discover the good derived

1. Bristed, 328.

2. Quarterly Review, XLI (November, 1829), 424.

3. Blackwood's Magazine, IV (February, 1819), 549; Hamilton, I, 354.

from the study.¹ The effects of this attitude was injurious to the habits and tastes of the youth.

The English blamed the pride and vanity of the Americans upon the educational system. Too much ardent love for their own institutions was instilled in the youth. Democracy, equality, the vastness of his country, the superiority of Americans in battles, were all impressed upon the mind of the youth.²

The method of instruction was another point of criticism. Poorly trained professors could not instruct the youth. The boys were left too much to themselves, living apart from the masters except when in the school room, which was about seven hours a day.³ The class hours were used for examination of exercises, the question and answer type.⁴ This fostered indolence and did not exercise the mind.

Student life was pictured by some travellers as one of debauchery and idleness. Eating, drinking and smoking occupied the leisure time of the youth. The habit of smoking was cited as much worse than among the students

1. Blackwood's Magazine, XLI (November, 1829), 548.

2. Marryat, 258.

3. Blackwood's Magazine, XLI (November, 1829), 549.

4. Grund, 131.

in Europe.¹ One traveller reported the following condition at the University in Charleston, South Carolina:

There are here 125 students, who are very disorderly, frequently disturbing congregations on the Sunday, because the doctor is too idle to preach, and thereby keep them together. Saw several of these learned young gentlemen stretched on a table, with their learned legs carelessly hanging out of their chamber windows, which seemed nearly all broken. Want of discipline is here too palpable, there is no lack of whiskey.²

The cause of this disorderly condition, the English writers attributed to the republican form of government and the spirit of independence in America. The system of education was exactly what could be expected. Parents had no command over children nor teachers over pupils. If a teacher struck or punished a boy he was apt to lose one or more pupils. There was no disgrace attached to being expelled from school.³ One master was dismissed for having struck a boy.⁴ Corporal punishment was not allowed, in fact, the case was reversed. Captain Marryat reported a sign in New Jersey school which read: "No kissing girls in school; no licking the master during holidays."⁵

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1. Blackwood's Magazine, XLI (November, 1829), 549.
 2. Quarterly Review, XXIX (July, 1823), 343.
 3. Ibid., XXI (January, 1819), 9.
 4. D'Arusmont, 420.
 5. Marryat, 255.

The professor's chairs at many of the universities were filled by members of the clergy. This group of men were generally not any more learned than the laymen and did not elevate the educational system. Usually they knew a little Latin and Greek and snatches of other subjects, as they could pick up between their round of duties, dinners and visiting.¹

The medical schools of America received praise from the English. They were rated as the best institutions of the country, even equal to those in Europe.² The best of these were found in Philadelphia, New York, Boston and New Haven. This did not mean that the entire medical profession in America was of a superior type. Few doctors availed themselves of the advantages of these better schools. A license to practice medicine was easy to obtain, as no examination was required; the usual training was received under the direction of some country physician.³

The education of the lawyers was described as wretched. The common method of studying law was with a practicing barrister, in whose office the student became in reality a clerk and did not have much time for study.⁴

1. Bristed, 329.

2. Blackwood's Magazine, IV (February, 1819), 550.

3. Ibid., 551.

4. Ibid.

The lack of books in the average lawyer's office further limited the opportunities of a student. The connection between the bar and the legislatures produced a deficiency in the American government. Most of the national and state legislators were from the legal class. The people did not demand highly educated men for public office.¹ One writer reported that

three thousand five hundred legislators are constantly required for the general and state governments; and in the whole country there is not a course of lectures, either their own constitution, the law of nations, political economy, statistics, or history and very little public instruction of any kind in these important departments of science and learning.²

Reference has already been made to the inferior education of the clergy. There were not enough schools for this professional group. Good schools had been established at Princeton, New Jersey, at Andover and Cambridge, Massachusetts, but few clergymen attended these.³ The majority of ministers studied under another of the profession. In this case the facilities for study were worse than those of the law students as most ministers were too poor to afford an adequate library. The principle of religious freedom in America had encouraged

