

A YANKEE JOURNALIST'S VISIT TO
THE SLAVE STATES, 1833

by JAMES BROOKS

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THE ROAD TO CHARLESTON

Richmond, (Va.)
March 11th, 1833

You see I have slipped away from the capital of the Union to the capital of the Old Dominion, from the calm, unruffled waters of the Potomac to the noisy stream of James River, or *Jeems's* River, as the good people, this side of our Tweed,¹ see fit to pronounce the word *James*. In "*Ould Virginia*" one feels as if he were on holy ground. He treads the soil and breathes the air of the Washingtons, the Henrys, the Jeffersons, the Madisons of our republic. He feels as if he were in old Greece, but, alas, in a land of lost gods, for I see, among the future statesmen of Virginia, none with heart and soul enough to equal the glory of her ancestors.

Having provided myself with letters of introduction to all parts of our common country, which Members of Congress and friends have given me in Washington, that center from which flow, and to which converge, men and women from all points of the compass, I bade *adieu* on Saturday (March 9) to "the city of magnificent distances," where I had passed many pleasant, and, with all my wanderings, many laborious hours, in diligent correspondence. I bade *adieu*, with heavy heart, to many friends who had made me happy; and yet, the regret was tempered with the consolation that I was starting for home—by a route somewhat devious and long, I grant.²

The steamboat bound to Norfolk, having been injured in the ice, and hauled up for repair, I took the steamer "*Sydney*" for Fredericksburg, which left at 10 A.M. Among our passengers were three members of Congress from North Carolina, a prominent Nullifier from South Carolina, and, next, the **greatest** man in Congress, Mr. Lewis³ of Alabama, who

¹ Tweed — River forms the eastern boundary between Scotland and England. The analogy is to the Potomac, which separates the Northern States from Virginia.

² Brooks was on his way to New Orleans, but his home city was Portland, Maine.

³ Dixon Hall Lewis (1802-1848) — U.S. Representative, later Senator, for Alabama

weighs three hundred and sixty pounds, and for whom a chair has been especially provided in the House of Representatives, the common large chairs not being large enough. Another passenger was Governor Moore⁴ of Alabama, with three female slaves whom he had just purchased in Washington for seven hundred dollars, and whom he was carrying with him to Alabama. The eldest of these slaves was thirteen, the second eleven, the youngest nine. They were clad neatly, in calico gowns, with bandanna handkerchiefs around their necks, and seemed very much like the well-dressed little girls in the interior of New England, in all but their color. Prompted by curiosity, I inquired of one of the girls all about her affairs. She said that her father and mother lived in Washington, that her father was free, and her mother a slave, and that she never expected to see them again. "*Governor Moore was a good master,*" she added, "*but I cried much when I left home.*"

It requires all my philosophy to be reconciled to this forcible severance, for money's sake, of these tender associations that make us human, and which do honor to our natures. My heart bleeds at the misery with which slavery curses both bond and free. It is an awful question, and one which should be approached in no spirit of fanaticism, proselytism, or chivalrous recklessness. This is not the time, nor am I in the place, to draw inferences. I intend only to speak facts, and give the impressions which Southern society, as mingled with slavery, make upon me. Did I not see from my window proud exhibitions of architectural grandeur, the beautiful Capitol of the State crowning a neighboring hill, and here and there a church that would have graced a street in Rome, I might fancy that I had fallen upon Africa, for the children of Africa are far more numerous than any others I have yet met with. They beset one on every side. A cloud of darkness hovers round about.

But to return. We sailed by the Arsenal, the Penitentiary, and the Navy Yard in Washington, crossed the Potomac, and tarried, in order to take in more passengers, a short time at Alexandria, which is a city of brick buildings, and looks rather as if it **had been** a place for business, than if it **was**. With a company of forty or fifty we put off again, and, after passing a brig loading with staves for New Orleans, soon lost sight of the heights of Georgetown, and of the Capitol in Washington, which gleams up in the

⁴ Samuel B. Moore (1789-1846) — Former Governor of Alabama (in office 1831)

distance, like a white cloud in the horizon. I strained my eyes to catch the last farewell glimpse of this building, in whose walls interests of such immense importance are acted upon, but soon lost sight of it, and I then looked upon the surrounding country. The Potomac is here broad, and glides quickly over its bed. Its waters were here muddy and turbid. The hills of Virginia and Maryland were clad with snow, but a warm sun was melting it rapidly away. The oaks from the low banks of the river nodded gently with the wind. Here and there, the mansion of some planter greeted us in the distance. Flocks of canvasback ducks were flying up the river in vast numbers. Seagulls now and then approached near our boat.

Soon Mount Vernon, where is buried the good Washington,⁵ and by which no American heart passes without a warmer devotion to the man, hove in sight. Even the British, when they sailed up the Potomac, paid his remains the tribute of a salute. We saw nothing on the little hill projecting into the Potomac, but the white mansion crowning its summit, and a few scattering trees. All was as quiet as death. I fancied that my eye rested on the brick tomb of the Father of his Country, as I strained them to the utmost to mark the spot, and [ran] them over the slope on which it lies, but it must have been but fancy, as hedges and trees quite conceal it from the passenger on the river. Fort Washington also, with its frowning fortress, peered upon our view. Formidable as it seemed, I believe it was this fort that the British passed in their course up and down the Potomac. We backed water here awhile, just to exchange a mail, which a sentinel on the wharf received, and then sailed on in our floating castle. We passed by many vessels loaded with an abundance of wood, and a country with forests, apparently enough to warm a hundred generations.

The captain of our boat gave us an excellent dinner, and as soon as this was fairly disposed of, we were sailing up Potomac Creek. At the head of this creek we were landed, and there we took passage in some ready coaches for Fredericksburg, which was five miles off. The wheels of our coaches often were buried in the mud up to the hub. Occasionally we stuck fast, and then we trudged along on foot, through the mud and through the fields, over hill and ravine. My first experience of a Virginia road was a sad one indeed. However, by sunset, we crossed the

⁵ George Washington (1732-1799) — The first President of the United States. At the date of Brooks' travels, there was debate about whether his remains should be transferred from the family crypt to one in the U.S. Capitol.

Rappahannock on a bridge, not remarkably inviting, and were landed in the principal street of Fredericksburg. I had but a moment to run over this place, and this I improved⁶. Fredericksburg, I am informed, has about thirty-five hundred inhabitants. The principal street is neat, and the houses are well built. It has much more of the air of prosperity than many of the towns in Virginia. I saw some navigation at the wharves. It is well known as containing the grave of the mother of Washington, over which Mr. Burroughs⁷ of New York City is erecting a monument.⁸

By dark, we packed up in a coach again, and started on our way to Richmond. The roads were better than we had just suffered over, but these were none of the best. I had for a coach companion the celebrated Chapman Johnson,⁹ one of Virginia's best sons, a man who has, of late years, scorned to mingle in Virginia politics, but who has left them to her political gamblers and her beardless boys. Our companions talked a little of "The Oaks," and "The Ashes," "The White Chimneys," and "Bowling Green," places by which we were passing, and which told me I was in a strange land.

A Southern Member of Congress told an anecdote of John Randolph,¹⁰ who, when a Yankee peddler rode up to his door and proposed to swap away his spavined horse for one of John's of the royal blood, which he values at a thousand dollars each, bawled out indignantly to Juba,¹¹ "*Let loose my hounds—unleash my hounds,*" of which he had a hundred, when the poor peddler took to his heels in terrible affright. Conversation however, lags after dark when one is fatigued and sleepy; and, therefore, we were soon nodding our heads, and being sadly tossed in uncouth dreams. I did open my eyes as the driver twanged his horn on approaching Bowling Green, and found that the full moon was far up, and

⁶ Improve — (Definition) Use to good purpose

⁷ Burroughs — *sic*, Burrows

⁸ Monument to Mary Ball Washington — The philanthropist Silas Burrows began its construction at Kenmore Plantation. In 1833, President Andrew Jackson laid the cornerstone, but the work was never completed. A second monument was dedicated in 1894, in the presence of President Grover Cleveland.

⁹ Chapman Johnson (1779-1849) — Virginia state senator; delegate to the 1829-1830 Virginia Constitutional Convention

¹⁰ John Randolph of Roanoke (1773-1833) — Virginian planter and congressman; renowned for taking his dog onto the floor of Congress

¹¹ Juba Taylor — Randolph's slave and servant

the sky was gleaming with myriads of stars. But I knew little else till we were crossing "Hanover Slashes," which in Yankee English would be "the low grounds of Hanover," where I was told that Henry Clay¹² was born. The horn of the driver was soon rung again with his blasts, and as the sun was just rising, we approached Hanover Court House.

We landed at a miserable tavern, and while what turned out to be a miserable breakfast was preparing, I ran back of the tavern to Hanover Court House, some hundred yards off, to see the very same building where the famous Patrick Henry¹³ made his speech against the parson, of which Wirt in his life of Henry¹⁴ gives so amusing an account. This Court House is a good-looking brick building, which indicates far better days than Virginia is now enjoying. The inside was being re-fitted and new-modeled. A jail was here, in which no prisoner need stay long, if he had a common portion of wit. Our tavern was a wooden, unpainted, and roughly clapboarded building. It had, in front, the common portico of all Virginian taverns, intended to keep off the sun. A broken railing was around a walk under this portico, elevated two or three feet, the steps to which were dilapidated. Lots of negroes were gaping at us, and a few wretched negro hotels were around. I am thus particular, because this is near the place which gave birth to the two greatest orators, orators alone I mean here, and not thinkers, of the United States. I gazed with intense interest on the old Court House, where Patrick Henry cried out, "*beef! beef! beef!*"—and, "The Slashes of Hanover" will not soon be forgotten, the birthplace of Henry Clay.

Breakfast disposed of, I mounted the box with the driver so as to have a fair view of "*Ould Virginia*."—We were now about eighteen miles from Richmond, and were moving along between four and five miles an hour, over a road not to be grumbled at, when compared with what we had seen. There were large clearings often to be seen, and then a large extent of woods. Not a farmhouse was visible upon the road, except the houses that were taverns. A little off from the road, as is the fashion here, in some clearing, was to be seen, with huts around for the negroes, either a brick building or a wooden building, with a chimney always projecting on the

¹² Henry Clay (1777-1852) — born in Virginia; U.S. senator for Kentucky

¹³ Patrick Henry (1736-1799) — born Virginia; promoter of American independence

¹⁴ "Sketches of the Life and Character of Patrick Henry", by William Wirt, pub. Philadelphia 1817

outside, which was the plantation house. The access from the main road to this was usually by some path through a gateway. I could not help contrasting all this with the numerous neat farmhouses which meet one in a New England road. There, one hundred or one hundred and fifty acres, or three hundred to the most, make a farm, and here, three or four or even ten thousand acres. There, each man does his own work, and here are lots of lazy negroes. There, is real democracy, and here is the head of the manor with his **villeins** under him, exhibiting a very fair picture of the feudal institutions of the Middle Ages. Now and then, though it was on Sunday, we drove by covered wagons going to market. These wagons were usually drawn by four or six mules, and on a mule nearest the wagon, sat the black driver, singing "*Jim Crow*," or "*Sound the Banjo*," or humming a variety of notes, as if he were the happiest being on earth—or else he rode on his saddle, stuffing his cheeks with good flour bread. These negroes were always unusually civil. If they catch a white man's eye, they raise their hats, and bow most profoundly. They were generally clad in a species of cheap negro cloth, of cotton and wool, with felt hats, and thick leather shoes.

Emerging from the woods some four or five miles from Richmond, we came upon an excellent turnpike. Fine carriages, with livery and gilded trappings, often indicated to us that we were in the vicinity of the city. We met many such moving onward. Often, also, a fine Virginia horse, with a horseman whose legs were wrapped up above the knees in a species of baize, called leggings, to preserve the pantaloons, rode by us. Anon we were in the capital of Virginia, as the church bells were ringing, and as the good people were filling the principal street. Enough for one letter—and here I will take a breath.

Richmond, (Va.)
c. March 11th, 1833

I have such a variety of matter to communicate, and of things which have so little connection, that I must drop the epistolary form, and take a freer one. Being detained here for want of a steamboat, I have had time to see much in this city, not only the capital of Virginia, but in some degree the capital of the whole South.

On Sunday, I went to the Episcopal church, in which Bishop Moore¹⁵ preaches. This church is built over the very spot where the theatre was built, in which the dreadful conflagration occurred some years ago, where so many persons lost their lives.¹⁶ In the front of the church is a monument commemorating the event, on which are engraved the names of the principal sufferers. The church was opened for the afternoon service at half past 3 P.M. I counted from fifty to sixty persons on the floor of the house, and there were some few in the galleries. The chief part of the auditory were women. I do not know whether this is, or is not, the usual congregation, Sabbath afternoons. Perhaps there may have been fewer than usual, as the air was raw and gusty just before the service began. Bishop Moore is an old man, and performed the duties of his office with great spirit and animation. His sermon was very short, very comprehensive, and very well delivered. The citizens of Richmond owe such a man a larger congregation.

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Monday morning, I started up to the Capitol. The Legislature had adjourned on Saturday last. The Capitol is oblong—from a model which Mr. Jefferson sent home when Minister to France,¹⁷ and, with many defects, is a beautiful building. It is of brick covered over with plaster, and painted in imitation of stone. It combines utility and beauty in a great degree. The builders inverted the model which Mr. Jefferson sent home, and changed the attic to the basement story, much to the detriment of the building, in my opinion. In the center of the entrance wall, under the dome, is a statue of Washington with a long inscription, which, if everybody reads, nobody remembers, and, therefore, there is no use in it. On one side is the hall of the House of Assembly, and on the other, the room for the Court of Appeals. Over the House of Assembly is the hall of the Senate, and opposite is the Library. I went into the Library, by the politeness of the librarian, and found there about six thousand seven hundred volumes, all neatly arranged in an elegant room. There were the "Laws and Constitutions" of each State, statistics (such as are necessary

¹⁵ Richard Channing Moore (1762-1841) — Consecrated Bishop of the Diocese of Virginia in 1814

¹⁶ Richmond Theater Fire — Occurred in 1811, causing 72 deaths

¹⁷ Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) — Born in Virginia; third President of the United States; U.S. Minister to France from 1785 to 1789

for a legislator,) history in general, and, in short, all those books, so far as I could judge from a rapid survey, which make up the practical library. Over the mantelpiece was a full-length portrait of Jefferson from a copy of Sully¹⁸ by Catlin.¹⁹

Around the Capitol is a large area enclosed in a massive iron railing, on which are scattered a few trees for shade and ornament. In one corner of this area is the Governor's house, with the kitchen, all provided and furnished by the State. This house is of brick, and makes a good appearance. The Governor has, in addition, a salary of one thousand pounds²⁰.

Opposite the Capitol is the City Hall, which is a very neat but not a large building, with a dome over the center. In the Hall, the Hustings Court is held. On one side of the bench is a full-length portrait of Lafayette,²¹ and on the other a full-length portrait of Washington.

o - o - o

I went into two tobacco manufactories this morning, and, if I were a chewer of tobacco, should be quite well satisfied to leave off the habit. One half hour's inspection of the movements would reform every neat man in New England, and then we should cease to pay tribute to Old Virginia for this article of hers. In the first manufactory where I went, there were at work about seventy negroes, men and boys. The men were hired by their masters for about one hundred dollars a year, boarding and clothing in addition, which costs less than a hundred more—and the boys for about twenty-five dollars. In the second manufactory, there were about one hundred at work, hired on the same terms, all slaves, some mulattos and some jet black.

The process of manufacturing is very simple. The leaves of tobacco are packed by the planter in a large hogshead or cask, and are then sent to

¹⁸ Thomas Sully (1783-1872) — English-born portrait painter

¹⁹ George Catlin (1796-1872) — American painter

²⁰ Pound — Historically, Virginia used a currency system based upon the British units of pounds, shillings and pence,

²¹ Marquis de Lafayette — Gilbert du Motier (1757-1834); French military officer, prominent in the U.S. Revolutionary War

market. There it sells, according to quality, from three to ten dollars a hundred.²² When the leaves are brought into the manufactory, some of the oldest negroes pick out and assort them according to quality. The leaf is some like that of a cabbage. The stem is torn out, and then it is rolled into the form desired through the dirty hands of dirty men and boys. The Fig Twist tobacco is rolled up in the form of a rod, and then turned and interlocked. This is the second or third quality. The Cavendish, which is the best, is rolled up in large bundles. There is then another kind, the cheapest, which is the sweepings of the floor. This is made from the odds and ends of all that is left, and, after being trampled underfoot for twelve hours and spit upon, is swept off by a coarse broom into a dirty room, and there collected and rolled into the form of tobacco. The tobacco is then "sweated" and pressed into the casks which are round or square, with great force. It is "sweated" in a hot room in order to keep it from molding.

O - O - O

A woman—for sale! I have heard much of selling negroes at auction, but I never before this day witnessed the spectacle. Within ten feet of the office of the Richmond Enquirer, that oracle of liberty for the whole Southern country, there was an auction flag with the following amusing advertisement: "*By virtue of an order of the Hustings Court for the city of Richmond, pronounced on the 22nd day of Feb. (Washington's birthday, mark ye) will be sold, in front of the High Constable's office, on Monday, the 11th instant, one bright mulatto woman, about 26 years of age; (very likely,) also, some empty barrels, and sundry old candle boxes, &c, to satisfy the above attachment, and all costs attending the same.*" This was dated March 1st, and regularly signed. As I was going by the crowd and this auction flag, I was struck with the question of the auctioneer who seemed to have his eye on me. "*Do you want to buy a woman?*" Buy a woman! what an idea! I shook my head, and shrunk back, blushing once in my life, at least, for an odd train of thought ran through my mind, as I thought of a woman in her high palmy state—and it was long before I understood that a slave was to be sold.

I then read the advertisement, and remembered that I was in a land where slaves and horses were commodities, equally marketable. "*Do you*

²² Hundred —(perhaps) a hundred pounds weight

want to buy a woman?" was an interrogation passed upon every passer-by. The auctioneer was loudly exclaiming, *"Two hundred dollars, only two hundred dollars for this likely woman. Two hundred and ten, shall I say? Two hundred and ten, 210, 210—who bids? 215, 215—a likely woman—215, only 215—a good seamstress, stout, healthy—only 215—220; is a good cook—230, only 230 dollars bid—235—240—245—250, 250, 250, 250—going, a woman a-going for only 250 dollars—260, only 260, 260, shall I knock her off for only 260 dollars? 260 dollars is the only bid. 270, did you say? yes, 270, 270, 270, as fine a woman as was ever under the hammer; 275—280—290—300 dollars I am bid. 300 dollars for a woman worth 500 dollars. 310, going, a woman going for 310 dollars—fine, likely, stout—315, 320 dollars, a-going, a-going—speak quick, a-going, a-going, a-going, going, and—and—and—a-going; for 320 dollars—and—and—gone to Mr. ——."*

I give you details because they interested me beyond measure—and I think you have readers who will not be less interested than I was, in the details of the auction. The woman was miserably clad, but grinned and gaped, and looked happy, and as earnest under the operation to know who was to be her master. She trotted off, well satisfied with her new master, and I busied myself with inquiring into the particulars. I learnt that her husband was free, and that he bought her [as] a slave, and then married her. Thus, she was his wife and his slave, and he held her by a double tenure, and could sell her when he pleased. The husband got into debt, and then ran off, and his wife was attached as his slave, and sold at public auction for \$320, under an order of the Court, to pay the debt. The new master, it is said, bought her in order that she might, by her labor, purchase her freedom of him for the sum given.

I did not stop to witness the sale of the empty barrels and the candle boxes, the other part of the concern, but the odd association, serious as it is, amused me so much, that I could with difficulty repress a laugh, among the white purchasers and the negro gapers standing around, who seemed to think all this nothing remarkable. They call ours a land of liberty! I have no doubt that the best of us, if we were in Virginia, would buy and sell human flesh; but I never in my life witnessed a sight with such mingled feelings of horror, amusement, and ridicule. It is a new sight to me, but I shall soon become habituated, for I see that a whole family are to be sold at auction tomorrow.

Richmond, (Va.)
March 11th, 1833

There being a number of the members of the Legislature as yet left in Richmond, I have made a talk with one whenever I could, and have often been amused and interested. The State pride of a Virginian surpasses all that we can well understand. There is no place like "*Old Virginny*" in his estimation. He glories in the fame of his ancestors, and imagines there is something in the soil fitted for the nurture of great men. "*Virginia is a sovereign State,*" said one to me, glowing with exultation, "*Virginia is a sovereign State and, therefore, she has a right to secede. She can't be sovereign, unless she has this right—and she is sovereign.*" There was no matching this assertion without a long and tedious argument, and I preferred to listen.

"Jefferson," he continued, for he was voluble and eloquent, "Jefferson was a Democrat always. Democracy ran in his blood. It is with men, as with horses. There is something in the blood. You can tell them by their pedigree. James Madison²³ was always a Federalist. In '98, he did not, in his famous Resolutions, express his own opinions, but the opinions of a party. He was the party's organ, and wrote out their sentiments. This made him President, and Jefferson kept him straight, but as soon as Jefferson died, you see he went over to the Federalists, whom he betrayed. He could not keep away from his kin. Federalism ran in his blood. It is with men, as with horses. Ritchie,²⁴ too, his father was a tory, and was near being hung for a tory. Ritchie was a Federalist. Jefferson, when alive, kept him bridled, but Jefferson dead, the tory blood got uppermost."

"It is with men, as with horses, sir. I am for Old Virginia. Virginia is a sovereign State. You Yankees deny Secession. because you are stronger than we are, and can flog us, but let Old Massachusetts, sir, get angry, and she will secede. She will do as she pleases. She has stuff in her, and I like her for

²³ James Madison (1751-1836) — Fourth President of the United States; born in Virginia

²⁴ Ritchie — (perhaps) Thomas Ritchie (1778-1854), influential Richmond newspaper editor

it. Webster²⁵ is a great man, and Calhoun is a great man. They are two of the greatest men in the world, sir. I don't know which is the strongest. But Webster is a Federalist, and Calhoun²⁶ is a Democrat. I was raised and bred a Democrat. I go then for Secession; for when you attempt to oppress us, when those big States, New York and Pennsylvania, attempt to break us down, we can secede. Secession is the salvation of the South, sir. We have slave property, and you Yankees, are opposed to it. We may be called upon to give up this, and then we can secede, sir, and the Union is worth more to you than it is to us; and if we secede, you will do us justice. I love the Union, but Secession is the only way to preserve it. Virginia would have a hard time as a border State, but then we should grow rich, sir. The whole South would be under us."

"The General Government has been ungrateful to Virginia. Sir, before the revolution, we were rich. We were gentlemen. Every man had money enough. Now we have little or no money. You Yankees come in troops to look at our country, and we can't raise loose cash enough to get across the Potomac. I own a large plantation and many slaves, sir, and I can't get money enough to paint my home. The General Government has been a viper to Virginia. She has stung her benefactor. Now you see how poor we are. You see everything going to ruin, old houses, old fences, ragged slaves. Virginia has nothing left but her horses, and then her racehorses do her more hurt than good. They make her people idle and gambling people. Sir, you Yankees are too cunning for us. You keep a better look out than we do. You and the New Yorkers and the Pennsylvanians got the old revolutionary debt for little or nothing, and made money on that, at our expense. So, in the late war, you bought the debt for 60 cents on a dollar, and made us pay a full dollar. Now you have got an American System,²⁷ but, thank God, Henry Clay's heart is opened. I love him, because he is a Virginian, and if he had not gone to Kentucky, we would have made a President of him long ago. Virginia has no such stock left. Patrick Henry and he sprung from the same soil. Sir, Old Virginia is peopling the whole South and West. Every great man, south of this, is a Virginian by birth. The ungrateful sons ran off. My wife wanted me to settle in Nashville, but not I. I love Virginia too well. And

²⁵ Daniel Webster (1782-1852) — Prominent New England lawyer and politician

²⁶ John C. Calhoun (1782-1850) — Born in South Carolina; supporter of Nullification; rose to U.S. Vice President

²⁷ American System — Economic plan adopted by the U.S.; its principal components were tariffs, a national bank and government subsidies for infrastructure

if this Union was separated, could I fight against Virginia? No, oh no, never. But this cursed American System is ruining us. It is depopulating Old Virginia. It is making you rich, and us poor."

Hitherto I had been too much interested in the open-hearted and lively conversation of my Virginian, even to interrupt him. I believe his conversation thus far embodied the pith of Virginian politics and Virginian philosophy. His argument on Secession was the best that can be given, for the best reason ever given is, that **if** Virginia is oppressed by the nation, she can secede; but then arises the ulterior question, whether **peaceably, or by revolution**. As conversation was here flagging, I determined to apply the spur.

"Have you ever been to the North?" I asked. "Yes, I was in Philadelphia, and it broke my heart when I compared Pennsylvania with Old Virginia. I saw their beautiful farmhouses, and their beautiful villages, and their flourishing manufactories, and I almost wept for Old Virginia. The American System is ruining us and enriching her at our expense. You know how prosperous we were in the old Revolution, before we entered into the partnership—and you see how poor we are now."

"But is there no other cause?" I interrupted. I did not like to tell him that slavery was the root of all this mischief, and when but one half worked without a stimulus, and the other half lived on their earnings, the country must be poor. "Where I came from," I continued, "they have at this moment (March 11) perhaps two feet of snow; but a summer's sky is now over our heads. Vegetation is springing up. The wheat is green. The early frost of autumn ripens our corn, but the long summer ripens yours. See what a climate you have. See what a soil, if you would but cultivate it, if you would but manure it, which by the way you seldom or never do. We buy even corn of you, for we cannot raise enough for ourselves. Our soil is rocky and our sky is unpropitious. See the cargoes of flour and corn you are daily discharging northward. See your tobacco manufactories. We grow all these with exceeding difficulty. We have no rice, no cotton, no sugar. Tell me what we can export. Do you not wonder that we live at all? and yet I tell you, that among our rocks, and on our coast, there is not a city nor a village that does not seem more flourishing than the best I have seen in Virginia."

"How the d__l do you live?" exclaimed my Virginian in perfect astonishment. "Two feet of snow now!" "Yes," I added, "and on the second of March, I see by the newspapers that our harbor was frozen over with ice, which only happens in extreme cold weather." "Two feet of snow!" he muttered again, as he saw the green grass around him—when I went on to say, that every man with us must have some visible occupation, that all but professional men worked, and that they had to labor hard for a livelihood in their way, that we had few or no racehorses, and that our jockeys were among the most suspicious of our population, that no farmer thought it disreputable to drive his own wagon to market, and that work was honorable, and by no means dishonorable, that we were as industrious as possible; but, with all our industry, had hard work to get along—that failing on the land, we tried our luck on the ocean, and that our fisheries and our West India trade gave us a living, when the land would not—that, there failing, we were obliged to emigrate, unless we could turn our waterfalls and steam power to account. I told him that what made Yankees more inventive than the rest of their countrymen was the necessity of being so, not that they had in reality more inventive genius; but their inventions, as he would see by going into the Patent Office in Washington, were probably three to one in comparison with the other sections of the Union. I told him also, that the reason of his seeing so many Yankees abroad in the cities of the Union and elsewhere was because they could not live at home. I told him again, that if we had the soil, the climate, and the rivers of Virginia, the wilderness would soon blossom like the rose.

"And why?" he enquired. "Because we have no slaves," I answered, "and because all work, and work not for others, but for themselves." "Oh, 'tis your American System," was the reply. "We will soon outdo you in this. We will establish manufactories, and as labor with us is cheaper than it is with you, we can sell cheaper, and shall then have possession of the market. Slaves can labor in manufactories. The experiment has been tried and has proved successful." "I do not doubt it," was my answer. "Provision is also cheaper. Fuel is cheaper. It costs less to support a laboring man. Try the experiment—and my life for it—Virginia, if she strangles her racehorses, keeps her boys out of the taverns, quits the study of metaphysics, and adopts a more liberal system of politics, will be again the good Old Dominion that you justly feel so proud of."

Our conversation was broken off here, much to my regret. I was interested in it, and have given it as correctly as I can remember.

Smithville, (N.C.)
March 16th, 1833

The scenery on James's River at this season of the year at least, is nothing remarkable. The river is narrow at Richmond, and the waters are not deep. The streams crook from Richmond to City Point so much, as to make us go about sixty miles to get twenty. The banks of the river are low, and, at great distances, here and there, are to be seen the mansion house of some planter. We were in sight of one plantation on which, a passenger told me, there were three hundred slaves and only three or four whites. The plantation was of immense extent, containing from ten to fifteen thousand acres. All this so strongly reminds me of the feudal ages, and of the feudal system, that I can with difficulty persuade myself to believe that I am in the Unites States. The most beautiful situation we passed by was that of Westover, small in extent, only 600 acres (!), but of rich land. The mansion house was of brick, two stories high, and had a rich and flourishing aspect. Judging from its external appearance, I should think it one of the best estates in Virginia. Moving along with great rapidity, we soon came to "the devil's dancing ground," a point of land on which the Indians believed that the devil danced every Friday night, which superstition the negroes keep up to this day.

Soon we were off Jamestown, famous for being the first settling place in Virginia. I looked over the ground with interest, as being a classic spot immortalized in our history. This is the land of Powhatan, Pocahontas, and Captain Smith, I thought. But how changed! Jamestown is now but the single plantation on the island.²⁸ I saw only a negro or two peering their dark faces from amid the ruined brick walls. There was only one habitable dwelling. Five or six chimneys, the monuments of what **has been**, were standing on different parts of the island. A few old brick wrecks of some houses were to be seen. The steeple of the old church, now resting on the ground, was not wholly crumbled to ruin. A shattered

²⁸ Founded in 1607, Jamestown was the first permanent English settlement in the Americas. As the capital of the Virginia colony, it was eventually abandoned in 1699, when the center of government moved to Williamsburg.

poplar was scattered here and there. But our steamer dashed on, and Jamestown was out of sight before I could well recall what I had seen.

We were now approaching Hampton Roads. The river became broader and broader. The waters look wilder as they were more exposed to the wind, and as the waves rushed in from the Chesapeake and the ocean. Old Point Comfort was soon visible, far off on our left. The Rip Raps²⁹ could just be seen with our spyglass. The wind here blew fresh, and every wave that struck the prow of our steamer sprinkled with the spray the unlucky passengers. Norfolk now approached in view. The well-built and beautifully-modeled hospital was on our right. Portsmouth was opposite to us, and a little ahead was Gosport, with its Navy Yard. The harbor of Norfolk was well-lined with shipping. Business seemed lively enough on its wharves. I cannot well see why Norfolk may not become the New York of a part of the Southern country. It is at the mouth of James River, which waters an immense and a good country. It commands the trade of a good part of North Carolina. It has a fine harbor, for the defense of which government has freely lavished its money.

It was dark when "*our plunder*," as they term baggage here, was well landed at Johnson's Hotel, a good place enough, but as involved as a Cretan labyrinth. Virginia boys were talking on Secession and Nullification in one corner, and a Connecticut peddler was parading strings of clocks in another, for which he "*axed*" fifty dollars apiece. He was offering to take racehorses, tobacco, old watches, whiskey or any trash in pay. This is the way to live, I wanted to say to the boys who were here also trailing over the lost glory of Old Virginia. Do then, sell your slaves, and the Old Dominion will soon be the New Dominion. The lost star empire will come back.

We now found that we must start for Charleston early next morning, unless we tarried here two days. I could not afford to lose so much time. There were two routes before us, one by Fayetteville and the interior of North Carolina, and another by Wilmington, all along the coast, called the Atlantic route. The last promised to reach Charleston earlier than the other, and at this season, the road is better. The last route also carried us

²⁹ Rip Raps — Originally a shoal at the mouth of Hampton Roads, developed in 1817 as part of the harbor defenses.

through the principal business places of North Carolina, and was to be diversified by steamboats. The proprietors advertise that they carry passengers from Philadelphia to Charleston in five days, but I doubt whether they can do it.

Before breakfast, Thursday morning, we crossed over from Norfolk to Portsmouth in a small steamboat, and by the breakfast hour, were at Deep Creek, seven miles, or a little more, from Norfolk. This Creek is on the borders of the Dismal Swamp, into which we were soon plunged—but, on a good road, by the margin of the great canal. The road was a little sandy, but was perfectly level. On our right was the canal,³⁰ forty feet wide, and six and a half feet deep, up and down which negroes, by long poles, were towing boats, and down which horses or mules were dragging sloops or schooners laden with cotton, tobacco, lumber of all sorts in great quantities, wheat, flour and, in short, all the products of Lower Virginia and South Carolina. On our left, and across the canal, was desolation desolate. As far as the eye could reach, one wide dismal swamp was seen. The bears, who are the chief tenants, could not have chosen a wilder lair. The cypress, from which immense quantities of shingles are made, the myrtle and some other rough bushes, diversified the swamp a little. But all was worse than the deserts of Africa, for the sands can be walked over, and this swamp cannot. It is almost as impossible as it is cheerless. Yet the industry of man has made a canal, and a good road through it, and is now branching off with new roads in many directions. In the material for shingles it is inexhaustible, but little or nothing can be raised upon it. A hovel here and there lies upon the road, but poverty and wretchedness are its apparent attendants. Much business, however, is done through it, for it is connected, by means of Albemarle Sound, with the rich country on Roanoke river.