1. Hamilton, I, 365.

2. Blackwood's Magazine, IV (March, 1829), 642.

3. Ibid.

thousands to preach by direct inspiration.¹ The profession was losing its attraction for young men, especially among the youth of the South. It was the least lucrative and one of the most laborious professions. Itinerant preachers were outnumbering the educated ones. Harvard College first conferred degrees in 1642; for the next successive eighty-eight years, one-half of the whole number educated there entered the church; but during the last period of equal time the proportion had been only one out of five.²

According to the majority of travellers, the education of women in America was neglected. Their period of education was even shorter than that of the boys. The same criticism was voiced, that too much was attempted in too short a time.³ Mrs. Trollope attended the graduation exercises of a girls' school in Cincinnati and noticed degrees in mathematics and science conferred. From the appearance and actions of the girls, she doubted their knowledge in these subjects.⁴ Again, the New England states led the others in this field of education. The best schools for women and the best educated women were

1. Blackwood's Magazine, IV (March, 1829), 651-652.

2. Ibid., 645.

3. Marryat, 261.

4. Trollope, 68.

found in this section.¹ During his travels in the Southern states, Bristed noticed several schools for girls. At Macon, Georgia, he visited the Female College, found one hundred and fifty young ladies ranging from ten to eighteen years of age, studying under competent teachers.² Other schools that he praised were in Columbus and Augusta.³

The result of the poor educational system in America was a low rank in literature and the arts. The English opinion of culture in America in the early nineteenth century was not very high.

Other features outside of a poor educational system blocked the progress of literary and artistic accomplishments. The more equal distribution of wealth left no class that could devote its time to literature. The hardships of the first settlers, and the unsettled state of government had occupied the time and thought of the people.⁴ The youth of the country was another obstacle. America had no accumulation of learning, no great libraries, no competition of talent to spur men on, and no liberally endowed schools.⁵

1. D'Arusmont, 421.

2. Bristed, 195.

3. Ibid., 114; 107.

4. Bristed, 305-306.

5. Ibid., 309.

The ease of making a living in other fields, and the attraction of fertile land in the South and West, drew the best talent away from literary pursuits.¹ The young people entered into the business life too early to have any wisdom or classical education. The desire for gain was the dominant feature of American life. Until there was adequate reward for literary works, Americans would not devote time to their production.

The Americans were reported to be great readers but their choice of reading material was very poor. The newspaper was particularly adapted to the hurried American reader. The talent of the country went into this field of writing.² Mrs. Trollope observed that newspapers were read by

all ranks of society from the successful merchant, which is the highest, to the domestic serving man, which is the lowest, they are all too actively employed to read, except at such broken moments as may suffice for a peep at a newspaper.³

The lack of scholarships and fellowships in colleges, and the poor salary of the professors, allowed no leisure time for the cultivation of literature and science.⁴

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1. Quarterly Review, XLI (November, 1829), 424; Bristed, 310.
 2. Bristed, 316.
 3. Trollope, 76.
 4. Quarterly Review, XLI (November, 1829), 425.

Until the universities were more richly endowed, or more encouragement was given by the government, this fault would exist.

One writer placed part of the blame for America's lack of literature upon England. During the colonial period, the English had monopolized printing and publishing, and not allowed it in the colonies. Neither had the English government given any encouragement to colleges. The only aid given was to William and Mary College; Harvard, Yale and Princeton had been established by the people themselves.¹

An optimistic viewpoint for the future of American literature was expressed by some observers. As population increased and there was more competition, men would become better educated. Bristed judged that there was more literary ability among the Americans than the average person could see; the fashion for foreign publications crowded out the native production.² A subdivision of labor, and an accumulation of wealth were needed before men could devote their entire life to literature; this would come as America grew. "We have no doubt that her authors would improve and multiply, to a degree that would make all our exertions necessary to keep the start

1. Grund, 95-96.

2. Bristed, 312-313.

we have of them,"¹ was the judgment of one writer. Another wrote, "but we do believe that she will disapprove the charge of intellectual inferiority, whenever proper cultivation of the mind shall cause it fully to develop its faculties."² Another encouraging feature was the interest Americans took in the English writing. Almost all English books were published in America.³