After riding in this swamp and by the canal, on a road which answers for a towpath, some 16 miles, perhaps, we came to the Lake Drummond Hotel, one half of which is in Virginia, and the other half in North Carolina, the dividing line of the States running, it is said, through the chimney in the center. It is a neat building, large and agreeable. It is the resort of gentlemen and ladies from Norfolk and other places. It is called the

³⁰ Dismal Swamp Canal — The 22-mile-long canal was built between 1793 and 1805, using mostly slave labor. Tolls were charged.

Gretna Green³¹ of Lower Virginia, for here young lovers, in despite of parents and the law, can be married—in North Carolina or Virginia as they choose.³² Steamboat parties, I was informed, occasionally come up the canal. The ladies tarry at the hotel, and the gentlemen, if they please, go to Lake Drummond, some distance further, which, by the way, feeds the canal with water. Our horses being changed in this romantic spot, if there can be romance in a swamp, we were hurried onward.

We went many miles further in the swamp as far as the head of the canal, when we turned to the left and made for Elizabeth City. The road was level and a little sandy. Soon after we left the swamp, a pine forest commenced, which seems almost interminable. We crossed Pasquotank River on a floating bridge, through the crevices of which the water gushed at every step of the horses. By four o'clock, we had dined in Elizabeth City, and were on our way to Edenton. We crossed Perquimans River on another floating bridge and by eight o'clock were in Edenton. It was now dark, nine or ten o'clock at night, rainy and squally—and Albemarle Sound was to be crossed in a little steamboat. I should have preferred to have tarried at the tavern where I was, and to see the end of a ball, which the beaux and belles of Edenton were then holding by the music of a fiddle which Coffee³³ was see-sawing with all his might; but the Sound must be crossed that night, or I must wait two days and take my chance in another stage.

After getting into a berth on board of the boat, the first sound I heard was that of "*Massa, it is time to get up.*" The stage horn was blowing. I was up Roanoke river, and at the wharf in Plymouth. By three o'clock in the morning we were well packed in another stagecoach. The driver was playing from his long horn or bugle his best tune, and we were on our way to Washington, through long unvarying pine forests, and yet over a level and sandy road. Once or twice, a log had fallen across the road, around which we went by the bushes and brushwood, for the woods were on fire, and streams of flame were running like lightning up and down

³¹ Gretna Green — Village located on the boundary between Scotland and England, favored by eloping couples.

³² Dismal Swamp Hotel — The hotel's location, directly on the state line, is said to have also favored the illegal practices of gambling and dueling.

³³ Coffee — Reference unexplained; possibly a negro musician

and athwart the pines.³⁴ At night, the spectacle was a grand one. The pines are full of pitch, more so than ours, and very combustible. The tall tops glittered like shooting meteors, as if the sky were on fire—and, as we drove along, if I had been quite easy on account of the alarm of the horses, and the danger there was from falling trees, I should have enjoyed it much. There **was** danger, for this is the land of tar, lampblack and of turpentine, and the trees are often notched on both sides, with a deep "bucket" in them to catch the turpentine as it comes out, and are thus easily blown over. We have driven miles and miles by such trees in North Carolina, the tar and turpentine taken from which are the chief means of subsistence to a great majority who live in these pine woods. Tar and turpentine are the great articles of trade on the seaboard. The land is too low and too poor for farming, and wherever farming is attempted, the ditching is a very expensive item in the farmer's account.

After breakfasting Friday morning in Washington, which by the way is a little town on Pamlico River, emptying into Pamlico Sound, the chief trade of which, I believe, is tar and turpentine, we started for New Bern. We crossed the Tar River on a fine bridge, and not long after came to the Neuse River, which is a great and beautiful stream at the bridge where we crossed. New Bern is near the junction of these two rivers, and in a pleasant place. We took dinner here at a good hotel, at 5 o'clock P.M. and at 6 P.M. started for Wilmington, one hundred miles off. Our road was yet sandy—through a pine forest, where tar and turpentine were made. Tar kilns were often seen on fire. The scarified trees looked like whitened sepulchers. I had few or no other than dreaming ideas, but slept tolerably after nine o'clock, except when the driver's horn awakened me, as he sounded it to call forth the negroes to change his horses. These negroes often rest by a pitch pine fire by the wayside, with pine torches a-blazing, so that they are on foot at the first twang of the horn.

After riding seventy miles that night, we were landed next morning in the pitch pine woods, at the house of a maiden lady, about sixty years of age, there to take breakfast. She had no neighbors, she said, short of two miles and a half, and amused herself with her hens and chickens and turkeys and negro servant. She saw nobody but the travelers and her servant,

³⁴ Fire in the pine-barrens — The pitch pines may perhaps have caught fire from the tar kilns, or, as a result of uncontrolled grass burns by local residents.

talked much—told us many things in ten minutes—gave us poached eggs, hominy, sweet potatoes, good coffee and corn bread for breakfast; and when my friend Captain B. asked her if she did not wish she was married and had children to comfort her there in the woods, she seemed to be as uneasy and as affected as a girl of sixteen, and stammered out an answer in great confusion. We shook hands and parted with her, one of our most interesting acquaintances, and [were] anon on our way to Wilmington, through more pine woods, over a yet level and sandy road.

Wilmington is a city of sand. The streets are all sand. It must be hotter in the summer than an oven. It is a place of much trade, well known to our West Indiamen, who take winter cargoes here. There are many steam mills which saw boards, and at present there are French, English and American vessels loading at the wharves. We snatched a hasty dinner here, and by three o'clock were in a steamboat, going down Cape Fear River to Smithville,³⁵ which is at its mouth, thirty miles off. Many vessels were under full sail for Wilmington, the wind and tide favoring. Many were anchoring near the mouth, for a wind to cross the bar. We passed by rice fields, cotton fields, and hills of sand. But time and the length of this epistle admonishes me to close here.

Smithville, (N.C.)
March 16th, 1833

After a continued motion, night and day, for four days, in small stagecoaches, and steamboats, I have halted over Sunday, I don't know where—but in a sort of Sahara Desert on a sand-flat, among a few scrubby live oaks, myrtles and cedars, where the wild waves of the ocean are beating, and the drum and fife of a neighboring fortress are summoning the garrison to the last duties of the week. If you have any curiosity to know where on this earth your troubadour editor is resting on a Saturday evening, look on the map for the southernmost section of North Carolina, on Cape Fear River, near Cape Fear, and you will find a little spot, an oasis-like, called Smithville, where are three or four good-looking houses, a few inhabitants, and a corps of U.S. troops, guarding the entrance to Wilmington. A few peach trees and a few plum trees are in full blossom. Our garden promises us green peas for dinner in a week. The air is balmy

³⁵ Smithville — Modern town of Southport (N.C.)

and summerlike; and I am as contented as one can be, a thousand miles from home, in a five-cornered garret, ascendable by a ladder-like flight of stairs—there among pests of negroes, young puppies and mewling kittens.

In a part, or all, of my journey from Washington, thus far, I have had three companions. One is my friend Captain B. of Portland, who sees nothing here equaling what we have in New England, neither stages, taverns, dinners, farms, buildings, villages nor roads, excepting, by the way, the corn bread and hominy, which he extols much, and the women whom he extols more, as far more accessible and conversable than those we meet at home. Another is a student just escaped from a theological school, whose eye is painted by every glass of whiskey he sees drunk, every slave he meets with, and whose ear is shocked by every oath the stage driver lavishes on his horses, or the boatman upon his ropes and rigging. He rebukes, but rebukes, I fear, in vain, all the profanity, intemperance and vice that comes in his way. Despairing of reforming all the world when journeying a hundred miles a day, I find that he is already shortening his lectures, and hardening his sensibility. My other companion is a New Englander, who has just made the tour of Europe, and who, being ashamed of often pleading ignorance to famous [sights] in his own land, is now making a tour of his own country. He talks altogether of Paris, and Rome and Vienna. Everything with him resembles *la Parisienne*. The old rusty churches we went by on the road reminded him of cathedrals, &c., and then came a description, and that suggests a story, and along he runs with his life and adventures on the Continent. By the way, I lost him some days ago, for he has gone into the interior of Virginia to look at her natural bridge, and her famous caves, and to breathe the air of the Blue Ridge, which is none of the most comfortable in March.³⁶

I left Richmond, Wednesday morning, in the steamboat "*Patrick Henry*", with about one hundred passengers. By seven o'clock we were moving at the rate of from fifteen to twenty miles an hour down James's River. After breakfast was disposed of, some, for amusement, took to card-playing; some to whiskey-drinking, or "taking feed," as they call it; some to the backgammon board; some to reading; some to talking of Secession and

³⁶ For the remainder of this letter, Brooks tells further anecdotes from his journey between Richmond and Smithville.

Nullification, which at this moment are the chief topics of conversation in Virginia, with men, women and boys; and others to watching the scenery. There were on board some few of the members of the Virginia Legislature, returning home to western Virginia, by the way of Baltimore.³⁷ I conversed a little with one who was a genuine Nullifier, and who carried his theory so far into practice as to clothe himself in the rough home-products of his own country, averring that he would buy nothing under "the accursed Tariff," nor wear anything of Yankee manufacture, so long as we taxed him to aid ourselves. I insisted upon it, that he was the best practical American System man I had ever met with, and if he would send back his hat to New York, and his boots to Lynn,³⁸ which he confessed were not made in his own country, I should think him perfect. I laughed at him a little for being obliged to make the circuit of the universe to get home, travelling as he does, for this purpose, over two or three other sovereign nations than his own, when if "*Old Virginia*" would confess the constitutionality of internal improvements, he might probably have a passable road, other than the present footpath across the mountains.

We then entered into a long but rather amicable disputation. He argued that "*Old Virginia*" suffered everything from the General Government; and suffered for her honesty also, for while other States were violating the constitution, and losing their **dignity** in taking and in begging appropriations from the General Government, proud, high-minded Virginia scorned to receive the bribe. I told him that Virginia was full fifty years behind the age in everything but good feeling, patriotism, hospitality and **chivalry**; that if De Witt Clinton³⁹ had been a Virginian in place of Thomas Jefferson, Virginia would have been now almost what New York is, for her politicians had been, and were, ruining her. They denied the General Government all power to assist her. With the best rivers in the world for internal communication, with the most valuable productions, they turned them to but little comparative account. They had quarreled so much about manufactures, that they were ashamed to

³⁷ The choice of a shipboard journey from Richmond to Baltimore probably reflects the poor state of roads in early Spring. Later in this paragraph, Brooks attributes the deficiency of Virginia's roads to its opposition to federal improvement works.

³⁸ Lynn — City in Massachusetts renowned for shoe manufacture

³⁹ De Witt Clinton (1769-1828) — Governor of New York State, known for his commitment to economic development

make their own waterfalls turn machinery. They were indignant if a Northern man spoke of slavery, so far as even to tell them that his countrymen would freely lavish their money to rid them of the misfortune, while at the same time **he** confessed that slavery was a curse to the State.

I contended that Virginia must and would be a manufacturing State, and that she must be Northern in feeling, and must soon see that her salvation depends upon the Union. No man could hope for all this so long as her old politicians were alive, and her boys studied Jefferson as the Bible; but poverty was already teaching her people lessons. Comparison was making them inquire, "*How is it that a people in a colder climate, whose roads and canals are frozen over three months or more a year, whose soil is not so good as ours, whose natural advantages are not so good as ours, who can raise little or nothing to sell in the market, are growing rich while we are growing poor? What is there in the mind of man on the other side of the Potomac, that can effect all this? Even Baltimore has caught the Northern fire, and enterprise is making her city boom with industry. What works these changes? How is it that Virginia is all in the background, and that while the North is paying her thousands and millions for her corn, her wheat, her tobacco, her coal, Old Virginia does not prosper?*" I told him the people would soon see that her politicians and her slaves were putting Virginia in this position, and that as soon as the people were convinced of it, they would be rid of both. He said that Virginia had made liberal appropriations for internal improvements this winter, and that in this respect a better feeling was awakened. Of course, he was horrified at what I said of Jefferson, and attributed Northern prosperity to the taxes which the North inflicted upon Virginia.

Of slavery, he repeated, it was a desperate evil, of which the State could not at present rid itself. The free blacks, he told me, and I believe him, were worse off than the slaves themselves. "*They were a ragged, lying, thievish, drunken, and lazy body of men, that worked only as hunger compelled. Nature had affixed a mark upon them, and in the society where they were, it always bore them down. They could hold no office. They could hope for no promotion. They had nothing to stimulate them, and hence they were idle, and worse off than the slaves themselves. They had not even the inducement to labor that a slave has—that of purchasing one's own freedom, and when old, they have no master to take care of them. A kind*

master, and nearly all are so, makes his slave happy and contented. There are many who would liberate their slaves, if the slaves would take their liberty, but they refuse it." Jefferson, he said, was an abolitionist, and he did not doubt that the day was coming when Virginia would prospectively abolish slavery. "*The spirit of abolition was strong, moving from North to South. New Jersey was once a slave state, but slavery was gradually abolished. Delaware and Maryland are following as rapidly as possible, and Virginia will follow next in order.*"

I answered that Mr. Jefferson's theory on slavery was one of his good theories, but it had the misfortune to be the only one whose execution he did not attempt. The good theory he kept in theory, but of the practical effects of the bad theories, our country had suffered enough—such as the embargo and gunboat theories. My object, in thus diverting the conversation, was to hear an enthusiastic admirer of Jefferson extol the man whom he worshipped as a deity. He proved that Jefferson was a great man. I did not doubt it. He added that Jefferson was a good man. I questioned much whether he was a good man as Washington was good. I spoke of the bad and malignant feelings which his published correspondence displayed.

He confessed that many of the letters of Jefferson injured him in public estimation, and ought to have been suppressed. He owned that they would diminish his greatness in the eyes of posterity. But Jefferson was good and great, he said, at heart. He took me to Monticello, and told me many domestic anecdotes which, I own, do honor to his humanity. We then divided on the opinion that Jefferson was a theorizer and no practical man. He contended that he was great in theory and practice. He cited the magnificent idea of purchasing the ranges of the States on the Mississippi, which I argued was a grand plan, a great scheme of a great head, but a successful and fortunate one, I owned, rather than the sound idea of a practical statesman, a man to be trusted at all times. In support of my argument, I cited politics a little, and after asserting that politicians could make more of Jefferson's writings than different expounders did of the Scriptures—for in the first, they could find direct opinions in favor of every side and all sides, and in the last, only indirect arguments and inferences—went on to prove that Jefferson, as in public life, so in private life, was a man of plans, of schemes, and a theorizer. I cited his University of Virginia, on which his popularity had extracted from the Legislature

thousands of dollars to little or no purpose, and now the plan was not half carried out; and his seat of Monticello, where he had spent all his fortune to build a palace on a desert hill, and before it was half-finished, dying and leaving his family in extreme want, and his palace a project to be laughed at by every visitor.

All this was too much for the Virginian, but he sustained the cause well, and said private affairs had nothing to do with public affairs, which I denied. As he now grew warm and talked admirably, I wanted to hear him talk more, and therefore added that, "*Jefferson was no Republican at heart.*" In reply, he recounted his Revolutionary history, and I recounted little anecdotes of his private life, as—that he aped European manners after his return from Europe, wore European dresses, lived in European style and, even when President, made it a rule never to admit a clerk in one of the Departments to his table.

We now disagreed more and more, for when I told him that Jefferson's contempt of the Judiciary, originating in a slight difference with Marshall,⁴⁰ and his Nullification doctrines were doing more injury to our country, in poisoning the minds of young men, particularly in the Southern States, than all his services could atone for, he answered that "*This was what he admired. It was republican. It was the creed of Old Virginia.*"

I give you these conversational sketches as better embodying the spirit of the people I happen to be with, than any essays I can offer.

Charleston, (S.C.)
March 20th, 1833

My last chronicles as a traveler left me in the borders of Cape Fear. I left there on Sunday night, 5 P.M. for Georgetown, S.C., distant 110 miles. The road was over one continued pine-barren as it has been for four hundred miles, and as it is, I suspect, to the end of this Southern world. Tar and turpentine, sand and shingles are the chief products of these regions on the seacoast, except upon the banks of the rivers, and upon an occasional hillock. The pine trees were often on fire. An encampment of negroes, on

⁴⁰ John Marshall (1755-1835) — Chief Justice of the Supreme Court

their way to market, was now and then to be seen. Seldom was a house in our way, and when a building did meet our eye, it was not a house, but a hovel or some miserable cottage. We stopped about 9 o'clock to change horses at a hut in the woods, where were two negresses, and a young negro, distant two miles or more from a neighbor. They slept on the floor on a blanket and straw bed; burned pine torches for candles, and seem very jovial in their lonely condition. They told us that their mistress had hired them out to take care of the stage driver, and said they were happy and contented.

We rode on then about five miles an hour all night; and soon left North Carolina to get into the sovereign nation of South Carolina. Burning woods, pine trees, and black stumps were all we saw. Toward morning, about 4 o'clock, we breakfasted with a Union man in South Carolina, who lived a little out of the road, and from whose house there rushed a body of barking dogs to meet us on our approach. He gave us hominy, corn bread, and sweet potatoes, which are standard dishes, talked politics a little, and said his State was mad; but he believed the Nullies⁴¹ would fight for six months like dogs, and then be the tamest people on earth. This disposed of, on we dragged over sandy roads, with our wretched go-cart⁴² and scarecrow horses, sometimes over creeks on ill-omening bridges, sometimes through streams with the water over the hubs of our wheels, sometimes over scabbed black stumps, sometimes through underwood and brush, sometimes close under the wide-spreading branches of a stray live oak that, perchance, sprang up in a swampy spot. Eight miles or more that we rode on the beach edging upon Long Bay were agreeably gone over, for the swelling waves, as they rolled gradually forward from the wide ocean, tossing over each other, and dashing their spray high up, and then encircling the whole shore, diversified the scene and made it interesting.

By noon on Monday, we were on the margin of Winyaw Bay, near the estates of the Hugers (pronounced *Euge*) and Pettigrews⁴³ of South Carolina. After crossing a rice swamp on a dike, some hundred yards in length, and wading a little among the nests of the alligators, we came to

⁴¹ Nullies — Supporters of Nullification

⁴² Go-cart — (Definition) Light open carriage or child's wheeled toy; Brooks is being derogatory

⁴³ Pettigrew — This surname also takes the form "Petigru"

the row boat in which we were to go by water to Georgetown, eight miles off. The rivers Waccamaw, Black, and the Big Pedee with the Little Pedee, form this bay. Three negroes, in Northern-manufactured negro clothes, singing some dolorous ditty, and keeping time with their oars, rowed us along by the mouths of the Waccamaw and the wildly rushing Pedee. We went by many rice fields. The banks of the rivers and the bay were just along the level of the river. The negroes were diking the banks by poles driven in the mud, so as to keep off the tides. Here let me remark that rice flourishes only on a peculiar soil. The land must be low and susceptible of inundation at certain seasons. Salt water kills the rice. It requires much good fortune to raise a good crop.

By three o'clock, or a little after, we landed in Georgetown. We swallowed a dinner as soon as possible, so as to take a survey of the town. The good lady of the hotel waved a peacock's feather over our heads, so as to keep off the flies and the mosquitoes—of the first of which there is an abundance here, and of the second there will be by and by; for mosquitoes are the pest of this country, and few but negroes, even the best acclimated, think of sleeping in summer in Charleston without a gauze screen over their beds. We borrowed a boat and sculled over Black River, to see a famous rice mill opposite Georgetown. It was well worth the labor, for we saw the rice, which in the kernel is like our wheat, taken into the mill by steam, there hulled, winnowed, bolted by steam—the broken separated from the whole kernels—and then all turned by steam into the rice barrel, ready for market. Georgetown has about 800 inhabitants and is a neat, well-looking, dull place, with much rice, and some timber trade. It is surrounded by rice swamps and four or five rivers, and must be unhealthy in the summer.

By eight o'clock, Monday night, we were again crossing in a ferry boat—a gondola, or a flat, as it is called here—the Black River. The negroes towed the boat over by a rope fastened to the banks of the opposite shores, and thus they moved us along with considerable rapidity. I slept for about eighteen or twenty miles, and found myself on the banks of the Santee. The driver was drumming up the sleepy negroes, who were to take us across the ferry. His task was hard, for as soon as he woke one, another who had just been awakened, was asleep. At last, "*our plunder,*" ourselves, and the mail, which the negroes said weighed "*right smart*"—for here they talk of working "*right smart,*" and hiring "*right smart*"—

were all embarked in another rowboat, to cross at midnight a ferry, two miles in length.

The Santee, where we crossed it, is branching by two mouths into the ocean. We first crossed the North Santee, a large stream, and then entered upon a narrow canal which had been cut through a morass so as to connect the North and South Santee. At times, when the waters were low, the stage crossed on a causeway between the Santees, but this causeway was now overflowed and we took to the water. The canal was among rice grounds, alligator's nests, and old stumps, and withal, was so narrow that it was difficult to row in it. Next, we crossed the South Santee, and after rowing up a little creek, were landed on the banks. A stage was in readiness, and we were soon in it, and again on our way to Charleston. As soon as daylight would permit, I could see that the country was a little better than that we had gone over. The road, however, was yet level and sandy. We saw some houses at a distance, for few here build upon the roads. The fashion is to have the woods altogether conceal your dwelling from the eyes of the passenger. Some negro wenches were at work cultivating the ground and planting corn. Oats were up perhaps a foot high, not sown broadcast as ours are, but in rows with trenches between. Many trees were leafing, and many flower trees were in full blossom. The air was balmy and delightful. The best day in Italy could not surpass that.

We saw nothing remarkable upon the road, except a steer saddled and bridled, with a boy and negro across his back, trotting to market. They drive here one ox, as well as two; and not having the best of yokes, often make them of matted grass. By nine o'clock on Tuesday morning, Fort Sullivan,⁴⁴ Castle Pinckney and the steeples of Charleston were in sight. Fatigued to death with this long journey, day and night, over a dull barren road, seldom meeting a human being—where a horse was looked upon as a curiosity, and where bears were masters of the woods and swamps—my pulse beat with joy, as I was once more beholding the signs of civilization, even in the distance. In a large boat, propelled by six negroes, we crossed the Cooper River, and the bay, and in about three fourths of an hour were on the wharves of Charleston, some miles from our starting point. I look upon this city as a resting place for a while, and as it is the largest of the Southern cities, it is here I can see the most of Southern men,

⁴⁴ Fort Sullivan — Guards Charleston harbor; later renamed Fort Moultrie

Southern manners and Southern feelings. Business is revived and reviving. The people are now cheerful and happy. Confidence is restored. Men are forgetting past affairs, and now look upon each other as brethren. The name of Henry Clay is spoken with enthusiasm by men of all parties. I arrive in the halcyon hour of mutual reconciliation,⁴⁵ and hope to partake in its enjoyments.

⁴⁵ Earlier in the month (March 1833), the impending crisis in South Carolina over Nullification has been averted in the U.S. Congress.

THINGS IN SOUTH CAROLINA

Charleston, (S.C.)
March 20th, 1833

In pursuance of my resolution of giving you the spirit of the people I meet with, without vouching for opinions, I give you the remarks of intelligent Union men in this city.

"The opposition to the Tariff here is universal. All parties oppose, though they differ widely as to the mode and manner of opposition. The Tariff, I think, is opposed not so much for good argument and sound reason, as because it is the fashion to oppose it. We complain of the reduction in the price of cotton, one of our staples, but no reasonable man can suppose that the Tariff [effects] this reduction. If there was not a cent laid as duties, the price of cotton could not be augmented, for the production is more than the consumption, and hence, so long as this is the fact, the price must fall rather than rise. We only suffer as consumers, and this is common with the people of the North. If you could satisfactorily establish the assertion that prices fall as duties rise, much opposition to the Tariff would be done away with."

"There is no doubt that the Nullifiers were in earnest—nor is there any doubt that they rejoice with great joy, that they can recede from their high grounds without dishonor. I think they were in earnest, because I saw their warlike preparations on all sides, and because I know they were mutually connected to each other. They must have fought, for they were so connected in their party as to make it a disgrace to retreat. Their pride, their sense of honor, their chivalry, as well as their angry passions were awakened. The Tariff itself was forgotten, but as the fuel to keep up a flame among the people, in the stronger and more impelling allegiance to party. Mutual recrimination, mutual organization also had done much to arouse that feeling which makes it a disgrace to back out. The Nullifiers were well armed and not a little drilled in almost all parts of the State. In the country, they had prepared to march to Charleston, and expected an easy victory, for not being there well informed of the United States government, they were greedy for the combat. But the Nullifiers in

Charleston were better informed. They would have begun war with great reluctance. Hence, they in the Circus meeting practically put off the Ordinance to the 4th of March, much to the discontent of the country Nullifiers. Nor were the Union men unprepared. They were organized and well-armed in self-defense. They never would have submitted to the despotism of the Convention. They would have sacrificed themselves by thousands, before they would have yielded to the oaths imposed by the Nullifiers. The Nullifiers would have found enough to do in taking care of them, without meeting forces from other States. Again, the Greenville district in the upper part of the State is the strongest Union district in the State. The residents there had the command of the Saluda Gap, of which they could not have been easily dispossessed, and by which they could have admitted as many and what troops they choose from N. Carolina and Tennessee."

"The leaders of the Nullifiers have exerted all their powers and all their influence to keep up the flame among the people. Hamilton,⁴⁶ who had a fortune by his wife, and who has now, if he has not spent it in electioneering, has labored night and day. He and others have patrolled the State in all directions. They have appealed to all manner of prejudices."

"I heard Mr. McDuffie⁴⁷ in a speech in the country, say that nearly all of the Union Party in Charleston were Yankees, or the agents of Yankees and Northern manufacturers. This, by the way, is not true, for there are not a hundred Yankees in Charleston belonging to the Union Party, and there is not one connected with Northern manufacturers. But the people believed it, and it aroused their anger beyond measure." (Oh, Mr. McDuffie)

"In Charleston the Nullifiers have resorted, so as to obtain possession of the city, to all manner of bribery and corruption. You have seen how men were kept drunk for days. What you read in the newspapers at the time was all true. Two succeeding elections in this city cost them \$87,000."

⁴⁶ James Hamilton Jr. (1786-1857) — Governor of South Carolina during the Nullification crisis of 1832

⁴⁷ George McDuffie (1790-1851) — U.S. Congressman; Nullifier; later, Governor of South Carolina

"Now we are at peace again, we are not at rest. A poison has been diffused among our young men that years cannot rid them of. They have been taught to contemn and despise the Union, and thus their affections have been alienated from a government which is our pride and glory. When this attachment of the individual to the government under which he lives is broken off, he loses all the good feelings of the citizen with it. Young men, in imbibing such principles and such lessons in their youth, carry them to the grave. Again, our young men are not brought up as they ought to be. If a father has a family of boys, six hundred acres of land, and forty or fifty negroes, he brings up his boys in idleness. All their thoughts are upon horseracing, their dogs and hunting. The consequence is, that when they become men, they have bad habits, and no property, nor means of support. Then they enter into politics, and, having nothing to gain unless they can get office, they are plotting [revolution] and overthrow, for in the general ruin of all things, they can participate in the plunder. I have heard such persons say, when I was walking the street, 'we will suck that fellow by and by.' "

"Trade with us is not reputable, as it is with you. The English notion prevails here, that merchandise is vulgar and sordid, and should be left to the commons, while the **noblemen** are to live on their estates. With these ideas in men's heads, when a plantation is giving but a small income, you can well judge what must be the feelings and the politics of many who are poor, but ashamed to work, and too proud to beg. The habits of living are also expensive. There is an extravagance in everything, and but little means to support it, now that the new rich lands in the South-Western States are making our productions almost valueless. Again, the people want industry—laborious general industry, I mean. If they had the habits of the people of the Northern States, this would be the richest people on earth, for our staples command cash everywhere. The world must have them, and this can be said of none of the productions of the Northern States."

Charleston, (S.C.)
March 20th, 1833

Attended a negro auction. Two auctioneers on the same stage were at the same time selling twenty or thirty negroes. A stage, about four feet high

and ten feet square, was erected, on which the negroes were brought by pairs, by families—a lot of brothers, a mother and her infant, a whole family, sisters, and so on. The auction was near the Post Office, and the negroes, without hats or bonnets, and in ragged, dirty garments, were ranged along in a line under its shade—and purchasers were examining, talking, and feeling of them. Two horses were up for sale at the same time. One of the auctioneers was a foreigner, and with three boys, of ten, twelve, and fourteen years of age, their mother and father on the stage, was asking, "*Vat you bid for dis lot? fine lot o' niggers! Vat you bid a piece? Nobody vant nigger? fine lot o' boys as ever in de market. Pompey, vat your name? look up: look bright at de gemmen.*" "*Robin, Robin, round here! No bid on de lot! Vun hundred dollars apiece, did I hear? only vun hundred dollars apiece for dis fine lot o' niggers—for dese fat, growing boys—dis hearty vench, and dat stout, healthy old man.*" Thus, one of the auctioneers went on, while the other in better English was keeping pace on another part of the stage, and bawling as loud, and gesticulating as energetically as he could before the surrounding crowd. This "*lot o' niggers*" was disposed of at last, at one hundred and eighty dollars a head.

Next, a mother and her child at the breast, were brought upon the stage. After the principal auctioneer had trumpeted all her good qualities, these sold for two hundred and twenty-five dollars apiece.

Next a stout, well-built man was brought upon the stage, who was "*good at everything,*" according to the auctioneer; and from his appearance, I should judge he was correct, say, good for stealing, running away, lying, swearing, and fighting. He sold for four hundred and ten dollars.

Then, another mother with her boy, a fine sharp-eyed boy, with teeth like ivory, and a face blacker than a thundercloud, were brought upon the platform. The American auctioneer chanted the praises of the mother, thus—"*she is a fine wench, a good field wench—never sick a day in her life*"—and the foreign auctioneer spoke for the boy, "*Gemmen, dat be a fine boy—fine little chap—a shaver! Vat you call him in English? Boy, tell de gemmen vat your name. Speak loud—don't hear—loud—louder.*" In the meantime, the boy was whispering that his name was Swallow, I believe. "*Yes, his name is Vollow, fine feller. Vat you give, gemmen, for dis fine vench, and dis fine boy? Vat apiece?*" After running through five and ten dollar bids, from one hundred dollars to two hundred and twenty-five dollars

apiece, they were sold for the last sum, at the end of a considerable pause, interrupted by threats to knock them off, if no higher sum was bid.

Now came the sale of the horses. One, an ill-looking pacing pony, was sold for twenty dollars; and the other, a long, lean, shabby-sided fellow, was sold for fifty dollars—not worth so much by a vast deal, as the negroes.

By the way, these negro auctions are becoming very common. The novelty is wearing off. I have lost all the horror I first felt in witnessing the sale at Richmond. In three weeks more, a lot of negroes in the market will not probably create a stronger sensation than a lot of horses and boxes. Of such materials are we made—and so necessary is it to remember this mark of human nature, before we condemn our Southern brethren. Is there one among us who would not do likewise, if our interests, our education, our feelings, our habits, all led that way? Let us answer that question, before we censure too fiercely.

I am not, I cannot be, the apologist of those holding men in bondage. I look upon slavery with all the horror a man can feel, who has been taught to consider all men as free and equal, but I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that the free black population here are infinitely worse off than the slaves. With many exceptions, undoubtedly—they are guilty of all manner of bad habits. They steal and plunder without hesitation, restrained only by fear of detection and punishment. They have no inducements to reform, or to be ambitious, for society keeps them forever in one path, and common resolution forbids their even daring to aim beyond it, or over it, if they had inducements.

White and black cannot amalgamate on equal conditions, no more than fire and water can associate. One must obtain the mastery over the other. It is easy to theorize. I grant that there are blacks whose intellect is as susceptible of high-wrought cultivation as that of any white man. I grant that they **may be** all that the warmest philanthropist may desire, but never in their present association. Give them all freedom at once, and you cannot change the laws and the prejudices of human nature. You cannot unmake men. You cannot make white and black associate on equal terms. Two men cannot be together an hour without one's obtaining superiority over the other. Much less can two classes of men of opposite complexions live on equal terms. With all our beautiful theories of freedom and

equality in our country, they are only fantasies, even in the Northern States. They who preach the most about them are not infrequently the greatest aristocrats and tyrants.

I have never seen perfect equality in any part of our country, but the nearest approximation to it is in the interior of New England—not in the new towns and villages, for it is not there, but at the fireside of her farmers and in her free schools. Perhaps I have now seen and been in all the various kinds of society that our country displays, and I must confess that there is none in which there is so much enjoyment, so much equality, so much freedom from pride and haughtiness, as in the social features in the interior of her New England. The *beau ideal* of equality is realized there, if anywhere. I do not hesitate to say then, that where there is the greatest equality, there is the greatest happiness for the majority. Having such views, I could be no advocate for slavery, not for an association of white and black which must, in the nature of things, keep one or the other in bondage. I believe, furthermore, that no man has a right to hold his fellow man in bondage, not a day nor an hour, unless compelled by the stern law of necessity, or of self-preservation. Such laws justify almost everything, and almost anything. But they do not justify the apathy in the Southern States, and the want of an effort to be rid of an evil which, slaveholders themselves confess, palsies their energies and jeopardizes their existence. As I see more, I shall have much to say on this subject.⁴⁸

In watching the effects of slavery, and in furnishing you with descriptions of auctions and other things, which might have a tendency to exasperate, unaccompanied by other reflections, let me say—I am neither for nor against the Colonization Society⁴⁹ as yet. I have not had the facts nor the opportunities to come to an opinion. I will give your readers all I see, and then we will come to a conclusion together, and judge how much good we can do. Slavery is not now a topic to be silent upon, as many tell us. We have a right to speak, and are in duty bound to speak. Public opinion at the South will justify us. But let us speak with a full knowledge of the subject, and with that consideration, which is due to our brethren who

⁴⁸ Fuller observations by Brooks on the subject of slavery can be found in the Appendix.

⁴⁹ American Colonization Society — Established in 1816 to support the migration of free-born black Americans to Africa; helped to found Liberia (1821-22)

feel the weight of the burden pressing upon them, and who all confess "*they know what to do.*"

Charleston, (S.C.)
March 21st, 1833

At last I am in the city of the blue cockade, and the palmetto button. I have shipped one of these nullifying badges to gratify Portland curiosity, which when it arrives, please hang up "as a mirror." I see the Nullifiers in every street, with their badges on, wearing them as proudly and as fearlessly as if they were wearing the eagle of their country. But, peace has come. The blue cockade is gradually being doffed. The sloop of war "*Natchez*" has moved up near the city. The numerous revenue cutters are lying just off the wharves, and are no longer threatening in the offing. Ladies and gentlemen of all parties are visiting them. Today the "*Natchez*" gives a party, and lady-Nullifiers and gentleman-Nullifiers, in abundance, will undoubtedly honor the occasion with their presence. Thus, I shall see the cockade of Carolina under the folds of the American flag. Thus, I shall see peace and harmony restored, and better feelings prevailing in a city, where two months ago, I had not a doubt that by this time there would be bloodshed and conflagration.

No Carolinian of any party doubts that the Nullifiers were in earnest. No one doubts that they had resolved to do their utmost. Union men have told me that they expected to lose their lives and their property, but, at all hazards, they were determined to maintain the supremacy of the laws, and they had not a doubt of their final success. They calculate that they had sufficient numerical strength of their own to match the Nullifiers, but with the whole nation to back them, they were inspired with a confidence which the other party could not feel. The Nullifiers do not deny that they are glad to have escaped from the peril in which they were involved, escaping as they do without a retreat, or a capitulation, but under the obscurity of a Tariff Bill, which is so ingeniously framed as, for a while at least, sufficiently to protect the manufacturers, yet leaving open for good arguments on both sides, the principle of protection.

I have been in South Carolina but a little while, but I have been here long enough to see that there are three parties, for I have conversed freely

with each and all. There is not a small party here averse to the Union in any form, and bent upon its destruction. Tariff or no Tariff, they are eager for a dissolution of the confederacy. They pant for an opportunity to put in motion the wheels of a revolution that shall upset everything. This party is principally composed of men who have nothing to lose and much to gain. Young men of ruined fortunes and dissolute habits, horse racers, gamblers, card players, are conspicuous among the number. They embody the very materials that Cicero described as under the orders of Catiline.⁵⁰ There is another party among the Nullifiers, much as strong, composed of men honestly and ardently attached to the Union, who will peril their lives and fortunes in support of it, but who are as resolutely opposed to the protecting system, and who honestly believe that Nullification is a peaceable remedy, and that it has now effected its purposes—that of compelling the General Government to recede from its position. The third party is the Union party, stronger than either of the two first disunited, but weaker when they are united. The character of this party is so well known that I need not describe it. In Charleston, it is composed of the principal men of business.

The late Convention at Columbia,⁵¹ which is just dissolved, discloses a little of the spirit of all their parties. You see one man, at least, there openly denouncing the Union, and clamoring for a separation. You see, for a wonder, the famous Hamilton, who, by the way, is the most popular man in South Carolina, and who never knew what it was to be beaten in an election, honorably opposing this sentiment and rebuking it. You see, also, that the Union men and the Nullifiers have defeated the disunion men, in form at least, so far as to put off the proposed test oath to the consideration of the Legislature. This Convention has also been very moderate for a despotic, uncontrolled, party majority, which, by the way, is one of the worst tyrannies on earth, bad enough in concurrent majorities, but insufferable in a single body. True, "the Bloody Bill," as it is termed here *par excellence*, is nullified, but this is such impotent, and safe Nullification, that people only laugh at it. The Union men here tell the Nullifiers, "*if you don't steal, you won't be hanged, and as you have resolved to be quiet, you nullified the Bloody Bill even without the form of law.*"

⁵⁰ Cicero described Catiline's conspirators as "... rich men who were in debt, men eager for power and wealth, ruined men who hoped for any change, criminals, profligates ..." (ref. Wikipedia, Second Catiline Oration, 63 B.C.)

⁵¹ Columbia, (S.C.) Conventions — Met November 19th, 1832 and March 11th, 1833

Nullification is only rendered a little more ridiculous by this operation—just as if a body of men were to nullify all the penal laws of the land, but at the same time, resolve to commit no offence under them.

I cannot give you a better idea of the state of things here, than by reciting the conversations which I hold. I give you first the conversation with a stage driver, whom, as soon as we entered upon the dominions of South Carolina, we found to be a Nullifier. He was ignorant enough on many points, but he is a fair specimen, I dare say, of many of the Nullifiers in the country.

Question. How old are you?

Answer. Almost twenty.

Q. Are there any Nullifiers about here?

A. I am a Nullifier.

Q. But you can't vote?

A. I do vote.

Q. How so? The law will not let a man vote, unless he is twenty-one.

A. I know it, and I suppose if it were strictly inquired into, I could not vote; but I live in a nullifying district and I do vote; and if anybody challenged me, I should knock them down.

Q. What makes you a Nullifier?

A. Because we are all growing poor. The d__d Yankees are taking all the money out of the country. South Carolina pays all the taxes. She pays, I don't know how much, but a hundred millions of dollars, I think.

"Oh no," I said.

"But my tracts say so," was the reply.

"Oh then, you have tracts? Where do they come from? Who pays for them?"

A. We pay the postage. They send them to us from Georgetown and Charleston.

Q. And you have nullifying almanacs also?

A. Yes, and books and newspapers in abundance. We read much.

Q. How can the Yankees be taking money from you?

A. They make us pay all the taxes, and charge us twice as much for things as they are worth. They do take money from us, for they get rich, and we are growing poor. They make us pay to support their factories. They pay no taxes, and we pay all the taxes. Cotton brings nothing now as it did in old times. Our shingles also are fallen in the market. Everything we have

to sell is so cheap that we cannot live.

Q. But would you break up this government for a few cents in taxes? Tell me what taxes you pay, to get rid of which you were going to risk your life?

A. I go for my State and my country.

Q. No, you don't go for your country; you go against it. What taxes do you pay? You wear nothing for which you pay taxes to the Yankees. Your coat is of the Carolina cloth. Your hat (it was an old straw thing) never came from the North.

A. These are Yankee pantaloons, (they were made of satinet.). I don't know that I pay my taxes, but my State has nullified, and I go for my State. Who would not go for his country?

Q. But what were you going to do, if the worse had come to the worst?

A. Going to fight.

Q. Whom were you going to fight?

A. The d__d Yankees.

Q. But the Yankees would never come here to fight you. They would leave the negroes to take care of you!

A. Who cares for the negroes? They have not spunk enough to whip a possum.

Q. But Gen. Jackson would have brought his Tennesseans here, who whipped the British at New Orleans!

A. They would all have died in our lowlands, and rice swamps.

Q. But I see nobody in these pine woods. You have no population. Where are your people to fight?

A. I belong to a volunteer corps in which there are sixty, and we meet once a month to exercise and drill.

Q. But what could you do with this company?

A. Go to Charleston. There were ten thousand of us, going there to take the fort.

Q. Should you have gone?

A. Yes, go anywhere for my State.

Q. But this fighting is dangerous. Men get killed. Were you willing for the old satinet pantaloons to lose your life?

A. I should stand my chance.

Q. But your chance would be a slim one in attempting to take on the water, with only ten thousand raw soldiers, a fortified castle.

A. Oh, we were going on rafts. The cavalry was coming down the rivers.

Q. But when you had taken this, the port was blockaded. You could not

take the cutters and the sloop of war.

A. But we could have starved the Yankees and kept from them our cotton and our rice.

Q. The Yankees could get cotton and rice enough elsewhere, and you would suffer more in this manner than they would.

A. Georgia and Virginia were going with us, and with them we could have whipped the Yankees.

Q. Do you know there are almost as many white people in the single city of New York as in the whole State of South Carolina?

A. Are there?

Q. Have you ever been out of South Carolina?

A. No.

Q. Do you know how large this country is?

A. I reckon I do.

Q. Do you think South Carolina would be missed if she were to go out of the Union?

A. She pays all the taxes, and the Union men cannot do without her. Why did Congress give up and repeal the Tariff, if she was not afraid of her?

Q. Do you think the Tariff is repealed?

A. Certainly.

Q. Oh no. Not a duty is yet reduced.

A. They are all reduced or taken off, for shingles and other things are now worth much more in Charleston than they were. If they are not taken off, my tracts lie."

This conversation gave us a good idea of the feelings which have wrought up the mass of the people in South Carolina to such an exasperation. This man is by no means a specimen of the intelligent Nullifiers, but he is a good specimen of the backwoodsmen who were to do the fighting. The high-mettled fellow has been first taught to "*damn the Yankees*," next to cultivate an undue State Pride, then to believe his State is omnipotent, and her continuance in the Union all-important, and indispensably necessary to support the government. He solemnly believed, and would have taken his oath, that South Carolina paid all the taxes of this vast Union. At a hundred millions of dollars he set down her burden! A *foreign* nation was about to subdue him and his State, and his pride rose on the reflection, and he was ready to throw his life away in attacking a fortified castle on an open raft! Mr. Calhoun's well-instructed backwoodsmen, of whom he boasted in Congress, are as ignorant of the extent, power, and

complicated interests of this government, as are the Rocky Mountain Indians, whom it is necessary to take to Cincinnati, Philadelphia and New York, so as to impress upon their own eyes, a proper sense of the nation they border upon, and with whom they may intend to wage war.

Charleston (S.C.)
March 23rd, 1833

Attended a dinner party at _____. Met General Scott,⁵² who is a tall, accomplished and polite Virginian; also, Commodore Elliot,⁵³ Colonel Bankhead,⁵⁴ and many other officers of the Army and Navy who, by the way, have been received with great hospitality in Charleston—publicly, by the Union party, and individually, by the Nullifiers; also, Mr. J. L. Petigru,⁵⁵ who is a distinguished lawyer and politician in South Carolina, and a most amiable man; also, Mr. Poinsett,⁵⁶ who lives on his fortune, and who has much influence with his political friends—a small (small in person I mean) unassuming man; and a few others of the most prominent individuals of the city.

The lawyers praised Mr. Greenleaf's⁵⁷ reports, said they were among the best in the Union. The Reporter in S.C. has a salary of \$1,500, and does not attend the Judges in their circuits, and of course, makes no briefs of the lawyer's argument. In passing, Dr. Payson⁵⁸ and my friend, Mr. Neal,⁵⁹ an old association, are well known everywhere. I meet no Presbyterian,

⁵² Winfield Scott (1786-1866) — born in Virginia; General in U.S. Army; Commander of Federal troops during Indian Wars

⁵³ Jesse Duncan Elliot (1782-1845)— Commodore, U.S. Navy; commanded naval forces at Charleston during Nullification crisis

⁵⁴ James Monroe Bankhead (1783-1856) — born in Virginia; U.S. Army officer; served in Second Seminole War

⁵⁵ James Louis Petigru (1789-1863) — lawyer; Attorney General of South Carolina; opponent of Nullification and Secession

⁵⁶ Joel Roberts Poinsett (1779-1851) — born in Charleston (S.C.); U.S. politician and diplomat; Secretary of War

⁵⁷ Simon Greenleaf (1783-1853) — born in Massachusetts; lawyer; reporter of Supreme Court of Maine, 1820-1832; later, Professor at Harvard Law School

⁵⁸ Rev. Dr. Edward Payson (1783-1827) — American Congregational preacher, of Portland, Maine; renowned for the published collection of his sermons

⁵⁹ John Neal (1793-1876) — Lawyer and author of Portland, Maine; Mentor to Brooks during the latter's legal studies

and but few well-informed men, who have not read the memoirs of the first. The book makes a profound impression, and adds vastly to Dr. Payson's reputation. One gentleman, not very reverently, remarked that the life of Dr. Payson was in theology, particularly his Journal, what Moore's⁶⁰ Byron was in poetry. Everybody has heard of John Neal, and wonder how he got so far "down east," where many good people here believe the snow is on the earth the year round, and ask "*How can you live in so cold a country?*"

Was informed that Captain Howard,⁶¹ of Portland, though sent here to keep the Nullifiers quiet if they did not behave well, was one of the most popular of men among them. They tell a good answer of his to a leading Nullifier at a dinner table, when asked "*What will you do with our harbor?*" "*Seal you up, if ordered,*" was the answer, "*as a bottle of good champagne. Shall do it with great reluctance, for I like the champagne, but must obey orders.*"

The dinner was, like all dinners, (all good dinners, I mean) easy, agreeable, and of course interesting; sat down at five, got up before nine. Nothing remarkable as a Charleston dinner, except that they put on dishes to wash one's hands in, and have black servants in a rich livery.

Read Mrs. Trollope's⁶² "*Refugee in America.*" It is worth reading, but it is evident she has seen nothing of American society. She cannot even imitate *Americanism*. She cants much on the word "*expect,*" which she is ever putting into every American's mouth. The word is little used at the North, except in its proper place, but more used here for *suspect*. "*Obliviated*" never used. "*Associational*" and "*educational*"! never used. The book is a wretched caricature of American manners, but the story is interesting. "The English folks" it seems, were very easily imposed upon by the simple Americans. The hero, an Englishman, found a perfect and an accomplished wife in this rude land! The three most depraved characters in the book are, a murderer, a gambler, and a divine! the other

⁶⁰ Thomas Moore (1779-1852) — Irish poet and songwriter; published biography of the poet, Lord Byron (1829)

⁶¹ William A. Howard — Born in Maine; captain of U.S. revenue cutter at Portland station

⁶² Mrs. Frances Milton Trollope (1779-1863) — English authoress; travelled through U.S.; spent time in Cincinnati

a smuggler and would-be murderer; and the other, the cousin, the most detestable of wretches! What "English folks!" Bah!

March 24th. Went to church. The bells ring every which way. Showers were pouring down copiously, like our July showers. Loud thunder. "Heat lightning" in the evening. Looked into an Episcopal church, saw little or nothing but the minister reading. Went to the ___ church, counted sixty persons, men, women, and children on the lower floor, in a larger church—a cloud of negroes in the left-hand gallery, and a few white persons in the right-hand gallery. This congregation, on account of the rain, it was said—glad to hear it—but thought there were sixty too many on the lower floor to hear such a preacher. In the afternoon went to another church, Presbyterian—a larger congregation, but still thin. They have free churches in Charleston, and many of them. Was told that the negroes had a place of worship of their own, previous to the projected insurrection in 1822, but as firearms were found there at that time, the church was broken up, and separate seats were assigned them in the churches for the whites.

Negroes pitch marbles a little on Sunday, but otherwise Charleston is a soberer place than Richmond or Washington on the Sabbath.

March 25th. Went on board of the sloop of war "*Natchez*," with two clergymen, a party of ladies and gentlemen. The "gig", as the boat is called, was in constant motion to and from the shore, laden with passengers to the "*Natchez*." On Saturday, was told, there were over two hundred ladies on board; today, a hundred, looking at the "big guns" that were to open their mouths, if compelled, upon the naughty Nullifiers. Everything was very neat. The captain's cabin as elegant as any parlor, with a very good library in it. A poor sailor was being flogged in the forecabin, who roared like a lion. A sick sailor was swinging in a hammock. Officers very polite. All American officers of the Army and Navy that I have met with are very polite. Politeness and gallantry are a part of their discipline. A great parade was made when the captain came on board. The boatswain whistled; the marines presented arms; the under officers and middies lifted their hats. Came to the conclusion, that he who has men to command in the Army or Navy must become a despot of necessity, and thus be spoiled for any other command. What government equals that of a military government? What severity and precision of discipline! Ladies

and gentlemen waltzed on the upper deck under an awning. The sun was hot. The music was a violin, a clarinet, and a tambourine. Talked with the Yankee ladies about home, with some Spanish ladies about Havana and England. Long dissertation upon waltzing—the Yankee abused it, and the Spaniard defended it.

This is what you will call, free-and-easy writing, or thinking—in print—out loud. I have a lot of such things to tell you, and have tried in vain to arrange them in book-like sentences, but I can't keep up any connection, and in despair have copied *verbatim* from my Journal, as I must send home something.

Charleston (S.C.)
March 26th, 1833

Visited the Charleston Public Library, saw many books, forgot to ask how many, but a large and well selected library—also, a few newspapers, anti-Tariff—and a fine Belvedere Apollo,⁶³ than which nothing can be more superb. This library is owned by individuals. A tax of ten dollars a year supports it. It is in the third story of a brick building. Many persons were talking of Secession and Nullification. Some complained loudly of the British Ministry in attempting the liberation of the blacks in the West Indies—said, it would make Northern fanatics run mad to imitate the example. The librarian was very civil. Strangers are admitted on introduction.

Talked of going by water to New Orleans in the schooner "*Cora*"—not an over-large schooner. Went to look at her; found a large crowd of blacks around; saw some looking very sober, others a-grinning and showing their ivory teeth; many blacks on deck, women and children. Made my way through them on board, saw many black hands stretched up through a slatting over the hatches, which is perhaps not ten feet square. Learnt that this was a slave vessel, with one hundred and twenty slaves for New Orleans. Talked with the slave-trader, who told me that slaves have brought a high price there, for the cholera had depopulated some plantations—said that he sometimes made two hundred dollars a head.

⁶³ Apollo Belvedere — famous Italian sculpture of the god Apollo, worked in white marble, dating from the 2nd century A.D.

There was a partition below deck, separating the men from the women. Saw some from on shore bidding "*Goodbye*" and "*God bless you*" to the slaves below, and shaking hands with them, as they reached their hands through the lattices—and adding "*Don't sob so*"—"You will write me." My heart ached at the spectacle. I caught the sympathy of sorrow for an instant, but for an instant only. Oh, my country! my country! Some of the slaves were sobbing as if they would break their hearts. Some were saying, "*Massa, don't forget the tobacco,*" some were laughing and hopping up; some were singing Methodist hymns. What an odd world this of ours! Mournful as is such a spectacle, the odd association of extreme joy and extreme sorrow did provoke a smile. Everybody looked on as if nothing wonderful was happening. Some negroes on the wharf were crying a little. I saw an old man wipe the tear from his eye as he looked into the hold for the last time, just as the vessel was dropping off into the stream. I asked the slave-trader about him, he told me "*His wife much younger than he, was there, and that he offered to buy him, but he would not go.*"

Held a long talk with the slave-trader, who said he was purchasing negroes all the time, took cargoes in Norfolk, and all along the James River. Asked him about purchasing a man without his wife, which he said he did when it was necessary, but not otherwise. Sometimes a negro married a wife on another plantation than that of his master, and when both could not be traded for, was obliged to trade for one. Asked him what was their process of marrying. He said they took each other without form or ceremony, except in the cities, where he believed there was a little ceremony, but that they were in general faithful to their engagements, and chaste. He had known a wife when bought and separated from her husband, to marry another husband twenty-four hours afterwards. Such marriages were considered necessary and legal, when there was a separation. This slave-trader said slaves were happy when they had a good master, but if they had a cruel one, they had a hard time of it. He said "*This was a capital lot of slaves; it was seldom they behaved so well.*" Sometimes he was obliged to handcuff them, and drive them to the vessel thus handcuffed, from the "Sugar House," a kind of negro prison here, where slaves are flogged. They often attempted to run away when he first bought them, but in a short time, as he treated them kindly, they behaved well enough. The "*Cora*" was hauling off in the stream, so as to get the negroes from their companions on shore; and also, so that the captain

could let them above decks, without the danger of their running away. Sometimes, I was told, they would swim ashore, sharks or no sharks, alligators or no alligators. I don't go to New Orleans with such a crew.

Run around and made calls on people, and left other letters of introduction. Charleston is one of the most hospitable places in the world. A stranger is greeted with continued kindness from men of the first rank. Went, after dinner, up and down King Street, which is the promenade of Charleston, the Broadway, though a very narrow way of the city. In this street are the bookstores, which, here as elsewhere, are the resorts of the literary-given; also "the English good stores," and millinery shops. In one, where I went to buy a blue cockade and a palmetto button, which is a gilt button, by the way, with a palmetto tree stamped on it—which button, some say, "the d__d Yankees" made—in this shop I saw lots of ladies buying Nullification badges for the Nullification Ball to be given at the Citadel tomorrow evening. Ladies here, like the men, are all politicians. I am told, however, that since the peace, the eagle buttons, the brilliant epaulettes, the uniforms, and the gallantry of Uncle Sam's officers, have made sad havoc upon Nullification hearts. They are more powerful than powder and ball.

To return to King Street. In spring, summer, and autumn, hundreds of ladies are to be seen there at five and six o'clock, some on foot, but more in carriages, bonnets off—windows and curtains up—thus riding along leisurely. In winter, the turnout is at midday—in warm weather, after dinner, for then is the only comfortable time. Ladies, here in the street, are far less showy in their dresses than in the Northern cities. There is none of the gaudy display of the New York Broadway. The colors are modest; the fashions, (if they be fashions, and if everyone does not dress as taste or whim dictates) modest and unassuming. There is great plainness in dress, comparatively speaking.

Charleston, (S.C.)
March 27th, 1833

Visited the Poor House of this city, in which there is great regularity, greatness, and an apparent air of comfort. There was an apartment for maniacs, but the maniacs are now removed to Columbia. For the first

time, I saw a straitjacket, which is a kind of a duck bag that is laced behind. The keeper, who was very obliging, took us into every apartment, the hospital and all. How much wretchedness there is in this world! How many miserable human beings whom we little think of in the heyday of life.

I next went to the "Sugar House," as it is called. "*Why?*" I asked. "*I don't know,*" was the answer, "*unless it is, because here they sweeten the negroes.*" This Sugar House is a negro jail, where negroes are sent to be flogged, and where they are forced to work, another negro watching over them with a long cowhide, which he lays on when they are lazy or don't work rapidly enough. It is also the place where negroes are sent in the morning from the Guard House—such negroes as are caught in the street after 10 o'clock at night at this season, and 9 o'clock in winter. There is a regular law that no negro shall be out after 10 at night, without a written pass from his master, or some white person. If one is found in the street after that hour, the City Guard take him to the Guard House, keep him till morning, then send him to the Sugar House, where he is kept, I think till ten o'clock A.M., where his master can have him by paying a dollar, but if this is not done by ten, he is flogged and sent off. The City Guard is the City Police. The men wear uniform, and perform guard duty at night. They are well paid at ____ dollars a month. The expense of the city is not small. The object in keeping up such an establishment is to keep the negroes in subjection. One can hear them crying out at all times of night, "*All's well.*" I think that's the cry.

In this Sugar House was a corn mill, or rather a treadmill, to grind corn by. Six negroes were walking on it, and were then turning the wheel. One black girl was there. One descends, and another ascends every three minutes, which time is denoted by a bell ringing after so many evolutions of the wheel. There was also a little garden, the vegetables in which were very forward. One negro was hoeing them, and another was standing by him with a cowhide, to keep him at work. Thus, one works, but it takes another to watch over him. Fine economy!

I looked at the flogging machine. The faulty negro—poor wretch—puts his hands in a noose, and is hoisted far up by a rope running through a double block, so that his feet just touch the floor. His feet are then fastened by a rope to a heavy piece of plank. Previous to this, however,

the victim is stripped of all his clothes. Then a negro with a stout cowhide lays on the blows. I had not the courage to inquire how many, or how the punishment is graduated. Negro flogs negro! Jew eats Jew!

This Sugar House is let out by the city for \$1,500 a year. The emoluments are the garden, the toll on the corn ground, fifty cents for turning the key on every negro that is admitted, one dollar a head for the negroes picked up at night, ten pence a day for board, with some other like perquisites.

I strolled around and looked at the jail, which is a firm, fast, and good building in the vicinity, and next looked at the Marine Hospital, which the government is fast building on a large plan, and lastly, at the Medical College, plastered in imitation of our granite.

The morning not being disposed of, I called with my letters of introduction to see Governor Hayne,⁶⁴ at "the Executive Room," in a fireproof building, in which the State Records are kept. The Governor was dressed in a blue coat, covered over with palmetto buttons. No man is more of a gentleman, whether here or at Washington, than Governor Hayne. Southern chivalry does not realize a better personification. He is the orator of the South—the best speaker, as a speaker, in this region, that I know of. Warm, open-hearted, frank, generous, easy, natural, and unaffected in his manners—what a pity that such a man is a Nullifier! He said he had been as far north as Salem, and had travelled up the valley of the Connecticut to Canada, which valley, he said, was the garden of the United States. He paid our people not a few compliments, which no Yankee, in a far-off land, can object to hearing. I wanted to ask him, if he did not think our people an *agricultural* people as well as a manufacturing people; for it is a distinction sometimes drawn by the Nullifiers—that **we** are a manufacturing people, and **they** are an agricultural people—and therefore the interests of the two sections are discordant—and, therefore—what? The Union must be dissolved, for we cannot live on equal terms with each other. Now, New England is as much of an agricultural country as South Carolina—and probably more so. Whatever affects planters here, affects farmers there. And yet there are many here who suppose the mass of our population to live in mills, ships, and

⁶⁴ Robert Young Hayne (1791-1839) — born in South Carolina; US Senator 1823-1832; State Governor, 1832-1834; later, mayor of Charleston; proponent of States' rights

factories, or in conditions dependent upon them—and not on farms!

As I can now go to the Ball of the Nullifiers ... under good auspices—a great Ball by the way, commemorative of—I know not what—to be given this evening in the Citadel, I accepted a ticket politely given me as a stranger, and shall go to see how the Nullifiers manage, as well as to see society in the mass. My ticket calls it "the State Rights, Free Trade and Military Ball." In the center of the ticket is an ellipse, in the middle of which is the palmetto, crossed by two spears—and in the circumference—"South Carolina, *animis opibusque parati*."⁶⁵ I peeped at the Citadel today, and saw great preparations. The entrance was over-arched with a grand painting, which some cicerone must expound to me. *Dum spiro, spero, spes*, (more Latin!)—while I breathe, I hope [, *hope*]—was painted around one of the images. The State troops—for the State has troops! —were arrayed around the door under arms. What can there be within?

Charleston, (S.C.)
March 28th, 1833

The Nullifiers here do things in a grand style. This Charleston is no laggard in working off a *fete*. The Nullifiers are men of taste, men of little guns and big guns, swords and cutlasses, great spunk and fine speeches, pretty ladies and pretty dances. Who would not be a Nullifier to live in such a land, feed on such chivalry—and enjoy such a *fete*, as a Nullification Ball? As a Yankee under good auspices, I went last evening into the Citadel, the heart of the Nullifiers' camp—and among big-mouthed cannon, muskets, fusees, pistols, long swords and short swords, king's arms, rifles, and fowling pieces, spears, pikes and bayonets bristling for horrid war, I found—think what? not less than twelve hundred ladies! What a place to put ladies in, good-hearted creatures, if they are like our Northern belles, and fair ones! What an area for the dance—"to trip the light fantastic toe" in! amid such a panoply of war! such an array of murderous weapons! such a flaunting of flags! such a display of cockades, and of men waltzing and *cotillioning* in swords, pistols, daggers and tent-like uniform! Cupid fights with no such weapons in my country. Love there comes of itself. It is not spurred up by the

⁶⁵ Translation — "prepared in mind and resources"; Virgil. *Aeneid*

bayonet, hurried on by mottoes, and folded up in flags. The cold North precipitates headlong into the passion: but the warm South takes the drum and the *fife*, the horn and the tambourine for a stimulus. The ladies in my land are alarmed when the bayonet gleams, or the shining blade is drawn—and faint at a dagger-scene! but here—mercy on their **hard-hearted** hearts—they live on "the pomp and circumstance of war;" they dance over stacks of arms almost tripping athwart the points of the bayonets; they sit upon huge balls, and cartouche boxes, and cannon-carriages; they wear the cockades on their very bosoms. Venus is not enthroned in the saloon, in the drawing-room nor in the parlor, but in the camp in the Citadel! What a people! What belligerent—amazons, I was going to say—but that they were fairy-cinctured, beautiful and delicate, and all one could wish for, except in their love of arms—warlike arms, I mean.

Well, I went to the Ball at 8 o'clock, or a little before. It was in the Citadel, which is the armory of the State, and where are deposited Carolina's munitions of war, with which she was going to whip her twenty-three sovereign sisters—with men enough to eat her up, slaves and all, if they gave the Kentuckians but the quantum of an eye and an ear apiece. The Citadel is an oblong building, perhaps two hundred feet in length and with an open area on the center, perhaps sixty feet in width. This area was floored over for the occasion, a canopy over-hanging it—and thus a grand, a magnificent Hall was prepared. The armories answered for drawing rooms. We hung our hats on bayonets. Their muzzles answered for candlesticks, their barrels for reflectors, as well as the tin dippers, tin pails and other tin so-forths, which radiated the light most brilliantly in all directions. Around the outside door was a vast multitude of black people, white people and yellow people, with not a few nondescripts. Pillars and arches of light, of almost all colors, formed by variegated glasses, in which were the lamps—immense in number—were thrown around the door. There were blue lights, (ominous enough!) scarlet lights, red lights, pale lights, yellow lights, green lights—in short, as many sorts of lights as there had been sorts of politicians. A beautiful transparency appeared among them with the badges of Carolina, the goddess of freedom, trumpet sounding—the mottoes of Carolina, and other figures and devices, which, not being versed in Nullification escutcheons and Nullification heraldry, I cannot explain. "*Nullification is*

the rightful remedy" (quoted from Jefferson in large capitals) glared the spectator in the face.

Rockets and bombs were let off in all directions; the Nullifiers vociferated and hurraed. The effect was grand beyond description—beyond anything I have seen anywhere. The Nullifiers eclipse us all—in everything—in talking, bragging, fighting, scolding, fretting and in great displays. Who would not be a Nullifier?

From half past seven till nine, carriages in line were discharging men in epaulettes, plumes, palmetto buttons, green coats, grey coats, red coats, and black coats, white breeches, yellow breeches, and black breeches. All the soldiery, the volunteers of this **empire**, came in the uniforms of their corps. Some wore badges of Nullification on their left breasts. Some bedecked themselves with leaves of palmetto. And carriages were discharging ladies also, two at least to each gentleman, ladies in white, in black, in scarlet, in blue—in all colors—ladies in feathers and hats of all fashions and all descriptions, some few in boas, many with cockades, many with palmetto flounces interwoven laterally, longitudinally, and elliptically. No two ladies were robed alike. No two looked alike.

Now let us go into the Hall. A more magnificent picture was to be seen. We ascended a flight of stone stairs—walked along an ornamented piazza or corridor, interwoven with imitation flags of cambric muslin of red and white, and sprigs of cedar, and live oak leaves, and palmetto. Ranges of card tables were spread in the gentlemen's drawing room. Rivers of wine were near. Refreshments of ices, of trifles, of lemonade, of a thousand nondescripts—who can tell how many? One's head and hair adjusted, and hat disposed of, he was ushered along the gallery, so as to view the company below, who, now the Governor had entered in uniform and epaulettes, and General Hamilton also, in all the pomp of the camp, with their respective suites, prepared to dance. Cotillions were formed in the crowd with exceeding difficulty, but when they were formed, the black band, who were planted somewhere on high, on a stage, amid flags and medallions, and palmetto trees, began to sound with horn, and clarinet, and drum and cymbals, and I know not what of other instruments, but that they made a deafening noise.

I took this opportunity to go below, to run among the groups, in order to see the curiosities. The area was covered all over with men, ladies and children. The portico was full of ranges of seats, all occupied. Four brass fieldpieces, highly polished, were directed towards the dancers—it may be, to accustom them to these speaking instruments. Over the cannon were pyramids of candles, some fifteen feet in height, in each corner of the area. Near them, also, were large cannonballs and matches, torches I mean, all ready for battle. Under the staging for the band were large iron pieces of ordnance, with their mouths towards the company. Back of them were five ranges of supper tables. Crossing the columns, festooned and arched, were the names of the Nullification districts. Around the columns were wreaths of palmetto. Between the columns were medallions with emblematic devices, on which were compliments to distinguished Nullifiers in South Carolina. Calhoun had one, and was called "*the great luminary.*" McDuffie had one, and was said "*to have the eloquence of Henry with the heart of Hampden.*"⁶⁶ Hayne had one, with an extract from one of his speeches. Hamilton had one with—I have forgotten what. W. R. Davis⁶⁷ and Barnwell⁶⁸ had only one, with a compliment, which was not fair, for why should they not have had one apiece? Pinckney⁶⁹ had one. Sumter⁷⁰ had one, and was called "*an old cock whose last crow was for liberty.*" Jefferson had one, with an urn on it, in which were many devices. Turnbull⁷¹ had one, which called him Brutus. In short, they made all Romans, or something else, of almost all the Nullifiers. Liberty had her medallions. "*The Bloody Bill*" was figured forth as "*the disgrace of the American Senate.*" Free Trade and State Rights had their medallion. Loud-sounding sentiments, lots of poetry, with the repeated quotation from Jefferson, "*Nullification is the rightful remedy,*" also stared us in the face.