Some attention was given to a few American writers. Benjamin Franklin was judged by one writer as the most celebrated American; his Autobiography should have been read by every youth.⁴ Another reviewer accused him of stealing a great deal of his material from other writers; also his foundation of knowledge had been obtained in London.⁵

Most of the travellers and writers were acquainted with the writings of Washington Irving but their opinions differed. Bristed wrote that

Salmagundi and the Knickerbocker History need not shrink from competition with any European performance, in the felicitous combination of good humoured wit, delicate irony, dexterous delineation of character, skilful exposition of the fashionable follies prevalent in the United States, with the occasional relief

1. Edinburgh Review, XVI (January, 1810), 446.
2. Blackwood's Magazine, IV (March, 1829), 649.
3. Bristed, 313.
4. Edinburgh Review, I (January, 1820), 130.
5. Quarterly Review, X (January, 1814), 524.

of exquisitely finished composition, full of tenderness, melancholy, pathos and eloquence.¹

Another writer thought that Irving had been too highly praised and accused him, like Franklin, of working over old subjects.²

Except for The Pilot, the works of James Fenimore Cooper received little attention in the English periodicals. The Edinburgh Review charged him with including long and tiresome accounts such as the details of dress or descriptions of nature, thus leaving the story and tiring the reader.³

The general opinion of the English was that, so far Americans had not produced a book of any worthy notice. The Edinburgh Review which in most cases was quite friendly, concluded that the destruction of the whole literature would not be much more of a "loss than a few leaves from an ancient classic."⁴ Marshall's Life of Washington was the greatest national work produced so far.⁵ Bristed remarked that the country was too new to furnish material for fiction.

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1. Bristed, 359.
 2. Blackwood's Magazine, XVI (September, 1824), 311.
 3. Edinburgh Review, L (October, 1829), 128-129.
 4. Ibid., XV (January, 1810), 435.
 5. Bristed, 357; Edinburgh Review, XV (January, 1810), 446.

There is, to be sure, some traditional romance about the Indians; but a novel describing these miserable barbarians, their squaws and their pooposes, would not be interesting to the present race of American writers.¹

Very little mention was made of American poetry. "Beauties of nature alone cannot inspire poetry"² was Bristed's conclusion. Some of William Cullen Bryant's poetry had found its way to England, but was said to be lacking in the qualities of good poetry.³ The Edinburgh Review, after reviewing a volume of American poetry characterized it as a "work of promise rather than of performance,"⁴ and concluded that no person of poetical mind had devoted himself to literature in America.⁵

The Americans wasted their literary talent on newspapers. Their important place in American reading has already been mentioned. Hamilton judged that nine-tenths of the population read little else; publications were found in nearly every village and in most cases the editors were uneducated.⁶ Thus an already ignorant people were further kept in ignorance. What America needed was

1. Bristed, 356.

2. Ibid.

3. Blackwood's Magazine, XVI (September, 1824), 311.

4. Edinburgh Review, LXI (April, 1835), 40.

5. Ibid., 28.

6. Hamilton, 73.

a first class review. Several had been started but had not lasted long. Bristed blamed this upon the American crave for novelty and constant change.¹ The North American Review was considered the best publication in the States.² Two literary publications in the South, The Southern Review and the Southern Literary Journal had shown great ability but had lived only a short time.³

The English visitors mentioned visits to American art galleries but had little praise for the works found there. Some American painters were mentioned; among these were Copley, West, Trumbull, Peale and Alston. Copley was judged a capital portrait painter; West was criticized as too exaggerated; Trumbull's paintings in the capitol at Washington were thought to be of poor subjects; Peale painted beautifully but coldly; Alston's ability was entirely due to his English training.⁴ Mrs. Trollope gave the Americans credit for a considerable degree of natural talent but thought them handicapped by lack of adequate training.⁵

1. Bristed, 316.

2. Ibid., 357.

3. Buckingham, 55.

4. Blackwood's Magazine, XVII (August, 1824), 131-133.

5. Trollope, 306.

The English opinion of architecture in America was very low. The miserable condition of the public buildings in Washington was evidence of a lack of interest. The money voted by Congress for the capitol was just enough to put up one wing and it was thought it would remain that way for years to come.¹ Hamilton thought the capitol building imposing but pointed out many faults.² The cathedral in Baltimore was generally praised as an outstanding building in the States.³ Two visitors in the South praised the homes in the cities of Savannah and Charleston.⁴

Although the entire picture of education and culture in early nineteenth century America was rather dark to the British, there was a general feeling that as soon as the nation had reached its full growth this would change and America would take an important place in the cultural world.