⁶⁶ Hampden — *sic*, Wade Hampton (1755-1835) — born S.C.; served in Revolutionary War; wealthy planter and owner of numerous slaves

⁶⁷ Warren R. Davis (1793-1835) — born in S.C.; lawyer; U.S. representative; Nullifier

⁶⁸ Robert Barnwell (1761-1814) — born in South Carolina; fought in Revolutionary War; member of U.S. Congress and S.C. House of Representatives

⁶⁹ Thomas Pinckney (1750-1828) — born in South Carolina; patriot, serving in Revolutionary War; S.C. governor; diplomat

⁷⁰ Thomas Sumter (1734-1832) — born in Virginia; general in S.C. militia during American War of Independence; later, U.S. representative and senator

⁷¹ Robert James Turnbull (1775-1833) — born in Florida; S.C. planter and politician; advocate of Nullification; pen-name "Brutus"

Enjoying all this, and thus in the heart of the Nullifier's camp, I ran around among gentlemen and ladies, with that perfect independence in which obscurity always clothes one. I knew but few, and could not find that few very often in the multitude. Here was a bevy of ladies, discussing the merits of Yankees and Yankee women. There a platoon over-sweeping and demolishing a half-formed cotillion. Here was the Governor of the State, in cap, plume, and epaulettes, with his amiable lady, wearing the cockade of Carolina. There, ex-Governor Hamilton, emperor of the South, with his suite around him, far less humble than Napoleon, when only trampling over the thrones of Europe, though he, with Carolina alone, was triumphing over twenty-three confederated *nations*, reaching almost over the half of one vast continent. Here was a cluster of generals, and colonels, and captains, epauletted to the ears, with swords dangling between their feet, or perchance spurs sticking into their heels. There, a body of men, vaunting the prowess of Carolina, and glorying in the sight before them, with hearts beating high, as they ran their eyes over the four brass fieldpieces, and the glittering bayonets encircling the pillars. "Carolina," "Carolina!" it was all Carolina with them. "Who will not stand by Carolina?" "Who does not think Carolina is immortal?" "Brave Carolina!" "Magnanimous, chivalrous Carolina!" "The Haynes, the Hamiltons, the Sumters, the Pinckneys, the Calhouns, the McDuffies, the Millers,⁷² the Turnbulls of Carolina!" "Hurrah for Carolina!" These were the exclamations or mottoes. The people, men, women, and children were all mad. There is no doing anything with such a people, unless you put a straitjacket on them—and that will never do in this free country. Talk of Nullification dying! It is nonsense, where you work upon the passions and the feelings of the people with such shows. Every man and child there will live and die a Nullifier. I had half a mind to become one myself.

Wearied with running round and gaping, I took to the cotillions in order to form an acquaintance with the lady-Nullifiers. They dance as Northern ladies dance, unless it be in new-fangled cotillions. They had a Spanish dance, a contra dance, a Virginia reel, waltzed a little, and attempted a gallopade—all in Yankee slippers, I dare say—when the supper disposed of, and the lights growing dim, I made for home. I hear that they danced

⁷² Stephen Decatur Miller (1787-1838) — born S.C.; lawyer; opponent of tariffs; S.C. Governor; U.S. Senator

till morning, which is nothing in this, *la belle France* of the Union, for they are all as crazy as the French of the old revolution.

Splendid, mad people, if this meets your eye, this letter from not an ill-natured spy in your camp, pray take his advice, and get sober again. Leave off drinking these intoxicating draughts of Carolina chivalry. Don't, ladies, dance with big-mouthed cannon, and bristling bayonets pointing at you. They look a little too frightful, and turn your beaux into duelists. Don't take partners with swords and daggers about them. They harden your hearts. You will all die old maids—some for this very reason are dying so, I see. Don't wear blue cockades on your bosoms. Leave them to the men's hats. Don't abuse the Yankees, the d__d Yankees, as some of your beaux term them.

Upon my word, we are not all tin peddlers, not all hucksters, wooden nutmeg and wooden ham sellers, though we live in such a cold, rocky land that we must depend in part upon our wits. **Some** of us are honest, and won't cheat you. **Some** don't cheat nor steal. We have no inclination at all to see your slaves cut your throats, and would rush to your rescue in such a crisis, sooner than your own contiguous States. Come down among us, and you will find that we are not icicles nor fog banks, but have heads and hearts, and are made of just such stuff as you are, except that material which you call **chivalry**, and which we call **spunk**, a word by the way, that means a mad fiery passion, up this second and down the next, such as our wild horses and fighting cocks and boxers are afflicted with. We like you much better than you like us, and speak much better of you, though you have two faults to our one. We go for the Union, because duty, patriotism, and common glory look that way, and not that we are more interested in it than you are—because we are a quiet, peaceable sort of a people also, that did some hard fighting for you against the British, and your hosts of tories at Guilford, the Cowpens, and I know not where, in your backwoods, and have no inclination to do such things over again, or to leave those old fields out of the American Union. We can handle balls, and muskets, and look at a cannon—witness Bunker Hill, and Concord, and Lexington—if necessary, but they are very **pokerish**, hollow things, that we have no great passion for. You amuse us much with your big and loud-sounding words, and those truculent speeches of yours, so foaming with fire and lava, so Etna-like. Your cockades and palmetto, and palmetto buttons, we think a little silly. We should take a piece of

homespun, a herring, a corn stalk, or a red oak button for devices, if we were making such a rumpus. You are a very clever—Yankee clever, I mean—kind of people, though I expected to find you with horns, huge ears, wings and hoofs, for you have made such a disturbance these three years, as I supposed no mortal man could ever make—none but imps, and fallen angels, or wild beasts of the forest. Pray do return to your senses. Hoist up again the star-spangled banner in your Citadel. Let us be all Americans, all Carolinians, all Yankees.

Charleston, (S.C.)
March 29th, 1833

I rode into the country which is in the vicinity, past ... the pine-barren that borders the seacoast. I saw a part of the railroad, over which a locomotive car is propelled, and which is now passable seventy-two miles, about one half of the contemplated distance to Hamburg, opposite Augusta, (Ga.) where it is to terminate. There is but one steam car on this end of the route, and that starts at six o'clock each morning. I also saw the race ground, about a mile and a half from the city. It is a large oblong field, strongly fenced in; and on one side of it are numerous shanties, called "Jockey Club Hotel," "Turf Hotel," &c. &c. These are only occupied during the races, which is a great time here. The racing season was about three weeks ago. They have fine horses in Charleston, in all of their private carriages. The great majority of them come from Kentucky, through the Saluda Gap.

Vegetation is quite advanced, and rapidly advancing. The air this day was not so warm as it has been; but we had this morning copious showers with loud thunder and vivid lightning. The gardens in the vicinity of Charleston are now beautiful beyond description. All vegetation is in that lively hue, which charms the eye, and delights the feelings. The trees that border the wayside are rapidly putting on their green covering. The open fields are verdant with the growing grass. Corn is up and advanced. The vegetables in the gardens are as forward as they will be in ours 1st of July. The market is well stocked with the luxuries of an early summer. A Southern spring is spring indeed. There are music and life in everything. If they could have here our captivating and amusing scenery, our variety of hill and dale, it would be at this season another paradise on earth.

Charleston is considered healthy by the inhabitants. They boast of their exemption from diseases, and say their bill of mortality is not so fatal as that of New York and Philadelphia. The city itself may be thus healthy, when the yellow fever does not prevail, but it is as much as one's life is worth to venture into the lowlands in the vicinity—in the country around. No resident of Charleston, even those born Carolinians, or the best acclimated, dare run the risk. For a citizen to sleep in the country in the summer months is considered almost certain death, for the country fever, as it is termed, immediately seizes him. The country, this side of the middle region—a rolling country of South Carolina for about one hundred miles from the seacoast—is swampy, or a pine-barren. There is in the swamps a *malaria*, very fatal to health, the effects of which no white man is willing to run the risk of encountering. Hence, the planters in the lowlands, particularly such as live on the rice plantations, remove in the sickly months to the seacoast, or go back into the country, to Buncombe county in North Carolina, near the Saluda Gap, or to the Virginia springs, or to the seacoast, or to the Northern States. The slaves on the rice plantations are said to be healthy and happy, and to suffer no affliction from the burning sun of August, or the noxious effluvia from the rice grounds. A white overseer is usually left in care of the plantation and the negroes, who, though born in the country, often, and commonly, has a fever every year. I am told that many of them die at middle age, and that few seldom obtain an old age. If such be the fact, it would seem that negroes are necessary to cultivate the rice grounds— though it is with difficulty that I can come to the conclusion that the white man, well acclimated, is not as well fitted by nature to cultivate the land he lives on as the negro. But the universal opinion is that it is exceedingly hazardous for a planter to continue with his family on his estate, and hence, no matter what the expense, the estates are deserted from June to the first frost in autumn, and the planter dare not visit his property, nor sleep in his house in that time, though he may be on the seacoast but a few miles off, or in a settlement on a pine-barren, which is considered healthy. The swampy rice grounds no doubt are sickly. The effluvia from so much putrid water, must be noxious. The pallor and ghastliness of many of the overseers bear testimony to the truth of the general assertion. And it is probable, yea certain, that the habits, the manners, the long practice of the negroes, have better fitted them to undergo the danger than the white

man is, or can be, with his training. Hence one of the great arguments in favor of slavery here, is, "*We cannot do without the negroes.*"

Being on horseback with a good cicerone, I rode about the city. The appearance of Charleston to the eye of a stranger, a Northern man in particular, is not very inviting. The streets are filled with negroes, who sit on the pavements, sunning themselves, with fruit, vegetables, cakes, &c. to sell, and the moving part of the population seems to be chiefly blacks. Negroes beset you on all sides. At table, they are most annoyingly civil and attentive. In the streets, they are chuckling forth some loud cry of "*oysters,*" &c. which they are "*totering*" on their heads. It is the first scream you hear in the morning, and ceases only with the last bell at night. By the way, there are two thousand more blacks in this city than there are whites, and hence the laws confining the negroes at night are justified on the ground of necessity. Many of the negroes here are intelligent also, and intelligence in the bosom of the slave is most dangerous to the safety of the master. The buildings seem to catch and sympathize and reflect the dark cloud in the streets. The brick buildings are rusty and moss-grown. Many appear like old castles that time has been frowning upon for centuries. There are many fine, very fine, and magnificent private houses. None more so in New England. But in spite of paint and care, all have an antique look. The whole city looks antique. The climate, I am told, causes this. The building just painted will soon become rusty. The air is humid and thus gives them an old look. Many of the bricks are imported from the North—and are not always the best. The streets in general are regularly laid out, and cross each other at right angles. In comparison with New York, they are very neat. Some of them are paved. Others, that have many bottoms, are not paved, and have no need of paving. There is much taste in the churches, and much in the stately mansions of the individual owners. The eye soon becomes habituated to the dark and rusty appearance of the buildings, and when it comes to draw a comparison, the city appears inviting and agreeable. The first unfavorable impression is recalled, and a far better one is received.

A view of the city from St. Michael's steeple, a beautiful steeple by the way, admired by strangers and citizens, is very grand and imposing. The eye ranges over the Cooper and Ashley rivers, Fort Sullivan, and Castle Pinckney, the shipping at the wharves, the long flat neck on which the city is built, and the numerous fine houses and the gardens, and thence into

the interior, where the pine woods begin. This steeple is a grand resort on gala days. There are in it six bells, which chime, and a clock, that not only strikes every hour, but every quarter of an hour. A negro who attends it asks for admission seven Carolina pence, a shilling York money, and nine pence of our money. One of the City Guard keeps watch there at night, as it commands a view of the whole city, so as to give notice of foes, or of an insurrection.

Charleston, (S.C.)
March 30th, 1833

I went to the Jews' Synagogue, it being Saturday, and their Sabbath, to see the ceremonies of the Hebrew Church. The Synagogue outside, is very much like all of our churches. Inside, there was in the center of an area a sort of elliptical staging on which were mounted the rabbis, chanting, praying and reading, all in Hebrew—not much to my edification, assuredly, for all that I could understand of the whole service was "*the President of the United States and his Excellency the Governor of South Carolina,*" a prayer probably uttered in the same breath for each. The chants were occasionally ended by the chorus of all the Jews present, whose numbers were about one hundred or more. The noise then was almost deafening, for man, woman and child screamed quite as loud as their voices would permit. The men and boys all had over their shoulders, or twined around their bodies, a sort of shawl—some of silk, some of worsted, and some of woolen, I believe. All the men kept their hats on, even the rabbis. During the service a kind of cymbal, or rattle, was carried round the church by the rabbis, and then deposited in the ark of the covenant, which was in the place where the pulpit usually is in our churches. Boys and men kept constantly going out, and coming in. Many very pretty Jewesses were in the galleries. I cannot say that any of them were very attentive to the services. Probably they understood not a word of it.

March 31. The churches today were fully attended—as full as the churches in New England.

I had some conversation with a gentleman from the interior, who was acquainted with Wade Hampton, well known among us to the sorrow of

many a soldier, as a commander on the Northern frontier during the last war. I was informed that he is one of the richest, if not the richest man in the Southern country, and that he owns about two thousand negroes. He is also very eccentric and strange. Property here, by the way, is often estimated by the number of negroes a man owns. I was also informed that Mr. Calhoun is one of the best farmers in the upper country—one of the most scientific and skillful farmers in all Carolina.

April 1. Brigadier General Hamilton paraded his five hundred volunteers in the rain. This plan is to be followed throughout the State, and colors are to be presented to each division. The volunteers are to be kept under arms, to effect the Nullification of the Force Bill, if necessary. These five hundred volunteers were all dressed in uniform, and maneuvered as well as the uniform companies in our quarter. A similar display is to be made in Sumterville. South Carolina is "to sleep on her arms!" The Union party has been organized in military order, and were ready for the strife if the worst came.

April 2. I have today in my possession a bill on the Bank of South Carolina, which promises to pay "twenty-five cents" to the bearer! I also saw a bill for six cents and a quarter! This is making change on a small scale. Georgia bills are not very current in this State; nor are North Carolina bills. In Charleston, there is not probably one single business-man who is not an ardent friend to the United States Bank, It is impossible to travel without U.S. Bank bills. One's pockets must be watched with exceeding care, so that they may not carry bills from one State to another. A bill on the U.S. Bank, no matter from what Branch, even the checks, are better than silver, for they pass as readily, and are more portable.

April 3. I start in the morning for Augusta, (Ga.) undetermined whether I shall go thence to Nashville or to New Orleans, reserving my conclusion for the answers I shall then receive as to roads, routes, distances, &c. There is much in Charleston to interest a stranger, not so much perhaps in public works or public exhibitions, as in that kind reception which every stranger properly recommended meets from a people who are all enthusiasm, all sentiment—whose passions often get the better of their judgment, but whose errors in general, I believe, are the errors of impulse rather than of self-calculation. These Carolinians were born to be a mad people. They have high notions of honor, of chivalry, as they call it—and

all of the duties of hospitality. They can be wrought up to say anything, by playing upon their feelings. It is the very field for agitators to act in. The well-educated are exceedingly well-educated. They have enlarged views, expansive ideas, and a good grasp of mind. Though many of them affect to believe that Carolina is all in all, yet even these do justice to the various sections of our wide confederacy, particularly to the industry, enterprise and ability of the North. There is an immense amount of talent in this little State—**little**, considering only her white population. Hereafter I shall have much and more to say of the causes that have developed so much talent, as well as of the peculiarities of Southern manners. In speaking of talent, for example, Charleston with but a white population of less than twenty thousand, has very many distinguished men, prominent in many things, and capable of making a figure anywhere.

Hayne has made a figure in the Senate, and is known all over the Union. His eloquence is of that kind that springs from the heart, which no affectation, effort, nor inclination can produce, and therefore touches the heart, and must have an effect. Hamilton is a man of much commanding influence everywhere. He is not elegant, but he is strong. It is said he is a very cool, self-collected man, and has none of those fiery propensities, which his language indicates. Drayton⁷³ is estimated very highly here. His probity, his virtues, his character are a tower of strength to his party at home. Poinsett is a man of eminent ability, agreeable in private life, influential in public life. He is well known abroad as Minister to Mexico, and highly esteemed at home for his very many good qualities. Petigru is another distinguished Union man who has been active in their late contest. He is a lawyer in the first rank at the bar—with a fund of learning and a fund at wit, esteemed in private for his comparative qualities, and powerful in public by his commanding abilities. Grimké⁷⁴ is a lawyer of high reputation, a scholar and a fine writer also. There are many others more or less prominent. The young men whom I have met with, in general, have minds of a high order. The late excitement has, perhaps, vivified their faculties. They talk too much of chivalry, and act too much by impulse, but if their chivalry and impulses are directed in the right

⁷³ William Drayton (1776-1846) — born in Florida, grew up in Charleston, South Carolina; U.S. congressman; Union supporter; after 1833, removed to Philadelphia; President of the Second Bank of the United States

⁷⁴ Thomas Smith Grimké (1786-1834) — born Charleston, S.C.; lawyer; Unionist

channels, they can well fill up the places of their fathers, which is saying much for them. If Carolinians can be tamed and broken as wild colts are, they might make a great people. But give them their own way, and they would have a revolution once a month. They would outdo the French as "architects of ruin."

Charleston, (S.C.)
April 1st, 1833

It is April Fools' Day, and I have been to see the Nullifiers play the fool, and have been exceedingly amused, though the rain has been pouring down in torrents, and the mud and slush are over our shoes. The Nullifiers have had, and are yet having, a grand parade. The volunteers of Charleston have turned out, in full uniform—and with all the show of war, war, horrid war. The truth is they are becoming crazier and crazier. Their late success has made them fully mad—and for aught I see, in a short time, Uncle Sam will have to handcuff the men and lock up the boys.

This morning, according to order from Brigadier General Hamilton, the volunteers of Charleston, nullifying volunteers, who were to have fought like tigers in the event of war, and who are good-looking fellows enough, but who probably love gunpowder no better than Yankees, assembled to the number of —about **five hundred!** There was the Republican Artillery, with brass pieces, the Cadet Artillery, Jefferson Artillery (alas for Jefferson), the Pinckney Artillery, the Scotch Infantry, the Riflemen, and I know not how many other companies of the 20,000, who were preparing to flog the whole United States of America, all arranged up and down Meeting Street, with horses, ordnance and servants, by 12 A.M. Soon General Hamilton, Emperor of the **nation** of South Carolina, the great god of war in this quarter—a Bonapartean kind of man by the way, with black whiskers, not tall, but compact and stout-bodied, rode up and down the ranks on a fine bay charger. He had on two epaulettes, yellow plumes, and blue cockade, and drove a horse as well as any Virginian horse racer. Anon, there came along, amid the sounding of fifes and drums and trumpets, and the waving of colors and swords, his Excellency, Governor Hayne, followed by five aides, all in buff kerseymere breeches, well sworded, well epauletted and well horsed. The line of march was soon formed, and they, the military, in the middle of the street, and the

lords of Carolina, on horse, and we the people, and they the slaves on foot, soon made our way to the Citadel, there to talk of liberty and death and Carolina. During all this nothing happened except some of the horses attached to the heavy ordnance threw off the negroes from their backs into a soft mud bed, and some of the gallant cavaliers in uniform had hard work to bridle up their snorting steeds, terrified as they were by the music of the black band, and the glittering parade of great guns and little guns.

Arrived at the Citadel, into which marched the military rank and file—and there, we the people, oversetting and nullifying the State Guard by the way, who in vain attempted to keep us out. The Citadel had lost the awning which over-arched the area. The medallions were all there. The palmettos were all there. The imitation flags were also there. The area below was pretty well occupied with the military. Uniforms of all colors handsomely variegated that part of the house. The ladies bordered the galleries, and we, the people, did as we could, among the multitudes in the portico. Soon Governor Hayne came forth from a balcony about 20 feet high, overshadowed by two tall palmettos. His five aides came forth with him, one bearing in his hand a flag.

Governor Hayne, then addressed the audience for about fifteen minutes, or rather his "*fellow soldiers*" as he termed them. He told them that South Carolina had effected the late change in the Tariff—that she had stood alone, and never quailed, when the South had deserted her—when a part of her own citizens had betrayed her, and when the whole Union seemed to be preparing war against her. She had done her duty. She had beaten off the myrmidons of power. She had destroyed the American System—had given it its death blow, and had achieved a glorious victory over tyranny and oppression, over the men who had been taken from her **her** property to pay **their** taxes, and who would have added murder to robbery, by sweeping her cities, desolating her fields, and destroying her citizens. Then taking the flag from the hands of the aide, he shook open the folds, and displayed the arms of the State, and Carolina's palmetto, and large gold letters engraved upon it, "*Liberty, it must be preserved,*" (though a hundred black slaves were gaping about)—and after making some fine remarks on the value of the gift, as the highest honor he could bestow, handed it to a staging some feet below him, to Brigadier General Hamilton, as commander of the volunteers of South Carolina. During this

speech, which was delivered with Governor Hayne's usual eloquence, the volunteers were constantly hurraing, clapping, vociferating and thumping their muskets on the floor.

General Hamilton received the standard from the Executive, whom the State had made its organ, said that he valued it dearly, but valued it more presented by such hands—and after cannonading the Union, and exhibiting Carolina chivalry, Carolina attachment to liberty, (the slaves!) Carolina activity, and calling his old friend General Jackson, whom he made President, “*an infuriate despot,*” who would murder Carolina’s sons and whose myrmidons were ready at his command to make the streets of Charleston run blood—averred, that Carolina had not a gun, nor a magazine of gunpowder, nor a piece of ordnance mounted when the Tariff was nullified, yet in five weeks she had four thousand men, enough to take the Capitol, and powder enough to blow it up! Hurrah for Jackson! Men, girls and boys clapped this sentiment. Hurrah for Carolina! Hurrah for Hamilton!

General Hamilton then handed over the flag to one ensign Frost, who received it and made a speech which I could not hear.

When General Hamilton waved the flag, the volunteers clapped beyond all calculation. He and Hayne were both received with great enthusiasm. They are commanders-in-chief of the hearts of the Nullifiers, as well as of their forces. I could not but note, that when General Hamilton averred he had men enough to take, and powder enough to blow up, the Capitol, a new torrent of rain immediately poured down on his bare head, for his cap was off, as he addressed the soldiers, but I did not see that it cooled the fire within, for not long after he said, “*all the land our enemy could stand upon in Carolina, was land enough to make his grave!*”

This afternoon we are to have a salute of a hundred guns near the Battery. The military, with General Hamilton at their head, are returning from the dinner at the Citadel, and if the rain has not sufficiently cooled their courage, will finish off the day in as fiery mode as they have begun. Truly, the Nullifiers are odd men. I know not what to make of them. They have heads, ears and bodies like the rest of us—and are no monsters in form, but they talk so boldly and act so madly, that I can't but think it would be a good plan to induce the Union men to go to Alabama and Mississippi,

and settle on government lands, and then make this “the Bedlam” of the Union, a house for mad politicians, and give General Hamilton the command. Though I have been here but a fortnight, I have seen so much of arms, and heard so much of war, that I sigh for a land of peace. Charleston is too much of a camp for me.

AMONG THE CREEKS

Augusta, (Ga.)
April 5th, 1833

Once more I am upon the wing, now wending my way for New Orleans, because it is vain to attempt the passage of the Cherokee country toward Nashville, there being no carriages, and the only mode of travelling being on horseback, which is not so comfortable, under a burning sun, to one not habituated to these hot regions, and not well versed in travelling savannahs, and crossing big rivers, perchance full of alligators. The weather is most uncomfortably hot. Vegetation is all alive, and fast hastening to maturity. I see negroes and negresses hoeing the large cornfields, which sometimes extend as far as the eye can reach. Rice in Georgia is already above ground. I forgot to tell you before, that a full week since, green peas were for sale in the markets of Charleston.

I left Charleston yesterday morning for Augusta, one hundred and forty-five miles off. We were landed by 11 A.M. at the Phoenix Hotel in this city, which, by the way, is almost the only place in the Southern States, I have met with, deserving the name of a Hotel. If no delays had occurred, we should have been here from five to eight A.M. As the railroad contemplated to extend from Charleston to Hamburg, a town just across the river, is not quite finished, we could travel but half of the distance on the railway. The cars over this railroad are propelled by steam, and steam alone, for the construction of the road is not such as to admit of horse power. The road is built of live oak timber, with piles driven into the ground, and is of a single track. It is not passable for anything but steam carriages, not even for foot passengers. It is over a very level road, and probably the highest elevations are not twenty feet, nor the deepest excavations over twenty-five feet. It extends chiefly through one continued pine-barren, but goes over many swamps. Edisto swamp, which it crosses, is crossed on a bridge built for the steam cars exclusively. At times, when we were crossing these swamps at the rate of twelve or fifteen miles an hour, one could not avoid the reflection that it would be a little disagreeable to be precipitated below. Our distance was not always as rapid as this. The motion varied from twenty miles an hour

to three miles an hour, owing to some defect in our steam engine. The customary motion is about twelve miles an hour. The expense of this road per mile, I was told, is about 3,000 dollars; but I doubt whether it could be as much, for it goes over almost a dead level. It is all of wood, except the single narrow and thin bar of iron over which the wheels run.

The propelling power was a car with four large wheels, on which were a steam boiler and a steam pipe, and, in short, almost all the apparatus of a steamboat. An engineer watched over the fireman, and some two or three other negroes who were engaged in some employment. Attached to this car was another full of goods, which was going into the interior; and to this yet another with about fifty passengers; and yet another small car with our baggage. We could sit or stand, or walk, walking with ease, just as we chose, even when we were moving with the greatest rapidity. On our way, we met at one of the turning-out points another car, with passengers from Columbia and Augusta, and with a large cargo of cotton from the interior. Here, let me remark, that it is the object of this railroad to divert trade from Savannah, and to direct it to Charleston. Thus, Charleston gains a great part of the trade of upper Georgia, and much from Tennessee, as well as much from North Carolina, which last she is sure of, railroad or not. The Charleston people have in their heads a grand idea, that of extending their railroad into Tennessee, so as to divert the trade of that State and a part of Kentucky from New Orleans. Such an idea is worthy of a Yankee.

We passed by Woodstock on our route, which is fifteen miles from Charleston, now the resort of the beaux and belles of Charleston, and less than an hour's ride in the car. They call it a village, but like almost all the villages in this quarter, it has but a single house, with lots of negro huts. Summerville, another such village, we also passed, where passengers turn off to Sumterville;⁷⁵ and Branchville, also another village, with a log house painted white outside, sealed with boards within, having some negro huts and a log barn. Here, as in the whole South, the people have their chimneys out of doors, much to the annoyance of my ideas of beauty and comeliness. None of the houses are built for cold weather. The provisions, as cooked by the negroes, are often brought from their huts to the houses of their masters. At each of these villages we took in wood,

⁷⁵ Sumterville — Later abbreviated to Sumter

pitch pine wood, an abundance of which was all around us, worth, when chopped up for the engine, only one dollar and fifty cents a cord; and water, also pumped up from wells by the wayside into a hogshead on a staging some fifteen feet high, from which ran a pipe into the reservoir of our land-steamer.

Night came on soon after we left the railroad. We were again in the pine woods, of the very sight of which I am wearied. I long to see a good high hill. I would clamber up the highest even with pleasure, for I have not seen the semblance of one since I left Richmond. The country through which I have come has been one continued stretch of pine woods. A thunderstorm, with vivid lightning and a strong wind, soon made our road a more dreary one. I went to sleep, and enjoyed as good a slumber as if in my bed for, in riding over roads of sand, one is not troubled with any jolting. The only obstructions are the swamps, and stumps and trees fallen across the road, three of which having been blown down during the last shower, we were obliged to get around the best way we could—by tearing down rail fences, going over scrub oaks, and knocking against pine stumps. By the way, they seldom or never cut away the obstructing tree, but force a path around it.

Such country, however, as I have described, is not all the country in South Carolina. Such is the country on the seacoast and for fifty miles in the interior, but even this is interrupted with belts of rich land, four or five miles in width. On the rivers there are excellent rice lands. The islands give good cotton. In the interior, toward the mountains, there is a fine country. The people who live in the pine lands, of which I speak, are poor and wretched and ignorant. The countenances of such as live in the vicinity of swamps or marshy grounds, are sallow, and indicate anything but vigor of body or mind. Indeed, I see but few, very few, anywhere, male and female, with the ruddy cheeks of our New England farmers. The miss who has the florid countenance of a New England girl, is not infrequently accused of being rouged. It is a land of pale faces.

We crossed the Savannah River at a ferry three miles below Augusta, there not very broad, but with a current quite rapid. The banks were in general very low, and as the river is now high, were in many places overflowed. I saw one bank, taller than the rest, with strata of chalk, down which an Indian was said to have plunged into the river in olden days,

when hotly pursued by an opposing tribe. My informant, a pine-barren man, seemed to consider this a wonder, and it was probably a wonder to him, whose eye never surveyed anything higher than a sand hillock, or a bed in which grow sweet potatoes.

Augusta is a beautiful town, with between seven and eight thousand inhabitants, newspapers, doctors, lawyers and ministers in proportion. They call it a city! The streets are broad and are regularly laid out, crossing each other at right angles. The City Hall is a fine building. The Market is not without taste and elegance. The quays are peculiarly fitted for the rapid rise and fall of the Savannah. Augusta is the depot ground of the planter, from whence his cotton is sent to Charleston and Savannah. Many steamboats were at the wharves, and business seemed to be flourishing. Very many of the buildings are of brick, and have a likely animated color, not being affected by the air as are Charleston and Savannah on the seacoast. It is one of the best built cities I have seen in the country, and reminds me of our thriving New England towns.

Hamburg is a little place opposite Augusta, a bridge connecting them. It was built chiefly by one individual so as to take the trade of part of upper Carolina from Augusta. The buildings are nearly all of a size, and were, I am informed, nearly all put up in one day. I was struck with the mounds of a fortification overlooking Hamburg, and fronting Augusta; and on enquiry, learnt that it was lately put up by a Mr. Shultz⁷⁶ "to defend Hamburg." It is said that he was hired by the Nullifiers in Carolina to throw it up, so as to defend that part of Carolina from the inroads of the U.S. troops in the Arsenal at Augusta!

The people of Augusta, like all other people in speaking of their houses, contend that Augusta is healthy at all seasons. The scarlet fever is now prevailing among children to an alarming extent, but no region is exempt from that fatal disease. I pursue my journey tonight in the Southern stage.

⁷⁶ Henry Schultz (1776-1851) — German-born entrepreneur; in 1821, founded Hamburg (S.C.), now a ghost town, facing Augusta (Ga.) across the Savannah River.

Columbus, (Ga.)
April 8th, 1833

My last letter was from the Savannah, the eastern boundary of Georgia, and this I send you from the banks of the Chattahoochee, a part of the western boundary of Georgia. I have thus crossed the State, and, tarrying here a little while to take breath, after a "sad tossing" over hills, through creeks, and across rivers, will give you the sum of my observations. One of my last wishes on the Savannah river was that I might have some hills to climber up, and thus lose sight of those everlasting pine-barrens which had wearied me out of all patience. This wish was amply gratified soon after I left Augusta. Though we came through many pine woods, yet they had an end. We had many a hill to ascend and descend. The country became more broken. The plantations more prosperous. The people seemed healthier and to have put on more "athletic habits." The variety of hill and dale rendered the ride more agreeable, but what roads! what roads! I am not in the humor to speak of them now when every limb is aching.

April 5 and 6. Left Augusta at 8 o'clock, P.M. in the great New Orleans mail stage. We had four passengers, one, the Mr. Trelawny⁷⁷ who figured in Greece. The mails even here were four large bags filled with pamphlets, and newspapers, the great letter mail, and one-way mail of a very respectable size, a load heavy enough for four horses, without passengers. Breakfasted next morning in Warrenton, only 41 miles off! Went through Sparta, a good-looking village of about 400 inhabitants, with very many good-looking people in it, so far as I could judge from a rapid survey of multitudes who were sunning themselves on the sidewalks, and there, talking politics. The questions were **Nullification** and **Unionism**. A doctor, who appeared to be the great man of the village, was haranguing them from his chair, and teaching them the true faith. All Southern politicians are now discussing Nullification, Secession, and the value of the Union. They talk upon it as if their lives were involved in the mere discussion of this abstract question. The chief argument of the Nullifiers here is, "*If we don't hold on to Secession or Nullification, or*

⁷⁷ Edward John Trelawny (1792-1881) — English-born; travelled with Lord Byron in support of the Greek independence movement; biographer of Byron and Shelley; toured for 2 years in U.S.

something of the sort, Congress will by and by take our negroes from us." This argument always has its effect, and if answered at all, it is said, "*We will then revolutionize.*" From the best information I can get, in conversation with men of all classes in South Carolina and Georgia, I judge that there is here but little of that ardent attachment to the Union which is felt at the North. Its value is calculated at all times and places. Some manfully contend for its importance. The chief argument of the other party is, "*Our interests are different from yours. We have slaves and you have not. We have great agricultural staples and you have not. No revenue laws can be framed operating equally upon such conflicting interests.*" There men forget that it is the variety of production, climate, and character, that makes the Union so important to each and all of the States.

The farms or plantations we passed by today were, in general, good, very good. We saw in many places white men at work. Seldom, very seldom, is manure used here. The farmers cultivate a field till it is worn out, then they let it lay by, and a small growth of pine and persimmon come over it. When a new field is wanted, they clear one, arguing that it is easier to clear land than to manure it. The chief products of the land we passed by today were cotton, corn and wheat. No rice is reared so far back in the country, unless it be immediately on the banks of the rivers.

We crossed the Great Ogeechee River, not very great neither, between Sparta and Warrenton. Just before reaching Milledgeville, we crossed the Oconee on a wooden bridge. Milledgeville is the seat of government for Georgia. It has about 2,000 inhabitants—is not much of a city, nor in appearance very alluring. The State House is a fine building, and is much admired. Milledgeville, it is said, was chosen for the seat of government, because like Rome, it has seven hills! but such hills! It is not a place of much trade, though not a small number of bales of cotton are sent from thence to Savannah. The river is not navigable in summer by steamboats, and is only navigable by such boats in high water. I was amused at dinner with a contrivance to keep off the sandflies and mosquitoes, not a few of which gentry begin already to make their appearance. Over a long table were thrown some dozen convex surfaces, suspended from the ceiling, bordered by baize, flannel, and [ribbons], at the upper end of which stood a negro who kept all in motion by string running through each end. The rustling kept off from the dinner all mosquitoes and flies.

On approaching Milledgeville we met many gentlemen on horseback descending the seven-hilled city toward the race ground, probably preparing for a trial of speed. By the way, there is in the vicinity of every Southern city a race ground. Around Richmond and Charleston there are large race grounds. Horses, gold mines, and State Rights were the topics of conversation at the hotel in Milledgeville.

We left Milledgeville for Macon, distant thirty miles, a little past 5 P.M. The weather had been very warm—and the clouds, betokening a storm, were now thickly gathering. Soon darkness came on, and we had in truth a "night of horrors." The wind was strong and violent. The thunder was far louder than thunder in my country. And the rain poured down, as if all the Southern rivers were dropping upon our heads. Added to all this, the darkness was palpable, for the moon was not yet up. The driver averred that he was unable to proceed, as he could see neither road, ditch, fence, nor horses, but as the lightning flashed on them. The passengers, by turns, piloted the way for him, till the moon rose, when we had sufficient light to make tolerable progress. By this time, however, the creeks were swollen with the profuse rain. Every little rivulet had become a turbulent river, rushing on with as much uproar as if it were the Mississippi. The horses swam over the Walnut Creek, the other side of Macon, and were soon on the banks of the Ocmulgee River, which we crossed, as nearly all Southern ferries are crossed, by pulling the boat over with a rope fastened to two trees on the opposite banks of the river. At 3 o'clock the next morning, we were in Macon, having been *only* ten hours in going thirty miles. Oh, the pleasures of travelling!

April 7. Stopping at Macon being out of all question, unless I stopped till the creeks and rivers, now rapidly swelling, should subside, I deemed it most prudent to push on with the mail, dismal as the prospect was. I left my stage companions behind, who have more time to perambulate the world than I have, and can, therefore, afford to stop a week, which they have a fair prospect of being compelled to do. I had now a whole stagecoach to myself, and therefore, a good bed to sleep upon. The rain was pouring down as furiously as ever, accompanied with thunder and lightning, but the wind, the worst companion of all, so often uprooting trees here, and strewing them by the wayside, was gone. The glimmer of

a clouded moon also aided us. The driver was one of Jehu's⁷⁸ aides, and cared for neither of the elements. He dashed through the creeks, and galloped so heedlessly over the ruts, and rung his horn at each Post House so merrily, that I concluded there could be no risk under such guidance, and therefore having lost (with this) three nights' sleep, did not awake till we reached Knoxville, 24 miles from Macon.

Knoxville is a little village, remarkable for nothing in particular. Here, we were told, it was impossible to get any further, for a small creek in the neighborhood had, of a sudden, become a river, that it could not be forded, and the stream was too rapid for the horses to swim over. Therefore, the driver must stop. "*The mail **must** go,*" was all the answer the daring driver would give. I threw in my protest, and was as politely told, "*I might stay, if I chose, behind, but the mail must go,*" and that immediately, for the creek was rising every moment, and the rain was pouring down as furiously as ever. Not choosing to be left behind, I concluded to take my chance with the driver, for I could swim, and there could be no danger of drowning amid the trees and bushes surrounding one on all sides. But when we approached the creek, even the driver seemed less daring. The creek **was** a river, and a large one too, foaming and fretting with as much violence as any river. Judging from what I had seen in New England, I would not believe it possible for a little rivulet, crossed every day, in the short space of fourteen or fifteen hours, to become such a torrent as was now sweeping all before it. I mounted the back of the stage above the baggage. The driver plunged in his team, and letting his horses have their own way, they soon landed me safely on the opposite bank, but the coach was half full of water, and the mails were all dripping with wet. Indeed, for some seconds, neither carriage nor horses touched the bottom, and we were going downstream with immense rapidity. I mention all these particulars to show the difficulties of transporting a great daily mail through a new country, particularly after heavy rains, and also to display the resolute character of a driver, to whom no other on the route was to be compared. Under his guidance, there never would be any failure of the mail, while this very mail was lost, when it came into the hands of other drivers who had less perseverance and less activity, being too late by about nine hours.

⁷⁸ Jehu — One having the reputation of a reckless driver (ref. 2 Kings 9:20)

After crossing this creek, we crossed Flint River, a rapid, muddy and narrow stream, in a [flatboat] drawn over by the rope, as I have mentioned before. Here we met three companies of U.S. troops from the Arsenal at Augusta, (Ga.) with their officers and servants, under march for Fort Mitchell, distant ten miles from Columbus. Some of the soldiers were handcuffed, probably because they had attempted to desert. Others were straggling along with their muskets in their hands. Some were digging or prying out the baggage-wagons, half-buried in the mud. Some were sitting on a log, under the foliage of some tall tree. Some—the rearguard, perhaps—were gathering up the fragments of the last night's encampment, and preparing to extinguish the fires which burned in spite of the rain, all over the hill where the tents had been pitched. Ahead of all, was Major McIntosh,⁷⁹ with his wife and children in a covered wagon, and two barefooted negro boys trudging on behind. Going on but a little further, we saw the desolation of the hurricane which about two or three weeks ago, created such desolation in this quarter. The road had been literally covered with uprooted trees and broken limbs. I saw some with their tops wrenched off, as if by the strong arm of some mighty giant. They were skinned and split as if the lightning had clung round them and torn about their trunks. Others threw their deep roots far off from their beds. Others were branchless and seemed shorn of everything, the wind having left nothing but the trunk. Some spots of ground were naked. In others, log was piled upon log, tree on tree, root on root. Terrible indeed must have been such a desolation. The newspapers gave many particulars of trees blown down, buildings overthrown, and fences destroyed—but to feel, to understand, the power of wind let loose on an errand of desolation, one must witness such a devastation.

During this and other days, I have passed by many negro traders who were crossing to Alabama. These negro traders, in order to save expense, usually carry their own provisions and encamp out at night. Passing many of these encampments early in the morning, when they were just pitching tents, I have observed groups of negroes handcuffed, probably to prevent them from running away. The driver told me that a thousand negroes had gone on his road to Alabama the present spring. Perhaps some of the persons whom I suspected to be negro traders were individuals

⁷⁹ Major McIntosh — (presumably) Descendant of William McIntosh (1778-1825), Scot, son of a British Army captain and a Creek Indian mother

emigrating with their negroes to Alabama, where large numbers of persons from South Carolina and Western Georgia are going. The emigration from South Carolina of both parties, I am credibly informed, has been very large. The reason of this emigration, to say nothing of the political troubles in South Carolina, is to be accounted for, not by the presumption that there is want of even land, for both South Carolina and Georgia have millions of acres, untilled and uncleared, but by the fact that new land is easier for a people to cultivate, who know little or nothing; or who, if they do know, practice nothing of the science of agriculture. Agriculture, as left here chiefly to negroes and uninterested overseers, must indeed be in a deplorable state. The farmers have too much land, and in attempting to cultivate too many acres, they neglect even what they attempt to cultivate. No wonder then they grow poor, without looking to the Tariff, or any other cause than mere inattention and negligence of a proper cultivation of the soil. If the time spent in horseracing was spent in the formation of agricultural societies, that horseracing, by the way, which we leave to the jockeys, but which respectable people here engage in heart and soul, even then the country would look different—and the American System would not be cursed as the fruitful mother of all evils—the cause whence originate the misfortunes of the horse racer, the negligent farmer, the holder of lazy slaves who eat and wear clothes, but who **produce** not so much as they **consume**. The South **needs** the practical lessons which contrast and necessity are teaching her. If we of New England, with our climate, lived as the South in general lives—in ten years, we should be the beggars of the Union—New England would be depopulated—the people, if there were any, would be the most wretched on earth—and it is only the fine climate, and the cash-commanding staples of the South, that has saved, and is now but partially saving, her from degradation.

April 8. In Columbus by 9 A.M. I left Charleston Thursday morning at 6 A.M. and have travelled, with the exception of about nine hours on Friday, all the time, day and night, till this morning. Almost seventy miles were travelled on the railroad. Time about four days—distance about 361 miles. Columbus is a pretty and well-planned village. The Chattahoochee is navigable by steamboats as far as Columbus, when the navigation is interrupted by falls. Large quantities of cotton are sent downriver to Apalachee Bay. Columbus being the head navigation of such a river bids fair to become a good place of business. Literally, it is full of shops,

lawyers and doctors, who, here as elsewhere, are talking of Nullification and Mr. Clay's bill.⁸⁰ I saw this morning some Creek Indians, who live just across the river. I have also seen here one or two individuals wearing the blue cockade of Carolina. The same cockade is to be seen, but not very often, in different places of Georgia—in Augusta—in Sparta—in Milledgeville—in Macon.

Fort Mitchell, (Ala.)
April 9th, 1833

I am quite beyond the bounds of civilization, in the heart of the Creek nation, where I can see the wild man almost in his rude state, and thus enjoy a little of the romance and variety of travelling. I left Columbia this morning, which, I forgot to tell you in my last, is a village large and flourishing, larger than Saco,⁸¹ all grown up within four years; and in a rough wagon, with my trunk for a seat and my cloak for a cushion, began my journey through the Creek nation. I am now (it is evening) but ten miles advanced, because in part the roads are almost impassable, the creeks being full and the causeways destroyed; and because, in part, there are others who have engaged seats before me. I am not sorry, however, for the detention, as it has given me an opportunity to see much of the woods and to make many observations upon the situation and character of the Creek Indians.

Fort Mitchell (at this moment, not garrisoned) is one of the chain of forts which was built here when the Creeks were feared and were neighbors highly dangerous to the Georgians, a part of the tribe then living in Georgia, and a part in Alabama, being divided by the River Chattahoochee. There are a few white inhabitants here: an Indian trader, with cotton stripes and other cotton articles, whiskey, powder, &c. to sell; a tavern built in the Southern fashion, with an open fire running through the center, a portico in front to keep off the sun and to lounge in, afternoons, with something of a bar, full of whiskey kept by a 'Squire, whose first salutation was, "*Stranger, will you take a glass with me?*" There are also

⁸⁰ The bill that defused the Nullification crisis (the Compromise Tariff) was proposed by U.S. Senators Henry Clay and John Calhoun, and enacted on March 2nd, 1833.

⁸¹ Saco — Small coastal community, lying to the south of Portland, Maine

Indians in abundance, and of negroes not a few, but a white woman I have not seen.

Many Creeks, this day, were assembled about the store in order to see the U.S. troops, who have been expected here from Augusta for some days, and whose object in coming here is to drive off intruders from the Creek lands—which, not these companies, nor a dozen, can do. Some few of these Indians were almost naked, exhibiting pictures of the most deplorable wretchedness I have ever witnessed. The children, in particular, had but a rag to cover them. Many were half-clad, with a ragged coarse cotton garment thrown over their shoulders, and a girdle about their bodies, without a hat, without shoes, or moccasins, without leggings, or pantaloons—displaying as firm and as fine a leg as the best statue of a Belvedere Apollo, with well-built and compact bodies, but with an arm as puny as that of a child, without muscle or vigor. Some few, very few, were well and fantastically dressed, with good deerskin leggings and moccasins, with calico robes, curiously and prettily fringed; with capes cornered and cornering in all directions and forms; with handkerchiefs or shawls tied round their heads and tufted like a plume; with ruffle shirts also of coarse cotton, amusingly shaped and as dirty as dirt could make them; and, lastly, with beadwork wound round the calf of their legs. Such persons as these were the chiefs or sons of chiefs, the beaux of the nation, who were probably making a display of their best apparel. The women, in general, were dressed with tolerable care and neatness. Some were exceedingly well-dressed in good calico gowns with fantastic shawls and handkerchiefs. Some were here with infants lashed to their backs, after the custom of the Indian women. Some few, very few, were almost drunk, but not half so drunk as many of the men, whom I saw stretched out on the hot sand with the burning sun pouring its rays directly in their faces, and on their half-naked bodies. Drunkenness, we all know, is the besetting sin of the Indian. I have heard them often during the day, begging for whiskey, almost the only English word they can pronounce, unless it be a profane oath, for drunkenness and profanity are the chief **virtues** which the whites have taught these poor children of the forest.

Em-haw-mico, the Chief of this once powerful and now numerous tribe, or one of the chiefs, was here today. He is, I am informed, well-off as to property, cultivating his lands, and owning many negroes. He is a solemn, stern-looking personage, and was clothed in a cotton robe, the work of

his own wife, from cotton grown on his own lands, by his own cultivation. I attempted "*to hold a talk*" with him, but as I could not understand his gutturals and nasals, nor he, my vowels and consonants, I was obliged to make use of one of his negroes for an interpreter, who spoke tolerable negro-English, which here and elsewhere, even in Charleston, is half incomprehensible—and who also spoke good Creek, for, in his language and that of the whole Southern country, he "*was born and raised*" among the Creeks. Em-haw-mico was complaining loudly of the white man who had just issued a writ against him for 1,200 dollars, a debt which he had incurred by signing in behalf of the nation as their chief, and which was to be settled by the Commissioners to whose direction had been trusted by the Federal government the liquidation of the Creek debts. It was the understanding of Em-haw-mico, that **they**, and not **he**, should settle the debt out of the 100,000 dollars appropriated by Congress. As the laws of Alabama have been lately extended over the Creeks, and their territory laid off into counties, I found it difficult to make the old chief understand the nature of a writ, for this was the first writ he had ever seen, and one of the first that had been served upon his countrymen. He told me this was not his debt, nor was it owed to the white man who sued it, nor was he accountable for it in any manner, but that the debt had been sold by a half-breed (Hardige, I think was his name) to a white man, which cession or sale was made, hence Hardige could not testify in a Court of Justice, being an Indian, but the white man could. A white man's testimony is allowed, but an Indian's is not, according to the laws of Alabama and Georgia.

The Creeks are in number about 10,000, according to a late census. Very few of them speak English. Some of their lands are very fine, particularly those on the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers. But white intruders or squatters have settled on many of their best lands, and, with their negroes, have cleared off many large plantations. Some of the Creeks have property. Some have negroes. Many are in easy circumstances. But the great mass are in a wretched condition. Nearly all are beastly drunkards, and beg for whiskey in the most humble, as well as in the most clamorous manner. Some have tolerable log huts to live in. Many sleep almost in the open air, with but a twig and pieces of bark for a canopy, and a blanket for a covering. They are, in general, indolent, exceedingly indolent. I have seen many of them today sitting in the sand and in a half-stupid state,

running their fingers through it like little children. Many of the men wear knives in their belts, and use them not infrequently when they are drunk.

They raise a little corn, and receive a little money from the General Government, but they soon dispose of it all for whiskey—and no man can tell what they live on after it is all disposed of. They beg; they steal; they dig roots and even live on them. The women are, as usual, more attentive to themselves than the men. Their morals are better. They guard their husband's blanket, almost the only thing he cares for, when he is drunk.

I see nothing remarkable in the few white inhabitants here. They talk of Nullification and Secession even in these woods. They have also many of the peculiar phrases of their Southern brethren; for here, as in Georgia, they call things "*mighty big*" and "*mighty little*," and anyone is "*mighty drunk*" and "*mighty sober*." *Mighty* is their qualifying adjective on all occasions, and, excluding the frequent use of the word "*except*," used here for "suspect," "think," "imagine," "guess," &c., and a little, odd intersprinkling of the words *like*, *directly* and *heap*, they talk as well as the people in any section of the Union that I have visited. They say "*I come directly I can*,"—"like they do" at Tallapoosa—and "*a heap of men, a heap of women, and a heap of work*," &c. &c.

I leave as soon as possible for Montgomery, hurry over Gaines'⁸² military road, and by Fort Bainbridge and Fort Hall. The mail and passengers are transported in an open wagon about a hundred miles, over roads full of stumps, huge roots, swamps, and creeks without bridges. Oh, the pleasure of travelling! The compensation is, to quote Dr. Johnson's⁸³ idea, not the information a man gains, but the ignorance he gets rid of.⁸⁴

⁸² Edmund Pendleton Gaines (1777-1849) — born in Virginia; family settled in Cherokee territory, Tennessee; entered U.S. Army in 1799; surveyed the military road from Nashville to Natchez in 1801-1804; served in the War of 1812, the Seminole War and the Black Hawk War

⁸³ Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) — English author and lexicographer

⁸⁴ The exact words are: "The use of travelling is to regulate imagination by reality, and instead of thinking how things may be, to see them as they are." *Letter XXII*, 1772.

Fort Bainbridge, (Ala.)
April 12th, 1833

I am yet longer detained in the midst of these woods, having advanced but twenty-two or three miles since I last wrote you from Fort Mitchell, or the Creek Agency. The great New Orleans mail is detained by broken-down bridges, swollen creeks, and torn-up roads. As no mail comes from New Orleans, none can go toward New Orleans, though there is a fair way for us some miles ahead. Having studied all art at Fort Mitchell, I threw my trunk into an emigrant's wagon, and, yesterday from early daylight to late sunset, trudged along with him, his family, his mules, and a drove of negroes toward Fort Bainbridge. We had travelled but two or three miles before we came up with a caravan of emigrants from North and South Carolina, who were moving in company toward North Alabama, there to pitch their camps in the woods and to try the fortune of new settlers. Our company, now including the droves of negroes belonging to each family, was nearly three hundred strong. In a very brief time the whole body had crept out from their covered wagons, the negroes had shaken themselves by the fire around which they had sprawled on the bare earth during the night; the mules were harnessed; a hasty meal of cold pork and beans and bread was prepared; the pitch pine torches were thrown together, and a cup of good coffee made, and anon all were under away, with my wagon for the advance guard. We crossed pine woods on tolerable roads, and oak woods on roads more wretched than one can well imagine. We crossed creeks also, in which the water was yet abundant, and corduroy bridges⁸⁵ over swamps, jostling out a rail every step we took. This new mode of life interested and amused me. It is a gypsy mode of travelling that one cannot always enjoy. But as the sun was pouring down its hot rays, and each pine tree that we passed was like a flame of fire, I was not reluctant to put up at night at "the stand," as they here call the huts or houses where the mail drivers change horses, and there to wait for the mail wagon or mail box which is to take me to Montgomery. My wagon encamped at night opposite the house where I was. The mules were soon unharnessed, and watered at a neighboring creek. A fire was instantly struck up among the pine torches; supper was eaten. The whites crept into the wagon, and the blacks stretched at length under a thatched

⁸⁵ Corduroy bridge — Type of road over a swampy area, made by placing logs side-by-side, and perpendicular to the direction of the road

covering of bark which they had suspended on rails for this night, because every cloud in the sky betokened rain.

My "hotel," or breakfast place for travelers in this wilderness, is one, perhaps, fitted for this climate, but not for ours. It has a large entry in the center, all open except its roof-covering, and two rooms in each wing, but no garret, nor cellar. There are two chimneys out of doors in each wing, made of wood, and red clay, but not a brick in the whole work. The shingles are oak staves, through which the sky is clearly visible. The floor is of oak, through which the earth is seen at every joint. The sides are of square lines of logs some three inches apart, *plastered* inside with oak staves, admitting every breath of air. There is not a pane of glass in the whole house. Open holes, with oak shutters fastened by a bit of buckskin, admit the light.

Around this house are the quarters for the negroes—the kitchen, the sleeping houses, the barns, the cribs, all presenting a little village shaded by noble oaks. "The lady of the mansion," is from Tennessee, pert, active, authoritative, dictating law to her negroes, and withal shrewd and intelligent. Her small dominions are kept neat. Her oak shines as bright as mahogany. Her beds are good enough for a prince, and her hominy, sweet potatoes, fried eggs and bacon, I leave them for the epicureans to expand upon. Last evening, she spread before me her little library in which was the "*Spectator*," the "*Life of General Marion*," the "*Token*" of 1832, with some of my friend Mellen's⁸⁶ poetry in it, "*Eugene Aram*,"⁸⁷ and many old pamphlets; and after handing me a pine torch, and remarking that "*she was sorry she had no candles*," left me for my own amusement. Such is a picture of life in the woods, the wildest part, perhaps, of Alabama—in the heart of the territory of the Creeks.

To employ myself this morning, as no mail has yet come into this "stand," I walked about two miles to see a Creek town. After going over creeks and swamps upon logs and the trunks of trees, and following the Indian trail, I came to an Indian settlement on the banks of a stream. The settlement more or less thick, extended about half a mile. The Indians were better dressed there than those I had seen at Fort Mitchell. Some of them had

⁸⁶ Grenville Mellen (1799-1841) — born in Maine; educated at Harvard

⁸⁷ *Eugene Aram* — novel by English writer Edward Bulwer-Lytton, pub. 1832

guns. None but the children were so naked as the Uchees, whom I had seen, and who are considered the vagabonds of the tribe; and who are, perhaps, thus made vagabonds, because they are more than others in the vicinity of the whites and their whiskey. Around their settlement, which is on excellent land, there are some traces of rude agriculture. The huts were, in general, miserable things, covered with bark thrown over rails.

On this expedition, I had for a companion, a good Creek "*scholar*" from beyond Fort Gibson, perhaps "*near the setting of the sun*," I may say, as a retort on his assertion that I came from its rising. He lives in the Missouri territory at the junction of the Verdigris and Arkansaw⁸⁸ Rivers, and has been, and is now engaged with General McIntosh, a half-breed, son of the McIntosh whom the Creeks killed for violating the laws, in transporting such Creeks over the Mississippi as can be persuaded to go with him. McIntosh is about here now holding a talk with the Chiefs, or a *ponico thektoe* at the Big Warrior's, as my companion expounds it. This companion of mine is a shrewd, half-tamed man. He speaks a little of all the Indian tongues and "*palavers them well*." His English is the most amusing of any I have met with. He calls "many hogs" "*a power of hogs*;" the translation of the Creek into English, or interpreting for my advantage is "*swapping tongues for me*;" "a good auctioneer" is "*a wheel horse at auction*;" "difficulty" is "*hockelty*," and so forth and so on. He is now engaged in drumming up a recruit of five hundred Creeks, whom he, under the command of McIntosh, is to take to the Missouri territory. He is girted by some eight or ten tin canteens full of whiskey or "*the critter*," he calls it, and his mode of enlistment is somewhat after this manner. Laden with whiskey, he visits the Indian settlements to "*palaver a little*,"—and as there are two parties, one **for**, but the majority **opposed** to emigration, he makes his peace with all by means of his whiskey. Whiskey is an argument no Indian can long resist. Give him but a taste of that, and he is your servant or your slave. It is a potent spell, that bewitches his senses and fastens him hand and feet. A taste of this whiskey, and a promise of more, added to the liberality of the Federal Government in providing the Indian with food, rifles and powder in the new regions, induce him to emigrate, and he then commences his long line of march toward the Pacific, into which he will be drawn by and by, treaty or no treaty.

⁸⁸ Arkansaw — *sic*, Arkansas

My companion said that the lands where the Creeks and Cherokees are carried were, in general, good, abounding in game and innumerable droves of buffaloes. Hostile Indians, it is true, surrounded them, but with the patronage of the General Government, and their own military organization, they assumed such a front as alarmed the Pawnee and other wild tribes and kept them in order. He had no doubt that they were happier there than in Alabama, harassed as they are by the cunning, cupidity, and cruelty of many of the whites, but he candidly confessed that in the course of a few years, no laws, no treaties, no matter how solemn, could withstand the torrent of white emigration, and that when they were thus pressed upon, they must again be swept toward the Pacific, and at last perish there, or be buried in it.

I do not lay claim to more philanthropy than other people possess, but, to every reflecting mind, there must be much in the conduct of the whites towards the Indians to make us almost ashamed of our species and of our color. If justice, not tempered with mercy, is the avenging sword, what dire calamity awaits our countrymen! what punishment is preparing for them! How has **our civilization** degraded the noble sons of the forest! How have our arts, our inventions, ruined their constitutions, poisoned their lives, and transformed them into brutes, mere brutes. But yesterday I saw the stout frame of an athletic Indian wallowing in the sand, thrown there by the strong drink of the white man, which he had given his last bit of silver to purchase, when he nor his wife nor children had had an ounce of food for thirty hours, as I was informed; an Indian, who had fought with Jackson in his Seminole campaign, and who bore a conspicuous part in one of his achievements, there defending the white man, but little knowing that at the same time, he was riveting yet stronger the chains of his own slavery. The victim of intemperance and of white colonization was an old chief, his beard grey with age, though his long hair was as dark as ever. There, in his sober moments, he thinks of the past, and compares that time when his services were courted and he was feared, to the present time, when he is an outcast and trampled underfoot. No wonder the revolting comparison drives him to sleep all in forgetfulness. The same sky is over his head. The wind rustles as the surges on the beach, through the same forests. The scene and the scenery, their associations are the same. There, like warriors are about him. But all, in fact, is changed. His warriors are not the iron-nerved, skin-clad men whom he

once led to battle, but calico-wrapped men, whom a barrel of whiskey can vanquish or buy. The oaks—the pines—the soil [is] not his, but is pursued by the white man. This is not his home. He is not to die here, and to be buried with his fathers.

ONWARD TO LOUISIANA

Montgomery, (Ala.)
April 13th, 1833

I am once more in a civilized land, where houses are made of boards and brick, and have paint on them, with good glass windows, fireplaces, and beds. After moving from twelve to twenty miles a day during the space of five days, from Columbus to Montgomery, distant from 90 to 100 miles—but miles laid off by Gaines when he wished his soldiers to make forced marches, long miles enough, I will assure you—I am now near the head navigable waters of the Alabama River, in a pleasant village—**city** it is called—on its banks, where everything is new and interesting, the stumps yet standing in some of the streets, and the woodman's ax yet at work on the surrounding wilderness to clear a spot for a habitation.

My last letter was from a place near Fort Bainbridge, of which fort, by the way, there is hardly a relic left, not even a stockade. I carried my letter nearly fifty miles before I could mail it. I left that place on the evening of Thursday last, when, a shower coming up with corresponding darkness, we were obliged to make use of pitch pine torches to find our way over the wretched roads, which sometimes can be known only by the notched trees, or, as they call them here, the **blazed** trees. We passed by the Big Warrior's "stand," which is among the neatest of the dwellings I have seen in the Indian nation. The Big Warrior is now dead, but the son is "well off," for he has three wives and thirty negroes. His wives and negroes are located on his different plantations, one of which is said to be of excellent land on the Tallapoosa River.

There being no moon, nor a ray of light from the stars, our driver concluded it was best to lay aside his passengers and the mail till the ensuing morning. The rain pouring down in torrents, and everything around us all dark, with not a house ahead for twelve miles, I could not demur long to this proposition, anxious as I was to advance. The hut in which my fellow passenger and myself were put was about ten feet square, made of logs, with a bark covering, and with a little door which I was obliged to stoop in order to enter. An old negro slave was the master

of this castle, having been hired out to take care of the horses in the stage. He had no bed for himself, much less for passengers. He had no food to give us, hungry as we were after the jolting we had experienced in the mail cart. His blanket he put at our service, and then, after kindling up his pitch pine fire, he had done all he could do.

For want of other occupation, I held a talk with the old man. His story is probably the story of many a kidnapped black man in this Southern country, and, therefore, may not be uninteresting. He was born a free man, he told us, in Pennsylvania, and lived in New Castle, Delaware. On visiting a short distance from Delaware, some ten years ago, he was seized by three white men, pinioned, or manacled, robbed of his free papers, and then shipped and sold for a slave in Georgia. He coolly remarked that "*He should not have cared anything about it, but that he had been free, and knew what liberty was; it was so sweet.*" The poor fellow told us a true story: I am confident from his knowledge of the geography of the land where he was born; and I was confirmed in the belief by his assertion "*that he had been a cook on board of a vessel*" and therefore a sailor, and more than this, manifested in his conversation an acquaintance with a sailor's life. He held everything about him in sovereign contempt. The Indians were thieves and great rascals, he told us, adding that their language was not worth learning, and he would not talk "*such stuff*" if he could. The negroes were half savages also, in his estimation, and had no manners. Instead of saying "*yes sir*" and "*no sir*," they said "*yes*" and "*no*," and "*what's't*." He would not keep company with "*such creters*," and therefore lived alone. The truth is, the negro had a spirit far above his situation, and far above the society around him, and he spoke from the heart when he said "*liberty was sweet*," and thus recalled to mind the days of his manhood and his freedom.

My cloak, trunk, and some of its contents answered well for a pillow and a blanket, and I have seldom slept more soundly. It was quite day when the old man awakened me and my companion, to whom I had surrendered the blanket. The mail cart was ready, and soon we were in motion. We went by Fort Hill, another of the chain of forts in the Indian country, now showing only a few log houses on a mound, and near this we met a negro woman going eight miles on foot through mud knee-deep, and over creeks with two or three feet of water in them, merely to get a

drink of whiskey. During the day, we went over Calebee bridge,⁸⁹ near which, I was told, a great battle was fought with the Indians by the whites under the command of Floyd.⁹⁰ I do not recollect the story. We crossed another log bridge, starting each timber at every step of the horses, at Cabahatchie Creek, and after wading in water and wallowing in mud nearly all day, escaped at last from the Indian country, into which I advise no traveler to go for pleasure, until the roads are better, the drivers more civilized, and mail carts more certain of progress.

At a place called Line Creek, which was crossed in a [flatboat], a creek now as large as a river, but dry in the summer, we left the Creek nation, and came into the settled part of Alabama. The country now put on a different aspect. Many of the farmhouses were neat and elegant. Some of the plantations were apparently of immense extent, and were admirably cultivated. I saw as many as fifty negroes at work in one field. Vegetation is under a rapid way. The cotton is already up. The negroes were hoeing the corn fields. Vast fields of wheat met the eye. The peach orchards had cast off their blossoms, and now looked all green. My heart beat joyfully, and my spirits were high, thus escaping from the wilderness, and its dreariness and darkness to a garden, as it were, which reminded me so much of my own New England.

I have omitted to mention above the great number of emigrants whom I have passed. It would seem as if North and South Carolina were pouring forth their population in swarms. Perhaps I have gone by in the Creek nation over three thousand persons, all emigrating, including negroes, of course. The fires of their encampments made the woods blaze in all directions. The lands of the Carolinas are being exhausted, and as, there, the art of nourishing and invigorating lands is little practiced upon, the planters are going to an untilled and to a more fertile country. Politics in South Carolina have had much to do in accelerating this emigration. From Georgia there has been less, hence large parts of Georgia are yet wild. The Cherokees are said to have some of the finest lands in that State, which Georgian cupidity is thirsting for with an insatiable passion. The gold

⁸⁹ Calebee Creek — Site of battle waged in 1814, in Macon County, Alabama, 50 miles west of Fort Mitchell, between Creek Indians and Georgia volunteers

⁹⁰ General John Floyd (1769-1839) — Born in South Carolina; brigade commander in Georgia Militia, 1812; in Creek War (Alabama), 1813-14

fever,⁹¹ and the land lotteries⁹² also do much towards retaining the population of Georgia, but the people will soon sweep over the Chattahoochee, and, after settling on the best lands in the Creek nation, presently to be in the market, they will fill Alabama. Alabama, I should judge from what I have seen, is a fine and a growing State. The white people work. That is a good sign. They work in the fields also. Negroes are scarce. And hence, perhaps in part, the fine plantations I have spoken of before. Keep off the negroes, thin them off—and their people must be great, powerful, rich, for the sky and earth vie in bestowing upon the people the best of climates and the best of soil.

I see nothing remarkable in Montgomery. It looks like a New England (agricultural) village. The Nullifiers are thick here. There are twelve doctors, and lawyers in proportion. The plan of each is to do business for a while, and then sue, for the people are loath to pay debts without compulsion, and next emigrate, so as to avoid enemies—and begin again. As in all new places, the people are a little rough, a little given to over-drinking, and some few to fighting, or "locking horns" as they call it.

The Methodists are at this moment having a great revival here, and, as religion always civilizes man and makes him better, I rejoice in it. The church and the theater—a shed of a thing—are contending for the victory. The church will triumph, for the pulpit is ably supplied, and the theater badly—were there no better reason to assign. I have seen one sight here which has met my eye nowhere else—rows of negroes sitting in the market for private sale—men and boys in their best dresses—and women and girls in neat check gowns, clean white aprons, and bandanna handkerchiefs around their heads. I start for Mobile as soon as I can obtain a passage in a steamboat down the Alabama.

⁹¹ Georgia gold fever — The 1829 discovery of gold in the Northern mountains stimulated white immigration into Cherokee lands, presaging the U.S. Indian Removal Act of the following year.

⁹² Georgia land lottery — Between 1805 and 1833, participants had the opportunity to obtain lots, often located in traditional Creek and Cherokee lands.