1. Quarterly Review, X (January, 1814), 525-526.
2. Hamilton, 24.
3. Hall, 160; Trollope, 171.
4. Buckingham, 161; Hall, 278.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The English attitude toward America from 1800 to 1850 was wavering in some respects and constant in others. From the mass of travel literature it is hard to draw any set conclusions.

Along some lines there was a certain amount of unity, but in general these were of small importance to America as a nation. It was a general verdict that Americans were always in a hurry, chewing tobacco, bragging and consumed with a passion for money making. The inconvenience of travel and the conditions of inns was rather generally deplored. On the other side, however, most of the travellers noted a warm spirit of hospitality among the Americans.

On matters of more importance the greatest amount of unity was shown in the criticism of slavery. All writers and reviewers felt that this was the greatest evil in America. On the question of religion, there was some difference of opinion. The average British traveller seemed to note the unusual religious sects in America, giving much space to these and little to the regular

denominations. Thus, the English probably drew an unfair picture of religion. The field of government and law did not receive as much space in the English books as other subjects. This was perhaps due to the interests of the visitors. Many of them had eyes only for economic advantages or for religious opportunities and were thus biased. The most frequent references to government were along the line of discouraging English interests in democracy.

That the average British traveller painted an unfair and incomplete picture of the United States may be concluded from noting the usual route of travel followed. Most of them stayed close to the Atlantic seaboard and in the larger cities. In most accounts New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington and Charleston are described. Very few ventured into the West, even as far as the Mississippi River.

The criticism against American manners seems hardly fair when few of the foreigners had so little insight into the American homes, except in the South. The English opinion of the American was based on the people in the inns, boats and stage coaches.

The traveller's view of a strange country is always affected by his own interests. If his own country is more advanced he is apt to look with scorn upon the other place. Too, it is not out of the ordinary that these

visitors were more attracted by the unusual and ridiculous in this country. The ordinary draws little attention anywhere.

The Americans were far from insensitive to the attacks made by the British and readily rose to their own defense. This defense took the forms of direct answers in the American periodicals, the leader in this field being the North American Review; controversial books, especially of fictitious travels in England; and counter-analyses of conditions in England.¹ The leading books of this latter group were A Sketch of Old England by a New England Man and John Bull in America, by James K. Paulding; and, Nations of America, Picked Up by a Travelling Bachelor by James Fenimore Cooper.²

However, on both sides efforts were made to create a better feeling between the two countries. The appeal for more authoritative material on America made by the Edinburgh Review and Blackwood's Magazine has already been mentioned. Some of the English travellers admitted the mistakes of their countrymen. Francis Grund in the preface of his book The Americans in Their Moral, Social and Political Relations, declared that the

Americans have been grossly misrepresented; and, this not so much by ascribing to them spurious

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1. Robert Spiller, The American in England, 301.
 2. Mesick, 283.

qualities, as by omitting all mention of those which entitle them to honor and respect, and representing foibles of certain classes as weaknesses belonging to the nation.¹

After studying the English travel literature of the early nineteenth century, Grund's statement would be cited more as an exception than the general rule. A fair summary of the period may be concluded from the following statement made by Henry Tuckerman:

There was, indeed, from the close of the War of 1812, for a series of years, an inundation of English books of travel, wherein the United States, their people, and their prospects, were discussed with a monotonous recapitulation of objections, a superficial knowledge, and a predetermined depreciation, which render the task of analyzing their contents and estimating their comparative merit in the highest degree wearisome. Redeemed, in some instances, by piquant anecdote, interesting adventure, or some grace of style or originality of view, they are, for the most part, shallow, egotistical,² and more or less repetitions of each other.

1. Grund, 10.

2. Mesick, 287.

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and hereby certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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