Montgomery, (Ala.)
April 15th, 1833

Great rains, overflowing creeks, and swollen streams of all sorts have detained me, and detain me yet on my journey. The Alabama river is foaming and fretting and lashing its sides, and no steamboats come up, and of course none being up, none go down. The profuse rains are operating to the injury of the crops. The corn, late-planted, is rotting in the ground; and the cotton seed suffers none the less. In the meantime, scolding and complaining for such an unexpected detention, where one can see everything in four and twenty hours, I have been running about and looking at the people over again.

Yesterday being Sunday, I went to church. It was confession day for the new converts, and each and all told their stories. For a wonder, the Methodists, Presbyterians and Baptists had united, and were acting in concert. There was more enthusiasm, more passion, more energy than I have ever seen in a New England camp meeting. Almost all of the audience, but myself, were on their knees. Many were on the floor in intense suffering, uttering the bitterest groans. The blacks participated in the revival, and the minister spoke to them, for once, as if they were human beings, and had such souls as the white men have. I care not what a person is made of, nor how many prejudices a man may have, he cannot witness such a scene without catching the sympathy. The electricity will run over him. And, were I called upon it to illustrate what eloquence was, or where it may most affect one for the passing moment, I would not ever resort to the pulpit; I would not always go to the bar, nor to the hall of legislation; but I would, perchance, take some ignorant strong-minded man, when his whole heart and soul were wrought up, and when he was speaking his feelings, it may be, in rough and coarse and unformed sentences, but yet in words alive with meaning, and with an eye of fire, and a voice of thunder—for eloquence is not in words, eloquence is not always in action, there is eloquence in circumstances, in deep emotion and vigorous, though rough, conception. The best description is of things as they are. For example, an accidental death is little or nothing in the careful description of a scholar. If in sounding and Latin-formed words it may have no effect; but I have heard the story of an accidental death, just as it was, in the good old Saxon words of our language, and it made me shudder, and my blood run cold. So, yesterday, a convert was painting

religion. I have read beautiful descriptions of it, its effects at home and abroad, over the feelings and the character, outwardly and inwardly; they were pretty; I credited them, and read them again. But here the convert was telling his own story, his change from the past to the present, and with odd thoughts clothed in odd language, described the change in a manner that had more effect than all the preaching of all the preachers.

A Sunday in Alabama, if this was a specimen, was well kept. The stores were all closed. All business was adjourned. The streets were deserted. The tavern, of course, must have its visitors and its boarders—some joining with the preachers and averring that, mad as their congregations were, they were doing good in a new society, and that such convictions would operate, when you might appeal in vain for years to the better judgment of men—others condemning this terrifying of people to death and frightening them, and cajoling them into religion—and yet others ridiculing all, and running into Deism and Atheism, and disbelieving all religion. I give you the above as a picture of a Sunday and of "a revival" in Alabama.

Judging from what I have as yet seen and can learn, I should think public feeling, public morality, public enterprise, were in a state of rapid improvement here. Comparing this new State with Georgia, an old State, Alabama has the superiority in all these considerations. There is more civilization here than in Georgia, I should think, strange as it may seem. There is certainly more industry, more vigor, more hardihood, and less gasconade⁹³ and cupidity. Georgia does everything to foster the bad passions of her people, such as putting lands robbed from the Cherokees into a public lottery in which each family is engaged—and then encouraging her citizens to hunt after gold mines and *El Dorados*, where the best gold mine is good agriculture, and the richest income that of good crops. In Alabama, industry seems[?] to be creditable. The people are more on an equality, more republican; and though, as in Georgia, they will settle a dispute in a duel, I do not believe they would stab, or cut a throat in the dark. Nor do I know that such is the practice in Georgia, but report credits many people with such a propensity.

⁹³ Gasconade — (Definition) bravado; boasting

The settlers in Alabama are principally from the Carolinas, from Georgia and Tennessee. I do not know an Alabamian who was born in the State. There is probably more good land here than in all the Carolinas and Georgia. The cotton crops are the most profitable, and hence public attention is principally directed to the raising of cotton. Corn is high, and but little is raised. Provisions of all sorts are scarce. Hog, snout, ham and bacon are served up on our tables from morning to night, so that one must expect to be half-hog, if he lives here long. Even a dish of milk is a scarce and valuable article. An egg is seen now and then, but a chicken has never been put upon the table. Hence, living is high—and it costs more to support oneself, or to support a family, in this little village than in Portland. Bread is high. Everything is high. But one's income is high also. Twenty-five and fifty percent, every man calculates to make, who makes anything.

There is probably no State in the Union with more natural advantage than Alabama. Her climate is that of the South, and of course, good. Her staple commands cash at all times. Her lands are new and fruitful. Her water privileges are magnificent—the Alabama being navigable for steamboats from Mobile to Montgomery, and yet farther up on the Coosa, 400 miles—the Tombigbee navigable to Columbus,⁹⁴ and the Black Bania,⁹⁵ which empties into the Tombigbee, being navigable to Tuscaloosa—the capital of the State, and, as I am informed, a vigorously flourishing place, with a promising university. In the North, wending all along her borders, is the River Tennessee which empties into the Ohio, then into the Mississippi, with New Orleans for a market—a river, as I am informed, navigable at times by steamboats as far up as Knoxville (Tenn.) If one casts his eye over the map and, with this information, surveys the position of the State, he will see that, by and by, Alabama must be a brilliant star in our constellation.

In looking at Alabama as she is, and as she was but a few years ago, I can hardly credit my senses. Is this the land, I ask myself, where Floyd and Jackson,⁹⁶ but a few years ago, were desolating the Creek towns with fire and sword? Where are the immense bodies of Indians that then carried

⁹⁴ Columbus MS

⁹⁵ *sic*, Bance or Black Warrior

⁹⁶ Andrew Jackson (1767-1845) — Commander of Tennessee Militia; later, U.S. President

terror to the heart of the American settlements? The battles of Talladega,⁹⁷ of Tallahatchie—of the Horseshoe [Bend]⁹⁸ on the Tallapoosa, and of Calebee—are fresh in the memories of many. But now, all around, and on many of these places, are flourishing plantations! All is peace, and quiet, and security! The settler could not wait to cut down the pines and the oaks; but he notched them and thus destroyed them—and their ragged branches now decaying hang over many a corn and cotton field, and prove that this cultivation is but the work of yesterday. Truly all is change, change, change, around us. The traveler who visits this place ten years hence, will see as great a change as the ten years past can show.

Alabama River, (Ala.)
April 18th, 1833

I am on board the steamer "*Tuscumbia*," going down the River Alabama, at the rate of from eight to twenty miles an hour—our motion depending upon the rapidity of the stream, and the pressure of the steam power. Our steamer is one of the oldest and one of the poorest on the river, and yet is comfortable and not disagreeable. We have good beds, good meals, good weather, and good luck, and are as contented as one can well be, pent up, likely to be for three days, in a single cabin, with but few books, and anxious to make rapid headway.

The Alabama River is one of the most beautiful rivers I have seen in the Southern country. It is now about twenty feet higher than usual, and overflows the banks in many directions, but, during the late rains, it was twenty feet higher than it is at present. I see high water marks on the banks, which are often higher than the tallest deck of our steamer, bedded in the water as we are. The captain tells me that, but a few days since, as he was going down the river, the water was around the houses on many of the high banks; and on many of the plantations, masters, mistresses, and negroes were seen on the roofs of their houses surrounded by the waters. Their barns, fodder, and provisions were

⁹⁷ Battle of Talladega (1813) — Fought near Talladega (Ala.) between the Tennessee Militia and Red Stick Creek Indians

⁹⁸ Battle of Horseshoe Bend (1814) — Fought near Dadeville (Ala.) by U.S. forces and their Cherokee allies against the Red Stick Creek Indians

swept off, their cattle drowned, their corn and cotton fields widely inundated.

There are rivers which have on their banks more varied and imposing scenery than on the banks of the Alabama. But a quiet and cheering beauty seems to preside over the current. The channel is through a far extending forest, and the banks are covered with forest trees—of oak, of cottonwood, &c. &c. The clearings, generally speaking, are from the river; and the woods are left to contend with and to beat back the freshets. The current at present is rapid, but not boisterous. We glide quietly along, almost without feeling that we are in motion. The river is constantly curving. It is, perhaps, one of the most serpentine rivers in the country, for we go 400 miles, at least, by water to reach a point which is distant only 180 miles by land. The bends occasionally almost meet; and a canal of but a single mile would save us a dozen. The curves are, however, exceedingly beautiful. They not only preserve the arch, "the line of beauty," but are now bordered with the tall trees, in all the freshness of an advancing vegetation, gradually and gently sloping even to the water's edge.

We stop often to take in cotton and wood; and, in order to make a stop, the steamer is always turned about, and made to buffet the current. The delay, therefore, is not inconsiderable, since we stop to take in from one hundred to even seven bales of cotton, and wood as it can be found, after the late inundations have so swept over the banks.

We left Montgomery Wednesday (yesterday) at 10 A.M., with but a few bales of cotton, which, by the way, is freighted to Mobile for one dollar per bale—and some twenty passengers. Our first stop was at Washington, of which I saw nothing but a warehouse for cotton—and there was probably but little more to be seen, for a blacksmith's shop, a grog shop and a warehouse on the banks of the Alabama, make a town, and perhaps a city. We stop next at Vernon and Benton, a grog-shop, &c., named I suppose in honor of the Colonel; and next at Selma, where we passed a part of the night, it being too dark to run. On Thursday, our first stop was at Cahawba,⁹⁹ a town much larger than those mentioned before, with many inhabitants, and some good buildings, two or three of which

⁹⁹ Cahawba — also spelled Cahaba

were of brick. We stopped also at Portland, a small village, where the men look better than the buildings, to let out a passenger, and to take in a letter or more. We called at various landings to take in wood; and from some high bluffs, or banks, sixty feet high perhaps, were precipitated bales of cotton from the warehouses far above our heads, guided on their passage down by a rope which was held by negroes above.

You may expect a letter from Mobile tomorrow.

Mobile, (Ala.)
April 19th, 1833

Our steamboat arrived safely in this place at 3 o'clock, P.M. We passed many canebreaks on the banks of the river, some very high, and some low. We have also passed many "negro quarters" or negro huts surrounded by water on all sides for a great distance, and almost all were deserted by the tenants. But a negro occasionally braved the element in his [flatboat]. This was seen toward the mouth of the river.

Large flocks or droves of negroes, I use the language in vogue here, were at times seen on the banks—men, women and children. All were commonly clad in coarse cottons, not colored. This is their working dress. They have, a better dress for holidays, the women either having the cast-off fine dresses of their mistresses, or check gowns with neat aprons, in which they feel "mighty proud," to quote another of their phrases which are current.

The plantations on the banks of the Alabama are in general of the best land, fruitful and profitable, yielding not infrequently 15 percent profit on the investment, including the value of "the force," as the negroes are sometimes called, and the money originally paid for the land, which at first did not cost over one dollar and a half or two dollars per acre. So profitable are such investments, that many planters in other States divide their "force," and buy and settle the lands here, and make much money from the investment. A gentleman from Camden, S.C., one of our passengers, who came out here with his negroes in 1821, when this was a wilderness and there was hardly a plantation on the river, told me he had such a plantation, and on it were 60 negroes, many of whom he had

never seen. I told him a Northern farmer could not make three nor one percent on his farm. "*How do they live then,*" was the question. "*By prudence, economy and hard labor,*" was the answer. "*Oh, that we had those virtues,*" he remarked. "*Our boys when young must have a horse apiece to hunt with, and when older, must be set up with negroes and a plantation. Our girls are spoilt with indulgence, and it costs us all our profits to educate them. Work! neither girls nor boys ever think of that!*"

The banks of the Alabama show at times huge masses of limestone. The water is all tintured with lime. At the bottom of the prairie lands which, by the way, are fine lands here, there is limestone, by boring through which water gurgles up with great power, with fish sometimes upon it. Powerful springs sometimes throw up large quantities of water, and then disappear by a subterranean passage. The prairies are considered healthy, though there is much moss on the trees—an indication of a moist climate & soil. Their sandhills are also considered healthy, and strips of mud, and strips of excellent land are often seen together.

There are twelve steamboats, some of them first-rate boats, that ply on the Rivers Alabama and Tombigbee, and discharge in Mobile. The two rivers join forty or fifty miles above Mobile, and there the water is proportionally swollen, yet the river is not wide, nor the current strong. Both wind and current serve twenty miles, and then divided, forming the Mobile and Tensaw Rivers.

The country above Mobile for some distance is flat and overflown, and, of course, unhealthy. Wherever we approached the shore, the mosquitoes beset us in swarms. Mobile itself has a very business-like aspect at present. Her wharves are crowded with cotton-bags. The buildings are principally of brick, and look well. The streets are broad and cross each other at right angles. I am told there are from four to five thousand inhabitants. There are no Spaniards left of the original settlers. Many of the merchants are Northerners, Yankees, and go north in the summer, for which journey they are now preparing.

The present is the most beautiful season of the year. The woods are alive with the voices of thousands of warblers. Vegetation is profuse in its offerings, and the most fragrant odors ravish one's senses. My project of a paradise, would be a farm on some bluff of the Alabama—well cleared,

well cultivated—with those gifts of fortune and domestic engagements that make one easy and happy—on which soil no slaves should tread, for slavery is the curse of all enjoyment. With them you can neither eat nor sleep in safety, nor enjoy even the civilities and refinements of life, for they are careless and filthy, polluting and corrupting everything they touch, either in fact, or at least, in my imagination. If there was no other punishment for the crime of holding a man in bondage, the dirt of one who has no interest to keep clean, is punishment sufficient. See the taverns, and the steamboats of the whole Southern country.

I start for New Orleans in the morning—by stage and steamboat across Lakes Borgne and Pontchartrain, distant 180 miles. I write this in an excellent hotel, for a wonder, neat and clean—the blacks must be free—with coat, vest and stock off, and window up, so hot is the weather, notwithstanding the rain is pouring down incessantly.

Mobile, like other slave-holding towns, compels its slaves to go in, and keep house at 9 or 10 o'clock in the evening—or gives them twenty-five lashes, more or less, if they are abroad without permission. The bell (9 P.M.) is now ringing to give them the time. And now, as I must be up in the morning at daybreak, take, but excuse, these my rambling notes with all their faults.

New Orleans, (La.)
April 23, 1833

My last letter was from Mobile. I told you that was a pretty town well laid out—with many fine houses—and a money-making population. I saw but little of the people—but I was pleased with everything—pleased perhaps, because I was rejoiced once more to be out of the wilds of Alabama, to breathe a fresh air—and to get something else to eat than hog, shoat, ham, knuckle, jowl, pig, pork and bacon. Heaven forgive me for the hogs I have eaten during twenty days. The woods are full of them. Myriads of them run wild like rabbits. I sometimes fancy I must have eaten all, for their very ghosts squeak and gibber around me. A little hominy, a cup of milk, what luxuries to dream of! A terrapin, or a frog would have been a blessing, and yet numbers of the first were creeping over the sandhills, and the swamps resounded with the croakings of the second. But no such

luxuries as these are cooked for the weary traveler. In the Creek nation, it was all hog. At Montgomery Union Hotel, it was "the whole hog," greased and grizzled, till the very fat oozed from the pores of the miserable suffering boarders. Forgive me this petulance. It is my first complaint, but I am not now so courteous as I might be, being at present "half hog" myself.

To return. I left Mobile Saturday morning, in the mail coach, which goes over land to Portersville, thirty miles. We passed by in the first three or four miles many elegant country seats, with porticoes, balconies, alluring walks, and beautiful groves of orange and sycamore trees. The houses are built on the sand eminences and are considered healthy. The wealthy citizens of Mobile make these their summer residences, and they are not so distant that they cannot enjoy the society of friends, as well as the air of the country. We passed by also a Catholic college, or seminary—an elegant building in the woods, around which walks are preparing, and trees are being set out. The boys from the city, and elsewhere, are there well educated—though some who were riding by us on ponies, beautifully caparisoned, complained much of "the cockroaches and the worms," which they avowed they had to eat.

Our road was now through a pine-barren—of course, amid pitch pine trees, over sandy roads, and dismal swamps. The road was good enough, however. I never shall complain of roads again, now having ridden the whole length of the Southern States. The people think, that which we call impassable, to be a tolerable turnpike, and their horses dash without ceremony over a ravine, or through a swamp, which we should consider a little too bad for even a beast to go in. We passed by a Spanish village on the edge of a swamp—a village of log huts and thatched roofs, where there was not a sign of cultivation, but where the people live in pastoral life, watching over their herds and cattle. The people were as dark as mulattos. They chatted Spanish and broken English.

A steamboat waited for us at Portersville—the boat intended to convey the great mail to New Orleans. A bridge was thrown over a marsh and the flats of Pascagoula Bay, on which we walked to the boat. Then, after quarrelling a half hour with the little gnats and the malicious mosquitoes that attacked us in swarms, we embarked. We [ran] almost the whole length of the bay, through Lake Borgne, in sight of the Gulf of Mexico—

through the *regolets*,¹⁰⁰ or straits between the lakes—by the frowning fortress which the government [has] built to frighten off the British, if ever again they speak for the "*beauty and booty*"¹⁰¹ of New Orleans—thence athwart Lake Pontchartrain, and by morning we were in New Orleans.

¹⁰⁰ Regolets — also spelled Rigolets

¹⁰¹ The phrase "Beauty and Booty" gained notoriety in the years following the War of 1812. It was alleged that the British Army had chosen these watchwords on the eve of the Battle of New Orleans, as an invitation for its troops to practice "rape and rapine, as the reward of victory."

NEW ORLEANS: RISING STAR

New Orleans, (La.)
c. April 23rd, 1833

My first view of New Orleans, or rather I should say, of the suburbs of New Orleans, was from Lake Pontchartrain. It was Sunday morning when I landed. The steamboat, as soon as we approached the shore, was crowded with faces of all colors, speaking almost all languages, translatable and untranslatable. The passengers with the mail were soon mounted on a railroad car, and propelled by hand a few rods under a "*L'arc de triomphe*," which was a wooden building painted white, over-arching the railroad, and resting on either side—a hotel I think. Then we waited a few minutes for the locomotive, which had not yet arrived from the city, to which and from which it goes every half-hour, distance 4½ miles. These few minutes I employed in looking about. All around, except the neat and rather elegant buildings, and the pathways, was swamp, or dismal swamp, full of stagnant water, and rough-looking bushes. I looked into one hotel. There were many persons, some drinking all sorts of liquor from an elegantly furnished bar, some playing backgammon and chess, some chatting a *French* that was comprehensible, and some a language known only to themselves. Evidently it was a holiday. There was mirth and jollity, and loud obstreperous joy. The crowd was considerable, the noise deafening. I looked into another hotel. An awning and a curtain shadowed one door, through which I heard the clink of dollars. With the curiosity of my countrymen, for which all of us are so famed, I drew aside the curtain, and stood before a row of gamblers, some white, some mulatto, some chatting French, some broken English—all paraded by, or around, a table crowded with large pieces of silver, playing *roulette*. The presence of a stranger created no sensation, no interruption. Others were at my heels. Only one of the players looked up from the table, and he only turned up his spectacles, and then looked down again. It was broad-day business. There was no concealment. No man was ashamed. No man objected to being seen. The gamblers did not seem to be the best of men in appearance, though they played high. I have seen many better-looking men in New Orleans.

The locomotive soon came along with great rapidity, smoking and puffing loud, and drawing in its trail a long row of large cars, full from top to bottom of newcomers. Perhaps one hundred and fifty persons jumped from the cars within three minutes after the locomotive stopped. This crowd was so much more added to the former crowd, and I soon learnt that "the Lake," as it is called, is the resort of hundreds and thousands from New Orleans on Sunday. The locomotive was wheeled about, and our party ascended the cars—fine large cars, well cushioned, and curtained—and in a very few minutes, we were in New Orleans, landed in the street, where as many more people were waiting to go to "the Lake."

"My plunder," or baggage disposed of, I walked around to see the city. The market was open with almost everything for sale, from green peas, blackberries, pineapples, and the vegetables we have in July or August, to all kinds of meat; and it was crowded with negroes, mulattos, quadroons—in short, with men and women of all colors, from total blackness, and their pretty brunette, to the fine showy features of the quadroons—and talking French without interruption in the full vivacity of the language, thus making the long arch bound and rebound with voices, not unlike that of the full chatter of a New England monitorial school.

At the hotel where I am, at Bishop's, where Americans chiefly stop, one of the most moral in the city, and one of the best in the Union—better by far, because the waiters are Irish, and not negro slaves, with their attendant filth and negligence—there, Sunday as it was, the bar was crowded with visitants and the billiard room was full, and the chess and checker boards were all employed.

I looked at the American part of the city. There, the stores in general were shut, though not all of them. I went to the French part. There the shops, almost all, were open. Goods were displayed as in a weekday. Purchasers were active in the dry good shops, and shops of that description—and the grog-shops were crowded. I wandered up and down the levee, which is the embankment on the Mississippi, and where many flatboats lie, and there many, very many, were playing whist, lieu[?], and four-and-fours, I think they call it.

I went to a meeting of the Colonization Society, but it was all a dead failure. The “prominent man” who had undertaken to preside, [dared] not appear, or did not like here to assume the duties of such an office, and “the distinguished men” who were to speak, “backed out.” The meeting was in the Presbyterian church, and the musicians played part of the Cinderella waltz for an overture!

I looked into the cathedral, an old Spanish building, rough-cast, antique, and now rusty, and there the choir were chanting, and the priest doing something—I know not what. The audience was principally colored. There were some French and Spanish women, without bonnets, and with veils thrown over their heads. Many were on their knees before the cross. More were going out and in, as in the Jewish Synagogue. The doors were wide open on the principal street, with no ascending step. Strangers peeped in or walked in as they pleased, and boys were playing bat-in-ball on a green or a park opposite, vociferating as all boys will, much to the detriment of the devotional, if there were any such. It is a pity, however, there is not here even more of the Catholic religion.

A trooper in full uniform, galloping along leisurely, caught my eye. I followed him as fast as possible, and soon I heard martial music. The military were parading. Many companies were out. Sunday is the muster-day of the soldiers of New Orleans. It is the best day that could be selected, for if men are kept busily drilling, they are kept out of mischief.

Towards evening, when the sea breeze was coming in, and the air was cooler, I promenaded with a Portland friend up and down the levee. Hundreds and thousands of persons were out. The whole population seemed poured forth there. We went to see a negro dance which is held every Sunday evening, when the slaves have their saturnalia.¹⁰² There it is the custom of the negroes to perform all sort of foot-evolutions and convolutions. They drink and carouse and dance. They do their play and sport for a week. But we were too late to see the ceremony, and turned about disappointed.

Upon the whole, Sunday is a very bad day in New Orleans—a bad institution there, I was going to say—but it is not my province to scan the

¹⁰² Saturnalia — (Definition) An unrestrained, often licentious, celebration

measures of good and evil in a day the Deity has consecrated. One thing is certain: there is more vice, more iniquity, more sport in that leisure day, than any other during the week. The French theatre is open, and crowded. Men throng together. Idleness begets iniquity. But enough, my paper is down.

New Orleans, (La.)
April 23rd, 1833

This afternoon (April 23rd) I walked under a hot sun—the day was as warm as our 4th of July—among the tombs, and the graves in the Catholic burying-ground. I strolled into a Catholic chapel nearby. The priests in the church were working mummeries over a dead body. Colored persons sat there or kneeled there with wax tapers in their hands. A sexton with a cross or a spear, and a military band over his shoulders, stood back of the cross and the coffin. Two priests and a little boy were making loud noises in Latin and in French, and one was sprinkling the coffin with incense and holy water. The hearse was at the door. The coffin was soon brought out. The priests preceded the hearse. Men and women with veils, or bare-headed, some under an umbrella, and some without, followed the hearse on foot to the graveyard.

This graveyard is all a dead level, and in rainy days inundated with water. It is a morass, a swamp partly rescued from its wilderness. I followed the procession to the grave. The coffin was taken from the hearse. The priests re-acted their mummeries. Some jargon was said. A boy in a scarf and a robe brandished the cross. Holy water and incense were again thrown over the coffin. The priests ceased and turned on their heels. The hearse galloped off, and the procession dispersed.

I now watched the process of interment. The body was that of a colored person who had died of the cholera (which is not an epidemic now.) The mourners were fine-looking mulattos. They tarried to see the last of their friend. The grave was not two feet and a half deep. I measured it for curiosity. The bottom was soft mud into which I could thrust a stick almost any depth. The water was within a foot of the top of the grave. The clods of earth around it were all clayey—such earth as would be dug from a bog. The coffin was put into the grave, and it floated so as to be level

with the surface. A negro, a fiend-like looking brute, with his pantaloons above his knees, all covered with the clay in which he had been working, —without hat, without coat or a whole shirt, but with a hoe and a spade— mounted the top of the coffin, and trampled it under the water, and then a brother-looking being threw the heavy clods on. The mourning women also threw on a clod or two, then kneeled round the grave, devoutly crossed themselves, dropped a tear or two as for the last time they bid adieu to a form they once valued, and walked home alone.

I then looked around among the graves. A hole here and holes there were all ready for the next comers, some six feet long or more, some three or four feet long. The water was in all the graves. The ground beneath our feet was like that of a swamp, the surface of which the sun had encrusted. I tumbled over broken coffins, pieces of which were piled in little heaps, and pieces of which were placed as stakes to mark the spot of the last buried. The very earth gave way under my feet. The vegetation was that of a swamp. The rank weeds flourished roughly over many a dead body. Old sticks, old poles, such as our gardeners stick peas with, while sides of coffins were put up as grave stones. What a spectacle. I tell you the plain truth in unexaggerated words.

Wandering yet further to the borders of the yard, I approached what appeared like ovens—and so they are called. They look exceedingly like the oven-doors in our kitchens. They were six or seven feet deep, six or seven feet high, and there were three tiers—that is, three bodies could be laid above the same spot of earth, one above the other—"an oven" being assigned for each. The doors of these ovens, when filled, are bricked and plastered over. On some of these there were inscriptions—on marble, perhaps. Many of these ovens were open-mouthed, warning visitors of their fate, and almost, as it were, inviting them to enter. I hurried sickening from the spectacle. Far from the earth, pestilence seemed to be issuing. In many places, the odors were insufferable.

This morning (April 24th) I rose with the sun—so as to escape its burning rays, not to be risked without danger for a long time, by a person not acclimated—and curiosity again drew me to another graveyard. Curiosity is an impulse I cannot resist. It gets the better even of cowardice and all the disgust which haunted me after yesterday's stroll. I went to the Protestant, the American burying ground. The tombs there are all above

ground, but not any were as neat as I saw in the French graveyard. It is a more shameful affair than even the scene I have described before. The tombs are badly covered. The ovens are badly plastered. There is little like neatness, propriety, or even decency. The whole is shameful—and the Americans here would not tolerate it, if they made this their abiding place, and not the place to alight and make money in. But no man calculates on dying here—and if he does, so far from friends, it matters not much to him how, or where, his body is laid.

Graves ready dug are here also kept for sale. An oven can be had for sixty or seventy dollars. A tomb must cost a large sum. The graves were all full of water. The earth we walked over sunk under our feet. More pieces of coffins were seen here than in the Catholic yard. I had heard much of the trenches or pits in which the cholera victims were buried. Language cannot, if it were proper to array words in the description, portray the facts as they happened at that alarming season. A friend tells me, the worst accounts but half-realized the terror of those times. He himself saw bodies, without coffins, piled in masses around those pits. The draymen raced off full gallop to the yard, so brisk was their business—and then boosting their profits.

Two of these pits were filled with victims, and dirt was thrown over them. The earth was moist, and with a stick I sounded the ditches. My stick was pushed down with ease. I know not how far it could have been driven. The exhalations from these ditches were insupportable. I turned from it to catch a breath of purer air. The third ditch was filled only with water. Thank God, there was no call for it. I hurried from this scene, from this wilderness of the dead once more to the busy populous parts of the city. The drays were now rolling by me. All was animation, cheerfulness, and business. My hotel was full of the gay, the courteous, and the happy, calculating on life many years yet, and large masses of wealth. I lost only a breakfast from this stride among the tombs, gratifying a curiosity I have no wish to indulge again. The spectacle is too revolting. It is not solemn, impressive, and awful **there**, as in ordinary graveyards. Oh no, one even laughs or grins a ghastly smile, and despises his own frail tenement destined to such corruption and insignificance, and yet having the audacity to be proud and ambitious! Death loses its terrors in such a graveyard, and life its objects, and allurements, for what is there worth living for? an oven, a hole of clay and mud and dirty water! **Bury your**

dead with decency. Have a fitting graveyard. If I had the power, I would emblazon these words on every lamppost in New Orleans.

New Orleans, (La.)
c. April 24th, 1833

The population of New Orleans is in some degree a sample of the various assemblies that make up the Union, with this difference, there is little or no amalgamation here, no national character as yet. Here are men from all countries, speaking almost all languages, men, and women too, of all hues and almost all colors. One part of the city is all French. There are the Mesdames and Mademoiselles that we read of in French story, with all the vivacity, all the chatter, almost all the fashion of the gay Parisians. The streets are French, the "*Champs Elysees*," odious Elysian fields, by the way, the *Rue Royale*, the *Rue des Chartres*, the chief promenades for the beaux and belles when the hot sun is going down, and there is shade from the houses—with many other French names from French scenes, from French stories, and French famous men. The negroes and mulattos and quadroons there altogether speak French, though some of them speak English. The facility with which even a Virginian negro learns to speak French is surprising. Fresh from the woods of Virginia, here he will speak tolerable French, and with French vivacity—in a very short time, for his associates all speak French, his master is frequently French, and thus the language is imposed upon him.

Another part of the city is quite American. It seems like a Northern city—and the people like Northern people. There are the Yankees, the money-making Yankees, all motion, all attention, all for business. One thinks he is in New York or Boston, for the men about here have not the sallow color of the South, but the bright faces of New England. Their peculiarities in conversation are Yankee peculiarities. Their ideas are Yankee ideas. Their enterprise, daring, and planning, is that of the North. In truth, the chief part of this population is north of New Jersey—and here we have a Northern city, if not in the heart of the North, yet near the mouth of the Mississippi, commanding the trade of the West, and drawing with great force that of the South.

In truth, where are the Yankees? I ask not where **they are**, for who can answer that question? I find them everywhere, in every nook and corner where I go, there preserving their identity, their attachment and love to the land of their birth, and gazing with an eye of pride on its institutions and its fame. Not a man from New England, no matter how long he may have been from home, whose heart does not throb quicker at the mention of her name, who does not welcome a traveler from there as his brother, and talk with excitation of the days of his childhood. Her schools, her churches, her glory, her enterprise, her courage, are topics in which his soul expands, and even the dull tongue, and the cold heart quickens and warms, when his fancy carries him to the hills and vales of his own New England. Where are not the Yankees? I find them in the cities and wilds of Carolina and Georgia. I see them on the seaboard from Norfolk to Savannah. I find them on the rivers and prairies of Alabama. They crowd [*line missing*] are her traders, her physicians, and her lawyers. I find them here, their ships crowding the port, their merchants pushing their operations to the wilds of Texas, to the borders of Arkansaw,¹⁰³ and then far up the Missouri, the Illinois and the Wabash—to say nothing of the Mississippi, the Tennessee, and Ohio. In short, they are everywhere where a living is to be earned, a dollar to be won, a daring plan to be attempted; nothing daunts them; nothing appalls them, neither sickness, nor disease, nor pestilence, nor dangerous report. The Mississippi is no barrier, nor the Red River, nor the Arkansaw, nor warlike tribes of Indians, nor the Rocky Mountains. They are over-leaping all. The distant Oregon only bounds their ambition, where Yankee adventurers at this moment are moving.

To return from whence thoughts of home have led me. Not only are French and Yankees to be seen here, but there are Spaniards. The French themselves make three parties, the European French, the French from the islands, and the creoles, native-born citizens—as white, by the way, as any of the French, notwithstanding the contrary impressions. There then are the boatmen, constituting yet another people, coming from where no one knows—a people unlike any which we meet with at home—courageous, daring, profane, rough-hewn, and but partly civilized, using the knife as well as the fist in their conflicts, living on the water, cooking

¹⁰³ Arkansaw — Initial name of Arkansas Territory (1819-1836), comprising the modern States of Arkansas and Oklahoma

on the levee, and sleeping, it may be, with or without a blanket, on the stray cotton-bags that perchance lie on the banks of the Mississippi. They are a people who in general know no fear, but little law and less religion. They swarm the banks of the river. Their boats crowd the shore. They make their homes there—with their dogs—and seem as happy as any people in the world.

Thus, the reader will see, there are here odd assemblages of mankind. In winter, the white population outnumbers the black. In summer, *vice versa*. The negroes are in general from Virginia, and the Carolinas—bad, but bright fellows, whom their masters sold because they could not control at home. There are here also many Irish, who, with the negroes, are the draymen and servants of the citizens, indiscriminately working together.

The negroes here are better off than any I have seen in the Southern States. They dress on the Sabbath like princes. Many of them, slaves as they are, are the first dandies in the city—in the best of broadcloth, and the finest of hats. Such buy their time, for six or seven dollars a week, and not infrequently earn a dollar before breakfast. They are hearty, fat, and happy—and often I can hear them singing in the streets all manner of songs, often in a double voice, the best of which is,

"Rose, Rose, coal-black Rose—
I wish I may be scotch'd,
If I don't love Rose."

They seem little like the slaves in South Carolina. They have not so much servility in their air and manner. They feel more independent. They are more their own masters. Remember, I speak now of slavery in the city. As yet, I have not seen it on the sugar plantations.

New Orleans, (La.)
c. April 24th, 1833

I go everywhere, for I want to see everything, from the graves to the gambling houses. Of the last I had heard much, and with another Portland friend, of whom there are not a few here, I began a patrol about 9 o'clock, P.M. Wherever we heard the click of dollars, we went in. Some played

roulette, which is an indescribable, because to me an incomprehensible, game, and some were playing *faro*,¹⁰⁴ or in the pharo, or *faro banks*. I am not versed in the etymology or proper terms. We went into five or six. Some were in the streets with only intervening Venetian blinds. A few were upstairs. Indeed "*maison a louer*,"¹⁰⁵—gambling house, with proper directions, is posted up boldly on the corners of many a street. I am told there are eight of these licensed gambling houses, and that the tax on each is 8,000 dollars per annum, which fund is given to a charity hospital! Many contend for the utility of these licensed establishments, saying that they are "the safety valve of the city," and suppress minor establishments. But *quaere*,¹⁰⁶ for men play cards here on the levee in broad day, and often in the shops on the street, and a billiard room is as public as need be.

The players in many of the houses were "rowdies," as they are called, scurvy fellows, in decent clothes perhaps, but vulgar and profane, with an abundance of slang and slang-whanging. Occasionally, a man very respectable in appearance might be seen, a stray sheep perhaps, from a good flock. I was told the company was not so good as usual. Indeed, one of the establishments looked much better than the others, and this was said to be the fashionable establishment where "the best characters" resort—but I saw none of them. Spectacle-men and cigar-men were there. The stakes were chiefly *specie*.¹⁰⁷

To visit New Orleans, and not visit the French Theater, was out of the question. I therefore posted to this scene. The theater itself is very good. The company was large and brilliant, and usually attentive. Every representation was, of course, in French. I did not hear, even among the spectators, a word spoken in English, except such as came from my companion. The creole ladies were tastefully and elegantly dressed. Many of them are very pretty, with beautiful forms and engaging faces. They were in the second tier of boxes. Above those were the quadrooms, or in French *quatre-uns*,¹⁰⁸ many of whom were quite white, with as fine a cast of countenance and figure as one ever beheld. No white company was

¹⁰⁴ Faro — Gambling card game, very popular in the U.S. during the 19th century

¹⁰⁵ Translation — "house for rent"; should this be "*maison a jouer*" (house to play)?

¹⁰⁶ Quaere — (Definition) Latin term "used in legal drafts to call attention to some uncertainty or inconsistency in the material being cited."

¹⁰⁷ Specie — (Definition) money in coin

¹⁰⁸ *quatre-uns* — *sic*, *quarterons*

allowed to mingle with them, and their doors were guarded only for the admission of their own class. They were also elegantly and tastefully dressed. Above them were the negroes, who crowded there in masses.

After a tiresome comedy, not worth listening too, even in English—much less in French, where one must make an effort to follow a story— the Ravel family¹⁰⁹ delighted us with their dances and exercise. I have never seen this family before, and, as they name a good boat *walk-in-the-water*, so one may name the family, the *walk-in-the-air*. The feats were most surprising, from the youngest child to the oldest man. They dance on the rope and take pigeon wings as others do on the floor. Jean Ravel displayed great feats of muscular power, such as suspending himself by his arms horizontally in the air from a pillar erected on a step, and there continuing some time. Next, we had the play of Jocko, with an abundance of amusing and interesting monkey feats, the Ravels performing the parts of the monkeys with fine effect—ascending trees, climbing the scenery, and going up almost anywhere among the boxes. The pith of the story is, that Jocko is a mischievous monkey, but during a shipwreck, contrives to save a drowning child dearly beloved by its father, and after nursing it, and carefully guarding it from a huge snake with a forked and fiery tongue, that pursues him over the stage, is shot by pursuers, much to the grief of the child and pain of the father; and then Jocko dies in great agony.

I never have seen in an American theater so much propriety of conduct and good behavior as I witnessed here. The pit was quiet and respectable. The boxes were crowded with prettiness and fashion, and though every Frenchman talks with all his might and main, yet all was order, all propriety, and presented, thus far, a spectacle worthy of imitation to American managers. This theater is open, usually, three evenings a week, one of which is on Sunday, when there is the largest attendance.

This morning I came within one [...] of being present at a duel across the river, where combatants go—but they gave us the slip by naming a false hour. Since I have been here, less than a week, there have been two duels fought, and probably the average is two a week or more, judging from the best information I can get. Dueling is a very common occurrence here.

¹⁰⁹ Ravel family — Prominent troupe of pantomime artists, mimics and acrobats; still active on the U.S. stage in the 1880s.

The fiery heads fight without much ceremony. Almost every little grievance is redressed with pistols, and so common are these duels, that even the newspapers take no note of them. People laugh and joke about them, and many go as to witness a farce. Such is public feeling!

The parties whose shooting I was going to witness, for I go everywhere when anything is to be seen, were—one a merchant from Natchez, and the other a merchant in New Orleans. They exchanged, to use the terms of the day, three shots, and the New Orleans man was wounded in the leg with the third discharge, when the combatants settled the quarrel.

There is a law, I understand, here, against dueling, but public opinion—and *vox populi* is *vox dei*,¹¹⁰ even Colonel Johnson¹¹¹ says—gets command of, and controls, the law. The French fight. The American fights in defiance of the law. Dueling is such an **innocent** amusement, so far as the public is concerned, that if a man can settle his own account with his conscience and his God, I do not look upon it with half the horror with which I witness other vices dominant here. Dueling is even to be sneered at here, for the negroes are taking it up, and thus there are some hopes the whites will lay it down.

New Orleans, (La.)
April 25th, 1833

When I look about this city, and see the variety of language and characters which make the name of Americans, I wonder that our Union is as firm as it is. What an association is that, which joins in political fraternity the vivacity of the French, the gravity of the Spaniard, the soberness of New England, with other intermixtures of Irish, German, Indian, Negro, and West Indian! The truth is, our country is made up of all kinds of men and women, all sorts of blood, all sorts of prejudices, and education. Perhaps it is the beauty of our political institutions, that they mold us together, into a mass, and destroy such peculiarities. Perhaps such is the virtue of a republican form of government. There is much food for philosophy in

¹¹⁰ Translation — "the voice of the people is the voice of God" (abbrev. "*vox pop*")

¹¹¹ Colonel Johnson — (perhaps) Vice-President Richard Mentor Johnson (1780-1850), quoted in a speech to Congress on the Compensation Act of 1816

all these contemplations, but philosophy must now step aside for observation.

The French outnumber the Americans here. The city government is in their hands, and with the usual tact of the French people, they secure all advantages to themselves. There is some prejudice and a little undercover hostility existing between the two people. The French are fearful that they are losing their power, and the Americans are desirous of getting it. Hence, some Americans say, the French will not improve the city, for then it will be healthy, and the yellow fever will not take off the Americans!

New Orleans would probably be as healthy, and perhaps healthier than any Southern city, if it was clean. It is now, a foreigner who has travelled everywhere in Europe tells me, the filthiest place in the world. I am thinking New York before the cholera broke out there was as filthy, though with less stagnant water. It is dirt which makes New Orleans so sickly. It is the want of a proper expenditure to drain the streets and carry off the filth. The gutters or ditches are full of stagnant water, from which issue the most offensive exhalations. Smells "written and unwritten," are exceedingly noxious, and exceedingly numerous. The city is one[?] dead level, higher in parts than the Mississippi which washes it. The north part is a low swamp, into which water runs from the Mississippi [...] rivulets or little streams, now as the water is high, run through the streets from the river. This is most refreshing. The negroes, boys and others put their lips to the gutters, and drink there copious drafts of water, and it is good water too. This water runs through some of the streets to the swamp, and then breeds shrimps, crawfish, and mosquitoes. By the way, these crawfish are on our table every day for dinner. Rats and frogs, which the French eat, I say nothing of.

New Orleans, by and by, will be healthy, comparatively speaking. When the streets are paved, and well drained, and water is forced up from the Mississippi, so as to run through all the streets, it cannot be otherwise than agreeable. It will be, strange as the declaration may seem, one of the most beautiful cities in the Union. The parks are numerous. Some of them are now very inviting. Fine sycamores and cotton trees shade flourishing grassplots—and some of them are in the heart of the city. The streets are regularly laid out. They cross each other at right angles. The late-built

houses are fine buildings, some with porticoes, some with balconies, and a few with gardens. Many, very many, buildings are going up. Everything has a business and a flourishing air. Some few of the dwelling houses are superb. Some few of the stores are also very fine. Indeed, there is but little difference in general appearance, so far as buildings are concerned, between this and Baltimore or Boston, though there are no such granite and public buildings as there are in Boston. Brick is the chief material used: brick imported from the North, or poor brick made here from the clay dug up from the deposits of the Mississippi.

New Orleans, in our better estimation, is badly supplied with water. There are no wells, for water is within two feet of the earth, but putrid, dirty water, noxious and offensive, which is hardly fit to sprinkle the streets. The water used for cooking and drinking is the rainwater, filtered, as good water as I want, and far better than one commonly gets, or water from the Mississippi. When ice is put into this water, it is as good as one can desire. A corporation, I understand, have in contemplation the establishment of waterworks after the plan of the waterworks on the Schuylkill, which supply Philadelphia with water. This is a great *desideratum*.¹¹²

Perhaps there is no place in the United States, or in the world, where merchants are more enterprising, or so industrious as they are here. They work unceasingly. Little else is thought of but money-making, money-making, and the success in general is proportioned to their efforts. Money is made, money in abundance, and though the value of money is here ten percent, (not the **legal interest**) yet it is spent profusely and copiously. "*Live while you live,*" is a motto here acted upon. Everything is costly, but no man restrains his wants. The quantities of wine, lemonade, and other liquors drunk at the bars here, now, in these hot days, is immense. The profits from the bars are also immense. "*Let us live in the Winter and fast in the Summer*" is another motto; and here, at dinner parties, they are now leaving off the champagne and other rich wines, for the humble claret and water.

The sickly season cannot be said to commence before the last of July or August. Then the yellow fever usually sets in, by which, as a regular

¹¹² Desideratum — (Definition) Something desired as essential

visitor, the public will probably be freed whenever New Orleans is kept clean. The inhabitants represent the winter and spring as agreeable and healthy. This month is a delightful month. It is the April which the poets speak of, not the cold drizzling April which, I dare say, is now visiting you, bringing mountains of fog from the Banks of Newfoundland. It is April with flowers and fruits, with roses, and blossoms, and strawberries, and all the luxuries of early summer. It is safe for a foreigner to return here in early November. Many from the South remain here the whole year, but the experiment is a dangerous one.

It is difficult to say what proportion of newcomers have the yellow fever, but it is very fatal upon those whom it seizes, one half of the number dying, as I am told. Many, however, never migrate, and yet never have the fever. Prudence and care and temperance probably distinguish such.

New Orleans, (La.)
April 27th, 1833

New Orleans must, I think, in the progress of time, and probably not a very long time, be the largest commercial city in the world. It has increased, and is increasing, dirty and unhealthy as it is supposed to be, with immense rapidity. Real estate is very valuable. Rents are higher than in any other city of the United States. When I cast my eye over the map, and trace the almost interminable water communication in the interior, not from two nor three great rivers, but from many rivers, flowing through regions not settled at all, or but sparsely settled anywhere, but *now* yielding so much trade, I am not afraid to hazard the prediction that New Orleans must be the greatest commercial city in the world. The field on which the merchant is to act is most magnificent. **Fifty-five thousand miles** of internal water communication, it is said, seeks a vent for its trade at New Orleans—a trade from a great variety of latitudes, with a great variety of productions—coming from lands unsurpassed in fertility, and administering everything to the wants or luxuries of man. Think of this, and run your eye over the map, and remember that vast portions of this country, we of New England should yet call quite unsettled, and say if I err in my calculation.

There is the Red River, the trade of which goes to New Orleans, up which a steamboat this year has gone as far as Cantonment Towson,¹¹³ 1,200 miles—400 miles above which there are settlements— and all along this river there are new plantations, many of which are the richest in the world, fertile in the sugarcane and cotton, and in almost everything which the industry of man sees fit to cultivate. An individual has just informed me, that in February he arrived there from Tennessee and planted with fifty negroes, and that when he left, his cotton was up, covering two hundred acres on a prairie, and was then promising him a fertile and valuable crop.

There is the Arkansaw River, the trade of which must go to New Orleans, navigable at times by steamboats 900 miles, as I am informed. Arkansaw is yet but partially settled—but the extent of the river is 2500 miles.

There is the White River, navigable for steamboats from 400 to 500 miles, and for keelboats 900 miles. Its course is 1,200 miles.

Then there is the Ohio, navigable to Pittsburgh, 2,000 miles from New Orleans by water, where nearly all of the principal steamboats on the Mississippi are built—the Ohio with all its tributaries, with the Tennessee, navigable at times to Knoxville by steamboats, meandering through the best parts of Tennessee, and the finest territory in Alabama—with the Cumberland, navigable as far as Nashville by steamboats, and many others, navigable more or less, pouring their treasures ultimately into the Father of Waters.

Then there is the immense Missouri with its tributaries—there is the Illinois, with boat navigation for 300 miles—Rock River, navigable 200 miles—Kaskakia, 150 miles—with many others, which any eye will note on a map. And now to all of them may be added the mighty Mississippi itself, navigable by boats to the Falls of St. Anthony. In short, there is a continent above New Orleans—a **world** of itself, with streams as useful for trade as the great ocean. A small skiff or flatboat, that cannot stand a wave of the ocean, adventures in safely from the cold north, with its ice and snows, to the warm south, with its sugarcane, its olives, and its oranges!

¹¹³ Cantonment Towson — Frontier fort located near present-day Fort Towson, OK.

Nor is there in this Union such a field as New Orleans for enterprise—enterprise of all sorts, from the counter and the desk, to the bar and the pulpit. Everything is new—in chaos as it were—just advancing to form and comeliness. Moral courage, acting prudently and cautiously, and thus winning that influence which moral courage, aided by ability and prudence, always must have, will here find a glorious theatre for action. There is hardly such a place in the world for an upright, energetic, industrious and brave man—no matter what his occupation. A **brave man** I say, for courage in such a society is necessary—but I do not mean the bravery that sets at defiance powder and ball, and recklessly rushes into danger—I don't mean the bravery of the bull and the bear—for I leave such **bravery** to the pistols of the duelists, and the horns and tusks of brutes; but I do mean the bravery, the moral courage, which dare think, speak, and act for itself, if necessary, even in the teeth of public opinion, always acting with care and exceeding caution, and delicate respect even for the errors of others. And public opinion will ultimately honor the man who acts thus from honorable impulses, for public opinion is ever scanning with an eagle eye the motions of men, and ever erring, ever wandering as it is, it ultimately awards justice eight times out of ten, wherever it is due.

A divine, not bigoted nor fanatic, might do wonders here for the cause of morals, if he had that ability which commands an audience, and makes even churchgoing a pleasure, for the church and pleasure grounds are here rivals on the Sabbath. A lawyer travelling at times beyond his suits and his writs would find here ample range and scope for action.

On the whole, strange as many things appear to a stranger, I have been most agreeably deprived of many of my preformed opinions of New Orleans. There is not much more vice, among those whose opinions are valued, than in many other cities. Probably there is no more, for here it takes no trouble to conceal itself, as in other places. There is far more society, and far better society, than report led me to expect. I have been here but a short time, but long enough to find men and women with minds as well stored as in any part of the Union. Literature, it is true, is here but in the blossom; literary institutions and societies are scarce, but there are very many intelligent minds, there is the intellect that needs only the occasion—the flint and steel to strike out its sparks. Families

begin to look upon this city as an abiding place, as well as a stopping place. Thus, society is forming and organizing. Schools, of course, cannot yet be worth much; but gradually the schools will improve, as children are to be educated here, and cannot always be sent to the North. Large parties are often given, in which the creoles and Americans mingle—parties as large as any party-going man can desire, no matter how fond of society. Social visiting is kept up—and with the civilities and cordialities of life, there are its amusements and enjoyments.

New Orleans is not Boston to be sure—Boston with its proud associations, its past history, and its great men, valued as its "jewels"—nor Philadelphia with its science and refinement and general literature—but it is New York almost. There is the noise and bustle and dust of New York—the same mercantile activity, the same love of good eating and good drinking and varied amusement. It is the place to live in, to make money in, to figure in—if you don't die in the acclimation, and if you have long summers and good springs.

In the progress of a very few years, New Orleans must be a different city. Northern feeling will get uppermost and take command, and thus influence the morals as well as the manners of the city. Northern enterprise, unless effeminated by the luxurious climate, will improve and beautify the city, and render it healthy. Thus far, I have found it the most interesting part of my tour, giving one the best scope for observation and reflection. Every traveler should come here, and though he will find no men of leisure, yet he will find enough for his eyes to see and his ears to hear.

I go up the river this evening, (April 27th,) in the steamer "*Chancellor*," as far up as Louisville. If no accident occurs, you will next hear from me at Louisville, (Kentucky) or at Cincinnati, the headquarters of the great West.

New Orleans, (La.)
April 27th, 1833

I have been to the battleground with a companion who bore arms as a soldier—and he has fought his battles over again, and pointed out every

spot of interest. First, he showed me in the city the balcony in Royal Street from which General Jackson gave the citizens a rough harangue, before he ordered them and his soldiers to the field. After this, we rode four or five miles down the Mississippi, on the levee, where a road is made, by some beautiful plantations and beautiful buildings—by [...] and brick-kilns, by the race ground which is now thronged, this being the race-day, with drunk and sober people—till we came to a fine house with negro huts not far from it—and there we saw a large open field, a frame for a house on it here and there, a rail fence crossing it here and there, as if dividing it into lots—a sugar house in the distance, a tree now and then, and, at a great distance yet, other plantation-houses. This is the famous battleground where General Jackson made himself President. Now it is covered with verdure and people are preparing to build upon it. From its appearance, I never should suspect it to be the battleground. I should have gone by it hunting in yet another place, if I had been alone.

With difficulty, I traced a ditch, through which water from the river ran to the swamp, half or three fourths of a mile off, and on which, before the battle, was placed a sawmill, in operation only when the Mississippi was very high. On the New Orleans side of this ditch, General Jackson threw up a rough breastwork, four or five feet high, which, however, did not cost great labor, for much of the digging had been already done by the owner of the sawmill. On the front of this ditch, towards the river, was formed a half-moon, where the cotton-bags and heavy ordinance were placed, so as to rake the advancing columns of the British. Thus, on one side the river protected our forces, and on the other a morass as impassable as the Dismal Swamp. Thus, there was little or no danger of an enemy assaulting our flanks, and, as the ground was comparatively narrow, the British, having been unwise enough to land below instead of above New Orleans, must of necessity attack this rough breastwork.

The British committed a series of blunders, the two chief of which were landing below New Orleans, and next, not attacking the Americans before they had formed their breastwork. The nature of the country is such that there is no flanking, no getting around a resisting enemy, but he must be attacked in front. The British next should have put no trust in small arms used against an enemy whom they could not see; their only hope was in their artillery, and almost every shot from this was fired far over the heads of the Americans.

I have always thought Pakenham¹¹⁴ was mad in attacking the American lines as he did; but, after seeing the field, so tempting to an assailant, I think him less mad, for the ground is a dead level, and the fortifications there were so rough, that it was no difficult task to scale them. But his great miscalculation was in supposing that brave raw troops, protected by a breastwork, would not fight as stoutly as his veterans. In the open field, the Americans must have fled in a mass against his advancing columns, for his discipline was perfect, his soldiers brave even against hope; and, according to all accounts, there was but little discipline and less order in the American lines, and of course little could be done, where any other evolutions were to be performed than that of loading and firing.

My companion describes the sufferings of the British. He says many of them advanced to the very lines, and concealed themselves in the ditch, beneath the earth that was thrown up, and were there taken prisoners after the battle was over. Many seeing the havoc that was made in their ranks by our small arms, fell down among the heaps of slain, and pretended to be dead, and when night came on, crept off to their own army. Many uttered the most excruciating groans in the agony of their wounds, and laying their heads[?] on the cares[?] of a brother-soldier, cried for water, in language that softened even the hearts of enemies—who dare not assist them, for the British were yet in front.

I saw the tree under which it is said Pakenham fell, which was far off from the American lines—also, the ditches or trenches in which the British buried their dead—and also the headquarters of Jackson, and of Pakenham, both in sight, both of course on the plain. Fortunate indeed I consider the result of this battle, for the errors and follies of our enemies, and their contempt for native bravery, gave us the victory. All was done that could be done with raw troops, fresh from the woods and the fields and the streets—but the blunders of an enemy made us victorious.

This morning I went to the guardhouse, where are the *gens d'armes*,¹¹⁵ about sixty in number, all Frenchmen or other foreigners, a piece or two of artillery, with a variety of other weapons of war. These soldiers are the

¹¹⁴ Edward Pakenham (1778-1815) — Commander of British forces in North America in 1814; killed in action at Battle of New Orleans

¹¹⁵ Translation — *men of arms* (= police)

police of the city, watching over the blacks and the various strangers of all kinds that flock here. I looked into the Police Court, too narrow-contracted and dirty a place to put a respectable judge in. In the same building is what is called, the Calaboose—in Spanish, Calabozo—or the jail, in which are locked up not only all sorts of wretches of all colors, but even debtors, as I understand. The clerk of the Police Court politely procured admission for a friend and myself from the keeper, whom he addressed in French. I stepped to the door. The prison is a most forbidding execrable hole, and probably the worst in America. The keeper told us he could not be responsible for our pockets, or for the insults and attacks we should be exposed to. I did not like this information, and for a moment asked myself "*Is it worthwhile to go into such a place?*" A poor fellow was now brought out, sadly pale, dirty and ragged, turning himself and his features in all manner of contortions. Two negroes, one chained, carried him off on a rough litter. This spectacle settled the question of entering, and I took my leave without going in. The poor fellow of whom I speak had the cholera, which is now again an epidemic here—and fatal in the flatboats and dirty steamboats on the levee.

THE WESTERN FRINGE

Mississippi River, (La.)
April 27th, 1833

Amid clouds of dust, which a high wind was blowing in all directions, our steamer, the "*Chancellor*" left New Orleans on Saturday, 6 P.M. April 27th, for what almost equals a sea voyage—Louisville, Kentucky, distant by the river 1,419 miles. But what is distance here? little or nothing, as steam is realizing the dream of the lover, in annihilating time and space.

First, I will give you an idea of our steamer, and thus show you the comforts of travelling on the Western waters. The "*Chancellor*" is a boat of about 450 tons, a splendid boat, far better than any I have seen on the Atlantic waters, though not the best, as I am informed, on the river. Our cabin is above the deck, in the second story, open, airy and spacious. This cabin is elegantly furnished, as elegantly as a saloon, with a rich carpet—in short, with all the comforts, and conveniences of a parlor in the best of hotels. This cabin, when all open, extends almost the whole length of the steamboat. But there are doors dividing it in the after part, so as to give the ladies a separate apartment. On the right and left of this cabin are state rooms, with two berths in each, a writing table covering a bowl and pitcher, and thus giving one an opportunity to wash, as well as to write; or there are open berths, as in all cabins protected by Venetian blinds, alternating one with the other. Thus, the passenger can be alone all day, if he wishes, or he can enjoy a semi-society and an open berth, with a freer circulation of air.

Our table is well provided with all the luxuries, as well as the solids, of the season. We took in a quantity of ice at New Orleans, which stood by us till we reached Memphis, (Tenn.) when we recruited.¹¹⁶ Thus we have the muddy water of the Mississippi—not filtered as at New Orleans, for here that would be difficult—but well-iced, and therefore very cool and very good. Our meals are at the usual hours, but, in addition, we have a good luncheon at 12 o'clock. There is a bar on board with fruits and liquors in

¹¹⁶ Recruited — (Definition) replenished

abundance. Now even the epicure need not hesitate to travel here, nor the lover of ease, for the life, if there is error, is too luxurious and easy.

Our captain is a polite, and, apparently, an accomplished, man, one of the best on the river, I suspect. He is provided with a clerk, pilots and engineers, who are paid well, and has comparatively little else to do than to oversee the manner in which things are managed. Neatness and order prevail in all his arrangements. His waiters are attentive and obliging.

Our company is not very large. There are but few ladies in this boat, though the boats this spring are generally crowded. We passed the "*Farmer*" the fourth day out, which started two days before, full of ladies, and with about 200 deck passengers, boatmen principally, among whom the cholera had broken out. When we passed her, she had buried four persons, and three more were on the point of death. The company was most somber. The "*Farmer*" is a rapid but not a neat boat, and this is perhaps the reason that the passengers there were so unfortunate, while not a case has occurred in our boat. The dead, on board of the "*Farmer*" were buried on the banks of the river, probably without a coffin, or the common ceremonies of sepulcher. It is horrid thus to be left in the wilderness, far from home and friends, the victim of such disease!

The cabin passengers, of whom there are forty or fifty, amuse themselves in reading, or in writing a little—which you will see, from my handwriting, is not so easy an employment from the jostling of the machinery—or in conversation, promenading, playing backgammon, chess or cards. I have seen in the "*Chancellor*" but very little gambling, and that lasted only a few hours. By the regulations of the boat, all card-playing ceases at 10 P.M.

Our deck passengers have various amusements. Some seesaw a little over the catgut of a fiddle. Some play a Jews' harp. Some sing. Some sleep. Some tell stories, and a few read a little. They are the boatmen who go hundreds of miles down to New Orleans in their flatboats, or "broadhorns"¹¹⁷ as they call them, and after discharging their cargoes, break them up, sell the materials, and then take passage back in a

¹¹⁷ Broadhorn — "Rectangular, flat-bottomed boat with square ends, used to transport freight and passengers on inland waterways." Typically, the current of the river was used for propulsion.

steamboat, at a very cheap rate, working in part for their passage or "wooding the boat,"—that is taking in the wood, morning and evening, which is consumed by the steamboat, and which, by the way, costs about 60 or 70 dollars a day, the wood being on an average about two dollars a cord. The freight from New Orleans to Louisville is forty cents a hundred—to which expense must be added that of insurance.

The company I have met with on board of the steamboats here is better than report would lead one to expect. It is varied enough to be sure. There are men from all parts and of all occupations, from the professed gambler to the venturesome pioneer and hunter of the far, far-off wilderness. These men, in general, have great spirit, great volubility, a great love of telling great stories, of electioneering, of brisk fighting, and tomahawking and Indian hunting, but they are such men as one can sit hours with, and then enjoy their company. There is an originality, spice and vivacity in their conversation that interest one. They swear without much ceremony, and intersperse in their eloquence an oath, not between every sentence, but between every two or three words. Indeed, common as profanity is at the North, the South and the steamboat men of the West far outdo even the most gifted of our sailors. At home, we exaggerate the roughness of Western manners, and of Western boatmen, of whom as yet I am only prepared to speak. Some few wear knives, but such are rarely all from the low country. An equal fight is enjoyed, but an unequal contest is not tolerated. This propensity, however, is not one tenth part as strong as the Irish exhibit, this pugnacious propensity I mean. Gouging in Kentucky, I suspect, is quite all moonshine. Western boatmen are a brave, hardy, and rugged body of men, the bone and sinew of a working population. They sail off in their flatboats, on a journey often of nearly 2,000 miles, with a bold heart and a jovial front. You see then every mile and half of a mile, spotting the yellow waters of the Mississippi, and the calm silver current of the Ohio. They are paraded often at morning and evening in shore, or are rowing carelessly along on the whirling eddying stream of the great river. Every little tributary river that we pass throws them out on their distant adventurous voyage, from the bayou or outlet, to the far-reaching Tennessee, or more distant Illinois. Such a population must be bold, vigorous, and the more so as they are the founders, or the sons of the founders, of new empires in this magnificent West.

Mississippi River
c. May 2nd, 1833

I have [sat] for hours on the prow of our steamer and amused myself with seeing the varieties which the flatboats, keelboats, kedge-boats, and other kinds of boats, with whose names I am unacquainted, are loaded with when floating down the Mississippi and Ohio. Here goes a lot of hogs, horses, sheep, cows and bullocks, and there, perchance, a lot of negroes from Kentucky or Virginia, to be sold in Natchez or New Orleans for the Louisiana market. Here are flour, tobacco, corn and cotton, and there are iron, whiskey, &c. &c.—in short, the productions of almost every clime and every soil. Here goes a "broadhorn" with a white flag, which signifies that it is a peddling vessel, starting perhaps for Pittsburgh, with Yankee notions and other knick knackereries of all sorts for the farmers and farmers' daughters on the banks of the rivers. We actually met two travelling doctors, Yankees I dare say, offering their services in a little boat "*all along shore*," for hundreds and hundreds of miles! They could "*kill cholera*" or "*knock over a fever*", to quote the phrases of the boatmen.

When we left New Orleans, when passing the Batture,¹¹⁸ we went by from one to two thousand flatboats, which for three miles were on the levee. There are on board of each of these flatboats from three to six persons, who cook and board within their boats. Thus, you see the population of New Orleans is at times greatly enlarged by strangers, and also that, numerous as are the steamboats, they by no means engross all of the freighting business down the river.

I said little or nothing of the many, very many steamboats that crowd the new levee in New Orleans, because, though I labored hard to learn, no one could tell me how many there were on the Mississippi, nor how many traded at New Orleans. While I was there, from forty to fifty were coming in or leaving quite every hour in the day. It is said that there are from four to five hundred steamboats in the Western waters, including all from Pittsburgh to Galena and New Orleans, and probably the estimate is not wild. When on the Mississippi, we passed three, four, and five every day, and though not so many on the Ohio every day, yet we there passed many.

¹¹⁸ The Batture — Sandbar, shallow at low water, formed by sediment excavated by the Mississippi River from its banks

The steamboats which run from large towns in the West to New Orleans are large and splendid boats, surpassing the best boats I have seen at the North. The "*Homer*" and "*Mediterranean*" are represented as magnificent boats. The "*Chancellor*" would be "a star" upon our waters. Their boats will carry a very large number of passengers. We passed the "*Splendid*" with 120 cabin passengers and from two to three hundred deck passengers. Some of the larger boats carry, at times, 500 deck passengers, among whom, it is no wonder that the cholera at this season breaks out, sleeping as they do with little or no protection, and living as they do on food of the worst kind, half-cooked, for ten, twelve, or fourteen days.

These steamboats are all or nearly all of high pressure. Accidents often occur, but probably not more from steam than in the other waters of the United States, comparing the number of boats here with the numbers elsewhere. One feels quite as safe in travelling here as on other waters. There are dangers from "running afoul," and from "snagging." The Mississippi is full of snags, sawyers, and planters. "A snag" is a log or tree imbedded in the mud, and points downstream. A "sawyer" differs from a snag, in having a springing or sawing motion. The snags and sawyers are often just far enough under water to be concealed from the pilot's [view?], and yet to destroy the boat when under the tremendous pressure of steam. Captain Shreve,¹¹⁹ famous in these waters for drawing out the snags, has taken up very many, and made the navigation much safer with his bi-formed steamboat, which the boatmen call "Uncle Sam's Tooth-Puller." But, notwithstanding all this, there is risk from navigating the mighty Mississippi with its whirls and eddies, in which it is very perilous to swim whenever a boat is "snagged," even but a few feet from the shore.

The cholera is now nearly in every boat on the Mississippi and the lower part of Ohio. There has been but one case among the cabin passengers that I know of—and the disease has lost all its terrors. The "*Chancellor*," in which I was, ran aground one hundred and seventy miles below Louisville, for the Ohio is now too low to admit of its passage to Louisville—and after laying on the banks of the Ohio on the Indiana side of the river about six hours, and viewing the huts of the Indiana settlers, who, having no slaves are working like men for themselves, we were

¹¹⁹ Henry Miller Shreve (1785-1851) — Inventor and steamboat captain; pioneered riverboat navigation on the Ohio and Mississippi; charged with clearing log jams; name commemorated by Shreveport (La.)

taken off by a boat from St. Louis, the "*Metamora*," in which (a small boat) were about 280 persons. Soon after I came on board, one man dead of the cholera was put on shore in a box to be buried—after this, three persons more, frightened probably into the disease, were seriously attacked. I have not heard their fate, but I learn this morning that one of our cabin passengers is seriously attacked.¹²⁰ It is no credit to some persons that they continue to gamble even after pestilence and death have thus trodden in upon our numbers.

Of the cholera I have no fear, no more I mean than from a fever, or like complaints. It is now one of the settled diseases of the Mississippi. The drunken are almost certain of being its victims, and not only the intemperate, but the reckless, the careless, the exposed, the fearful, and it may be, the *over-cautious*. "*Live as usual, but live as you ought to live*," is the best preventive. The waters of the Mississippi, used on board all of the steamboats, predisposes many to the disease, as the waters of the St. Lawrence are said to do. All persons, however, are not thus affected. The frequent cases of cholera in the steamboats are not to be wondered at. In a good spacious boat, there is as much safety as on land, but an old boat full of passengers, and full of bilge water, dirty and badly officered, there must be cholera, for there is a change of food, change of habit, less of the conveniences and comforts of life—and idleness in addition, one of the best predisposing causes to an active mind or an active man.

This is mailed at Louisville, Kentucky, from which I will write you more. I find much difficulty from the rapidity, with which want of sufficient time compels me to journey, in giving that form and comeliness which I would give to sketches written with more leisure. It takes me all my idle time to observe and learn, but little to note what is seen. I had leisure in our steamer, but the weather was oppressively hot, and there was then much difficulty in using the pen, amid such excitement and so much of interest to see and to hear. Excuse, then, these rough-hewn articles, and receive my promise for something more carefully drawn as I have leisure.

¹²⁰ Footnote in original — "This gentleman is since dead. He had with him a beautiful wife—and was imprudent enough to sleep in the crowded cabin of a small steamboat when the pestilence was in it, and when he was afflicted with all the premonitory symptoms. I hear that he is a Captain in the Navy."

Louisville, (Ky.)
May 8th, 1833

Go back with me to New Orleans, full of mosquitoes, haunting you by day and assaulting you with their poisonous sting by night, so that you are glad to escape at early evening to your bed under your mosquito net, where you can read and think in peace; to New Orleans, now in full summer, teeming with the rich fruits of the earth, and follow me yet longer, if you have patience, on this long voyage to another region, another people, another climate, where I again meet spring, and the strong bracing air of New England.

I have said nothing of the rich plantations on both banks of the Mississippi above New Orleans, nothing of the fine rich-looking houses of all models and all colors, as erected by the taste of a Spaniard, a Frenchman, or an American; but, nevertheless, such houses and plantations are on the levee of the Mississippi for miles above New Orleans, adorning the river and variegating the prospect, sometimes seeming like whole villages, as the neatly painted negro huts cluster around the palace of the master, and sometimes like dilapidated towns, which negligence has left to ruin. These are chiefly rich sugar plantations on the finest land in the world, extending into the interior but a short distance where is almost an interminable swamp, but rich where it is good at all, formed from the deposits of the Mississippi, which like the Nile, fertilizes its banks.

But there is soon an end to this display of a rich country and fine houses. Houses soon appear further and further off, and look poorer and poorer. At last the embankment ceases, or nearly ceases, and then is seen a swamp with its cypress, spotted only here and there by the hut of a daring woodcutter who supplies the steamboats with fuel; or bluffs appear, bluffs or hills of all shapes, from the curve to the ragged or rent parallelogram. We passed Donaldsonville in the night. Baton Rouge was seen at advantage by daylight, with the neatly built Arsenal just above the town. We stopped at Natchez awhile, which time I improved in ascending a high bluff through deep mud, expecting to see nothing sufficient to compensate for my trouble; when, at once, a beautiful little city broke in upon the view—Natchez itself, with elegant houses, handsome streets,

and well bordered with the China tree.¹²¹ I looked into the squares and gardens, which were then flourishing in all their glory. As elegantly clad ladies were in the principal streets as one will see in Broadway. I regretted that I could not tarry longer to see this city of Mississippi, a State which I skirt in my travels, but of which one can see but little in a steamboat.

That part of Natchez under the hill, a small part, the port as it were, is filthy and uninviting. There was loud conversation on the subject of the cholera. It seems that Natchez is a port where slaves are brought and sold, so as to avoid the law of Louisiana, and from thence are introduced into Louisiana. A slave-trader brought a hundred of slaves there for sale, many of whom had, after their arrival, died of the cholera, and these the driver had carelessly thrown into a ditch, half-covering their bodies with dirt, so that the first rain brought them forth, to the horror of the inhabitants. The excitement was great, and I hope sufficient to drive these venders of souls and bodies further off, to pursue elsewhere their accursed traffic.

Of Arkansaw, on the left bank of the Mississippi, we saw nothing but its forests, its canebreaks so thick as to be almost impervious to light, and the cabins of its woodcutters, who were "squatting" on the lands of the government, and selling wood at 2.50 cts. per cord, disdainingly to cultivate the soil when, by leveling the huge trees on the banks, they could thus easily put money into their pockets. Somewhere in Arkansaw, while our steamboat was "wooding," I strayed off a little, and found near a log cabin two Indians, hideously painted, as in their days of war and glory, now beastly drunk with whiskey, and reveling in all the extravagances of intoxication.

Our voyage from Vicksburg, where we stopped in the night, to Memphis, in Tennessee, was uninviting and unvaried but by the passing of the flatboats and the steamboats for New Orleans and Red River, or the occasional soundings which we made in crossing a sand bar. "*A quarter less twain*," "*No bottom*," "*Mark above water twain*," or the like, were the chief sounds that saluted our ears, while forest, forest, forest, with the huts of the woodcutters, were all we could see on the shores.

¹²¹ China tree — Perhaps *Melia azerdarach*, popularly known as the chinaberry tree; or, *Koelreuteria bipinnat*, the Pride of China

Memphis is on a bluff or hill. It is a small neat-looking place, with a few brick buildings. We drifted on the current as our small boat or yawl put off to take in boat stores. Memphis seems, to the voyager on the Mississippi, like a refreshing port, when he has once more come in sight of land after being long upon the waters. We left there at evening. After a copious shower of rain with the thunder of the South, not of New England, the bright moon looked forth in its full radiance, and we journeyed up the strongly-opposing current in high spirits and good fellowship, passing in our steamer the "*Senator*," the "*Farmer*," and the "*Red Rover*," all full of cholera, as I was informed.

It was on Saturday evening that we left New Orleans. The next Saturday morning, early, we were near the mouth of the Ohio, in the light silver waters of the river on the right bank of the Mississippi, long before we approached its mouth; for, as the two streams meet, it is long before they unite, the Ohio keeping its peculiar tinge and the Mississippi its turbid yellow color for ten or twelve miles. About this time our mosquitoes had nearly left us. The climate was different; the season less advanced; the scenery on the banks of the river more undulating, and more varied. On entering the mouth of the beautiful river—"*la belle rivière*," well called by the French—I felt like the sailor, who on a long voyage has caught a glimpse of the shore. Yet we were 450 miles from Louisville. The country was, however, becoming more inviting. We were out of the low country. We were free from mosquitoes, from swamps and morasses—but yet we had indeed a voyage to make before reaching Pittsburgh or Cincinnati.

An indefinable sensation of satisfaction, delight and beauty, comes over one as he sails up this river, and notices its graceful curves, and its sloping banks now alive with vegetation, and covered with the ash, the oak, cottonwood and cypress. There is a calmness, quietude, and unobtrusive simple grandeur, that lulls the senses into contentment, and even draws the eye and opens the applauding mouth of him who has no soul for nature. The current is calm and unruffled. All is as quiet as when the first adventurous party first sailed from the upper waters on their adventurous voyage—they hardly knew whither. Occasionally the banks are broken by rocks. At times, but seldom, a precipice is to be seen; but, generally speaking, there is a sloping woodland of mighty trees, beautiful but awing, alluring but impressive.

We passed by many villages on the banks of the Ohio—villages or towns in Kentucky, in Illinois and Indiana. We landed at a few, and passed others in the night. Paducah in Kentucky, is a rapidly growing village. Shawneetown in Illinois, on the spot of an old Shawnese settlement, is a place of some importance. But I am not writing a geography, nor a book of travels.

Louisville, (Ky.)
May 8th, 1833

Such a town as this in the West—over the mountain—in the wilderness! thought I, as our steamer stopped at evening in the vicinity of Louisville, and as we slowly floated through the towering locks of the canal around the falls of the Ohio. Such a city as this here! I exclaimed to myself as I walked over the well-paved streets, and saw shops richly lighted up, and, evening as it was, a busy humming population in lively motion. It is indeed true that here is the wilderness, as we have been wont to consider it; here, when less than thirty years ago it was dangerous to live for fear of the tomahawk and scalping knife. Here, on the summit of a little ascent, just rescued from the wilderness, is a place deserving the name of a city, with some magnificent houses, many well-arranged streets, and inhabited by a people as enterprising and as cultivated and as far advanced in the civilities and refinements of life, as any of the best population in the United States. I could tarry in peace here for years, as in my own New England, but give me my friends and the thousand associations which every man cherishes in the land of his boyhood. I expect to find Cincinnati a great and growing city. Her fame has been trumpeted abroad. Her thriftiness, her flourishing advancement, her literary men are known, or are becoming known throughout the whole Union, but I did not expect to find in Louisville a place so large, so well built, so well stocked with all the comforts and affluences of life.

Louisville is now said to have from fifteen to sixteen thousand inhabitants. In 1820, there were 4,012. Mark this astonishing growth, a growth yet increasing, and probably destined to increase, till Louisville shall equal or go beyond Cincinnati; for business is flourishing, and though credits are injured, and the money-market affected, and failures

produced by the veto on the U.S. Bank, yet there is here that natural vigor, that superabundance of internal resources, and recuperative energy in trade, which of themselves force business to be good in spite of adversity. Louisville is the largest town in Kentucky, and commands nearly all the trade of the State. Wagons are often seen there, not only from the remote counties of Kentucky, but from very many parts of Tennessee. Indiana also gives Louisville an important trade; Indiana which, like Ohio, is a Yankee State in this North-Western country, with a population increasing nearly one hundred thousand souls every year, and with now, probably, half a million of souls within its borders; increasing thus **because it is not a slave state**, for the repulsion of emigrants and the retardation of the growth of a State are to be set down as yet other curses of slavery.

With as much yet to see and so little time to see it in, I have hurried over everything here. The politeness of many Kentucky friends who, with the hospitality for which they are so justly distinguished, offered me, though a perfect stranger, their kind attentions, at once introduced me to what was to be seen in Louisville. I looked into the Court House, a creditable building, in which business was apparently conducted with all the order and precision dominant in our New England halls of justice. I walked through the market in the morning, which was better stored than any I have seen since I left Washington. I see white men at work and but few negroes, which is a good sign in a slave state, and accounts for its prosperity. There is a high school, a free school for the poor and others of the city, which I did not have time to visit. I went into some of the iron foundries, where men were working steamboat machinery. There are many steam mills and a cotton factory. In short, everything has a lively and flourishing air—but what would Louisville, what would Kentucky be, if there were no slaves! Kentucky has no excuse, no palliation, for holding colored men in bondage. Neither her soil, nor her productions justify her. She cannot plead the common excuses of the South—"our sickly rice fields," "our deadly sugar plantations," "our low lands," "our intensely burning sun." The sons of Kentucky can put forth no such words from their mouths. They have no such excuses, poor as these are—for they boast of their soil; they boast of their genial sun; they boast of the general diffusion of political knowledge.

If I were a citizen of Ohio or Indiana, or a Yankee, without heart or soul, I would say to Kentucky, as I would say more earnestly to the whole South.

*"Go on now; keep your slaves. Talk of liberty and hold men in bondage! We glory in the spectacle. We are rich and you must be fed, when you have many slaves on an old country. We are increasing, and if you increase, it is slower than ours. Look at yourselves and look at us. See us doubling and quadrupling our population, when you are yet older than we are, and have had more years for growth. Make what laws you please, and we will do better than you under them; we will be thriftier, have better farms, better houses, a better educated population, generally speaking. But go on; what do we care? It is for our **interest**, for you to hold slaves. You must eat and wear out what we produce, for we are the producers and you are the consumers. Keep your slaves then; we make money by it. We draw your population. We enjoy the spectacle. You are our colonies, and cost us nothing, but pity as for your vices. You are our colonies without our population, without holding further inducements to our emigrants. If you are unwise enough to keep yourselves forever in such a situation, it is our interest also to keep you there."*

Such are the arguments a man, without the sympathies of a man, from any slaveholding State, can fairly use. But to do justice to the Kentuckians, let me say, I believe, they *feel* the vice, and anxiously desire to be rid of it. They are unlike many with whom I have conversed in the South, who in their words "*deprecate slavery*," but, in their hearts, resolve never to make an effort to do justice to their slaves, or their posterity, by making them free.

But, to return to Louisville. Of course, a two-day's tarry gave me no time to see the society of the place—society in a mass, I mean, though I saw much of detail. I went with some friends to a ladies' fair, the object of which was to purchase an organ for the first, and the new, Unitarian church in the city. There were there ladies as elegant, as refined, as fashionably decorated as one will see on the Atlantic border. The healthy air of the West gives their young ladies the lovely faces and ruddy countenances of New England. But few are seen with the sallow complexions of the South. I wish I had time to see more of this society, and enjoy more of this hospitality, so generously offered to me. I wish also I had time to see more of Kentucky, her caves, and her natural curiosities. I wish I had time to go a little into the interior, at least as far as Lexington, a region which many have told me is the garden of America, a spot blessed by heaven with the richest of gifts. I flattered myself that I should have

the pleasure of seeing Mr. Clay, amid "the lawns and groves of his own Ashland"—a farm in the vicinity of Lexington, scientifically, skillfully and profitably cultivated, I am told, by a man whose heart and fame, with posterity, I had as lief have as of any American, except it be Washington, Marshall or Madison. But summer is coming. The spring is already away. I must shorten my travels, and hasten home to our editorial closet, and there exchange the epistolary free-and-easy-run-about "I," for the stately, dignified, still-going "we." Besides, I begin to feel a longing desire once more to see New England, which, notwithstanding all the fine places there are in the world, perhaps, as in duty bound, I still think the best. I have finished this letter in the steamboat "*Juniata*," which is now ascending the Ohio for Cincinnati, and as my eyes have wandered over a quotation from Anacreon, not on love, a topic usually engrossing his attention, but upon "reflections at sea," I will re-quote them as the shadows of many of my own thoughts.

'Tis sweet, upon the vessel's side
To stand and view the passing tide,
Sadly to mark the silent scene;
In summer evening's close serene;
To muse on those, who far away
Perhaps behold his setting ray;
And at the sight may think the while
What welcome words, what cheerful smile
Shall greet &c. &c.

Cincinnati, (Ohio)
May 13th, 1833

There is a world of people here, on this side of the mountains—and land enough for fifty European nations, and a thousand dukedoms and principalities. What a country, this of ours! how vast, how magnificent, how promising in glorious results, if our States but cling together. Our geographies that speak of the West are twenty years behind hand. Our ideas (at least mine were) are a hundred years behind hand. There is here no fiction in Berkeley's¹²² *Westward the star of Empire takes its way*.¹²³

¹²² Bishop George Berkeley (1685-1753) — Irish philosopher

¹²³ Original wording — *Westward the course of empire takes its way* (1752)

Cincinnati, we all know is a new city, in a new State, populated with a rapidity unexampled in the history of the world—but Cincinnati, new as it is, has all the air and manner of an old place. New as it is, there are no stumps and burnt trees standing in the streets, as some may imagine, for the streets are all or nearly all as well paved as are the streets of Boston. The buildings are—not huts, thatched hamlets—oh, no—but elegant brick blocks, very many of them are—with some private mansion houses as rich and magnificent as there are in the Eastern States. It is a Yankee city in appearance—with Yankee industry and Yankee thriftiness. The houses are built as we build them, with gardens and walks where they can be had. There are no indications that the place is not as old as Portland, no signs of its unexampled growth. The inhabitants of only ten years standing are surprised to find themselves where they are, in the midst of a growing city, surrounded with the luxuries of life, the blessings of an elegant society—and a population now not of 30,000 inhabitants as generally named, but probably of 35,000! Such is the growth of a city—where land is now worth as many thousands of dollars as it cost single cents, less than thirty years ago—a city growing rapidly now in spite of the check of the veto,¹²⁴ and probably destined forever to be the empire city of the West.¹²⁵

Chance, it is said, fixed upon the location of Cincinnati—the black lustrous eyes of a settler's wife, removing hither Fort Washington,¹²⁶ in a manner which the truth-giving historian will tell, for such is said to be its origin. And why may there not be romance in the founding of Cincinnati, as in that of Rome? But happy eyes they! for the city is in a beautiful valley—in a spacious amphitheater, almost surrounded by gradually sloping hills, now green to their summits—and enchanting beyond description. Across the Ohio are Newport and Covington— delightful villages, surrounded by the same hills and the same landscape—and all taken together here form, with verdant hills and elegant buildings, that charming association of

¹²⁴ Veto — Following his re-election in 1832, President Andrew Jackson destroyed the regulatory role of the Second Bank of the United States by vetoing renewal of its charter. Public opinion was strongly divided on the wisdom of this policy.

¹²⁵ Brooks could not know that, despite the explosive growth of Cincinnati, it would be outshone within his lifetime by the new Illinois town of Chicago, established on the western frontier that very same year (1833).

¹²⁶ Fort Washington — Built in 1789, its location corresponded to the modern-day downtown area of Cincinnati.

nature and of art, which renders it one of the finest spots to be seen in the United States.

I have escaped from the clouds of darkness that hover about one's steps in the Southern States. This Ohio is New England in its aspect, its manners, and in much of its feeling. Hence, on the banks of the Ohio, on the Ohio and Indiana side, are the flourishing villages and the neat little farmhouses of New England, with their walks and their gardens, their porticoes, and piazzas, enjoying society and neighborhood, and proudly conscious that this is **all** a land of freemen. I want no better condemnation of slavery than the left bank of the Ohio, as you ascend it, contrasted even with Kentucky, but partially afflicted with this palsy. I want no better argument than the many farms and the neat dwellings, and promising agriculture of the free State. There is Madison in Indiana, one of the most inviting villages I have ever seen, situated in a valley defended from the river by one bank of ordinary height, and then by another of nature's formation more beautifully shaped than the art of man can imitate. But to Cincinnati.

I have looked into everything which I have been told is worthy of observation. The morning after I arrived, I delivered my letters, and numerous friends tendered me their attention. There is the Medical College, a large building with many admirably constructed lecture rooms, into which Dr. Staughton¹²⁷ introduced me. I saw many of its curiosities, its preparations, its prints and paintings, which I should think of exceeding value. I called upon Mr. Flint,¹²⁸ the literary lion of the West, known so extensively and advantageously all over our country. I am sorry to say his health is at present feeble. Mr. Flint is tall and spare in figure, not rapid, but fluent and interesting in conversation, instructive also, and full of anecdote and information concerning the valleys of the Mississippi and Ohio from New Orleans to Pittsburgh.

¹²⁷ Dr. Staughton — (perhaps) James M. Staughton (1800-1833), surgeon and physician; died of cholera in August 1833

¹²⁸ Timothy Flint (1780-1840) — author; pioneer and frontiersman of the Ohio and Mississippi Valley; editor of *Western Review* at Cincinnati

I looked into the Court House, for the Supreme Court is now in session. A trial for murder was on the tapis.¹²⁹ Of course, interest was excited and the crowd was pressing. The presiding judges here now are Judge Wright,¹³⁰ well known as a former member of Congress, and Judge Lane,¹³¹ both men of ability, and of eminent social value. I believe they are both from New England, but have grown up with, and are now identified with Ohio. The bar is principally of middle-aged and young men, a strong bar as I am told, and as appearances indicate from the vigor, new nerve, and enterprise brought into the field. I was introduced to very many of its members—intelligent able men, who are nearly all prosperous in their business. But Cincinnati is now no place for a young lawyer to settle in. He had better grow up with the growth of some other city, of which this West will by and by be as full as Germany now is.

The Court House here might be a more convenient building—but it answers the purpose—and is well enough, perhaps, in all but the accommodations of the members of the bar, though, if an advocate talks much to the Court, his neck must be pained from looking high up. I have seen our New England courts far noisier than this, and in decorum and propriety, they are more than up with us. There are many lawyers of high ability whom I could name, among whom is my brother editor, Charles Hammond,¹³² more of a public character among the foremost at the bar, though he takes care of the nation, the State, politics, the church and the bank in addition.

There is Mrs. Trollope's famous bazaar¹³³—I looked at that. It is an odd-looking concern, part church, part jail, part bank, and part dwelling

¹²⁹ *On the tapis* — (Definition) *Under consideration* (from French = carpet, table covering)

¹³⁰ John Crafts Wright (1784-1861) — born Connecticut; lawyer in Steubenville, Ohio (1809); elected to U.S. Congress (1823); judge of Supreme Court of Ohio (1831); co-founder of Cincinnati Law School (1833)

¹³¹ Judge Ebenezer Lane (1793-1866) — born Massachusetts; graduated Harvard, 1811; lawyer; moved to Ohio, 1818; Ohio Supreme Court, 1830-1845

¹³² Charles Hammond (1779-1840) — born Maryland; practicing lawyer (1801); elected to Ohio Senate (1813); Editor of the *Cincinnati Daily Gazette* (appointed 1825); anti-Jacksonian

¹³³ Mrs. Frances Trollope's Bazaar — Building formerly located at 411 East Third Street; opened 1828; also comprised an exhibition gallery, ballroom and two salons; sold to pay construction debts (1830)

house—wanting just enough of each to make you wonder what on earth it could be—out of shape—without form or comeliness. No wonder the Cincinnatians stared when such a structure was thrown up among them. It is deserted now, and as the ancients speak of Cleopatra's Needle, so we may call this Mrs. Trollope's Bell Top, for the cupola is in the shape of a bell. Mrs. Trollope is well known here. They say she was intelligent, skillful in sketches, and corresponded with distinguished men abroad, but wished to figure here as a Madam de Staël.¹³⁴ But Mrs. Trollope was a vulgar woman, gross in a thousand things, with so much of the equivocal in her character, that she could seldom or never meet with the good society of Cincinnati. The people amuse themselves with and laugh at her accounts. They probably never made a person angry, which, of course, is the best way to receive all such hits.

I went on Sunday morning to the Unitarian church, a small but neat building, with an organ of some power. The church was full. The preacher was Rev. Mr. Peabody,¹³⁵ who, though a young man, gave a sermon of uncommon ability, such as I have not heard since I left my church at home. His subject was—"*The dangers that surround young men in cities*"—and he applied his remarks to the peculiar circumstances of Cincinnati, where so many young men are taken from their friends in other States, and from the awe and the influence which the presence of friends always exerts over their manners and morals. A good sermon is a good feast—on any creed, or from anybody who has a right to sermonize at all; but, spare me, spare me from the hundred and one sermonizers who force the public to hear them two or three hours a week. If I had time and space, and this was the space, I would write an essay among these, my pictures of matters and things in general, attempting to prove that the stupidity, the ignorance, the carelessness, the audacity which ventures to speak with nothing to say, drives more people from the churches, than all the allurements of all the vices.

Dr. Beecher¹³⁶ commenced on Sunday evening a redelivery of the course of lectures which he delivered in Boston. He is a great man, of great

¹³⁴ Madame de Staël (1766-1817) — French novelist and critic

¹³⁵ Rev. Ephraim Peabody (1807-1856) — graduated Bowdoin (1827); pastor of First Unitarian Church at Cincinnati (1831-1838)

¹³⁶ Lyman Beecher (1775-1863) — born Connecticut; graduated Yale (1797); Presbyterian minister; ardent anti-Catholic; co-founder of American Temperance

power, both of thought and language, and is in the pulpit what Mr. Webster is at the bar. He is as positive, as earnest, as commanding, as declamatory at times, and as impressive. I never lose an opportunity to hear such a man, and therefore even in the rain, and the total darkness of Cincinnati streets, I aided in filling up his church—an elegant church, by the way—this evening, quite full to overflowing. The matter of the lectures we have heard much about at home. Let us speak of the manner.

Dr. Beecher is a rough-hewn orator. I have heard him speak better than he spoke Sunday evening, but then, he was powerful always, and able at times. His language is strong, bold, brave. He deals too much occasionally in the earthquake, the volcano, the thunder and lightning—in his oral discourses and his written sermons (for I have read them all)—these are the old clap-traps of all orators—anybody can have lots of them in their speeches, from the square yard to the acre. Dr. Beecher is thinker enough to forge metaphors of his own. There are creations enough in his own brain which will leap to life, armed and equipped as he directs. But this is a little fault, only to be mentioned by grumblers, as a bad example to the schoolboys, who take him for a model. Dr. Beecher is clear, distinct and energetic in his propositions. He puts what he has to say in the strongest point of view. He takes a bold, comprehensive view of his subject—and is often frank and liberal to excess in his concessions to an adversary's arguments. That throw-up of his spectacles which he has, that hint to the audience of "*Now give me your ears—I am going to say something good,*" is peculiar to him at this time. Fisher Ames¹³⁷ had something of the sort. And something good he **does** give. **His** head is up; his eye lightens; his arm is in motion; his intonations alter from the dull reading-on, didactic tone, to the threatening, ominous, touching, or overwhelming notes of genuine eloquence.

Dr. Beecher **is** an orator, but like all of our orators—Clay except, whom nobody **can** imitate in his great efforts, and whom nobody **should** imitate

Society (1826); at Boston (1826-1832); at Cincinnati (1832-1852); noted children include Harriet Beecher Stowe

¹³⁷ Fisher Ames (1758-1808) — Born in Massachusetts; politician; member of U.S. Congress; Federalist; noted orator

in his faults—a dangerous model, one to be admired but not copied. *Ohe jam satis*¹³⁸—what a proser¹³⁹ I have become!

Cincinnati, (Ohio)
May 13th, 1833

It is interesting to go about this city with a friend who has seen almost every house go up, and hear the story of the rise and progress of this street and that, this block of buildings and that—the price of this property in 1826 and the price of now. This family and that have grown very wealthy by the mere increasing value of lands.

Cincinnati is regularly laid out, with streets nearly parallel to the river, crossed at right angles by yet other streets, named, as in Philadelphia, first, second, third, &c. The quay, a boat landing, is paved to the water's edge—a spacious area of immense value, long contested, but now settled as belonging to the city. Land titles, by the way, are great topics of contest here. Antiquity has confirmed no possessions, and hence many with difficulty know when **their** land is **theirs** or when it belongs to some other persons.

Cincinnati is full of manufactories—not "the Birmingham of the West,"¹⁴⁰ like Pittsburgh, but yet its manufactories are important. I know not how many steam mills there are, but there are many, as one can see from the long train of smoke. There are cotton factories, steam engine factories, flour mills, sawmills, breweries, &c. I went into a type factory in which types are picked out of the melted lead, as it were, with great rapidity, without the slow progress of the old manner of molding. It is a Yankee invention, simple but wonderful and curious. Cincinnati has her free schools. This is a blessing, the treasure of a free State. **They** are the emblems of a people all free. **They** are the stepping stones of thousands of poor boys to knowledge, to character, to influence, to wealth. They are worth more than all the negroes and all the plantations of the whole slave States. A single farmer's boy, hardy and with an English education, will

¹³⁸ Translation — *That is enough, indeed*

¹³⁹ Proser — (Definition) One who talks or write tediously

¹⁴⁰ Birmingham of the West — The allusion is to Birmingham, England, an important manufacturing city since the late 18th century

bring more to pass, more into existence, than thirty slaves on a cotton or rice plantation. I am not certain that he will not do as much labor as a dozen—and then he has his wits, and his education to aid his hands.

The Cincinnatians are forming the nucleus of a literary circle, promising, by and by, to make this the Athens of the West. They are struggling now to transfer the seat of literary empire across the mountains, and to enthrone Apollo and the Muses on the banks of the Ohio. But Boston and Philadelphia are too strong for them. **That** public is an old public—a reading-matured body—with society formed—farms cultivated—and hence with a population at leisure to read and to think. Not so with Ohio as yet, even with her million of souls. Her settlers are hardly at home yet. There is now an abundance of wilderness around. There is quite excitement enough and **book** enough here in the bustle, the change, the novelty of everything about one to give that leisure necessary for a literary public.

There is, however, much talent and great ambition and enterprise in Cincinnati. Judge Hall's¹⁴¹ magazine is, I am told, succeeding well. Some book-publishing is done here, which will probably increase every year, now it is begun. There is in society also that thirst for knowledge which, when there is time from the accumulation of sufficient property, and a distribution of occupations, will and must satisfy itself.

Cincinnati, I have omitted to say earlier than this, is "watered" from the Ohio, as Philadelphia is from the Schuylkill. The water from the Ohio is drawn up by steam, forcing up into a reservoir, from whence from a hill it runs into all parts of the city. This water when iced, as it usually is, is delicious, or in the morning when it has been long underground, it is more than passable even without ice.

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From this "Queen of the West" as Cincinnati has been called, I will say a word or two on Western manners, habits and customs. True, I have seen but little of the great West, sailing up the Mississippi and Ohio as I did,

¹⁴¹ Judge James Hall (1793-1868) — born Philadelphia; studied law at Pittsburgh (1818); writer; editor of *Western Monthly Magazine* at Cincinnati (1833); banker

but I have seen no remarkable uncouthness, not even among the boatmen of our steamboats, with a few exceptions. I speak now of the boatmen from Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Indiana and Illinois. Missouri and Arkansas may occasionally send down an odd animal, like Mike Fink,¹⁴² but I have seen none such. That race has departed long ago to the paths of the hunter on the outskirts of civilization, even beyond the ax of the adventurous pioneer. I have seen nothing more wonderful among this class of men than among others in like employments, except that they swear more than any other people I ever met with. My first impression of Western boatmen is greatly softened by further observation.

Paulding's¹⁴³ "Westward Ho"¹⁴⁴ is all a caricature of the good people here or in Kentucky, and was probably intended as such, or to represent the by-gone manner of a gone-by people. There is in Lexington, I am told by friends who can speak by comparison, society as good and as refined as is to be found in the Union. In Louisville, I am confident no man could wish for better companions. It is quite time to cease to talk of Kentucky gouging and knock-downs. Probably people will fight there as in New England, but I suspect there is as much done in one region as in the other. The Irish of Kentucky may have that propensity which in this country so distinguishes the emigrant from the isle of Erin, and there the Irish are numerous, but the native-born Americans are probably as free from the love of wrangling as any other people. The frankness, courage, noble-daring, hospitality and generosity of the Kentuckians are probably not exaggerated. Mr. Clay is all Kentuckian, though he was born in Virginia. He is a little Kentucky in miniature—of high and low, rich and poor, though few of her sons have his abilities. The peculiar characteristics of his manners, and self-confidence in public life, are characteristics of very many of the Kentuckians. The people feel an ardent attachment to their State and identify themselves with its fame and advancement. They temper this chivalry, as South Carolina and Virginia calls it, with a holy adoration for the Union.

¹⁴² Mike Fink (c.1770/1780-c.1823) — semi-mythical figure; born Pittsburgh; excellent marksman; brawler; operated keelboats on the Ohio-Mississippi

¹⁴³ James Kirke Paulding (1778-1860) — born New York State; author; U.S. Secretary of the Navy (1838-1841)

¹⁴⁴ *Westward Ho* — Alternative title, *The Banks of the Ohio*, 1832

Ohio is almost or quite a Yankee State, if we, as in the practice at the South, call all Yankees who are free from the North of Maryland. New Englanders apparently compose a very great proportion of the population of Cincinnati. There are many German emigrants there, but the Yankees probably outnumber all. Throughout the State, as is well known, the preponderance of Northern emigrants is immense. Almost as much may be said of Indiana. For very many of the emigrants of Indiana were originally from the North, having settled in Ohio, and as they became "crowded" moved further West to give lands to their children. Illinois and Missouri have a more varied population. Probably a very large proportion of the Illinois emigrants were from the North of the Potomac. Missouri is settled by very many Virginians, who emigrated there with their slaves, that being a slave state, and long habit having accustomed them to such labor, and in some degree rendered it necessary. Emigration is said to follow in a great degree the parallels of latitude, and then to advance from State to State in columns.

The immigration westward is even now immense. Signs of it are visible on every river and road, although this is not the fittest season. In truth, the "Star of Empire" is emphatically moving westward. Ohio has its million already, and now there is uncultivated land enough handsomely to support five millions. Indiana is becoming a great State. Illinois is increasing with prodigious rapidity. I am told by a resident of this last State, who has traversed every part of it, that there is no land in the world which thus unites fertility and health. The numerous prairies, kept open for pasturage by the settlers, as are the lakes for the boatmen and sailors, are exceedingly fertile, and give a settler an early crop without the necessity of clearing. Illinois, probably, has as many or more inducements to emigration than any other Western State. Slavery is not tolerated there. Everything is new. Land is cheap and the good land is not all taken. Towns are yet to grow, as Cincinnati and Louisville have grown. In older places, there are not inducements to young men, for they have in some degree become like the towns of New England and the Middle States—and to grow with the growth and strengthen with the strength of a place is an immense advantage.

The readiness with which men, in this quarter of the world, quit their homes and their early associations is quite remarkable. There are hundreds in Ohio who now talk of emigrating, and hundreds who do

emigrate. Kentucky annually affords a larger emigrating population for Illinois, Missouri and Indiana. Tennessee is marching to Arkansaw, the Red River and Texas. Western Virginia¹⁴⁵ is wisely leaving Old Virginia, and seeking a people advancing with the age, so as to live in a State that keeps up with the times, and does not slumber on the past, where years and years gone by first found it. Men make nothing of moving hence thousands of miles. A steamboat carries them far up the Missouri, or Arkansaw, or the White River, or Red River; or they march overland—across the Wabash, and the Mississippi and stretch with cheerfulness towards the Rocky Mountains. In Arkansaw they talk of Indian reservations. Reservations? the white man is already surrounding the wretched and haunted Indian!

Everything is here of interest. There is a novelty and odd combination in all of one's associations. A man is startled on looking about him, and seeing what has happened. This Cincinnati here, but the forest of yesterday! This Louisville, outnumbering in population towns of two hundred years on the Atlantic! The Western Banks of the Ohio are full of neat and elegant villages, clustering like stars over it majestic current, and illuminating the dense forest that overhangs them from the neighboring hills. All these must be towns, by and by. Many will be cities, some immense cities. In truth, prediction is at fault, and lags behind the age, when it dares to speak of the future. An Eastern man, warm his fancy as he may, unless he looks with his own eyes upon what has happened, can hardly understand what is to happen. But all this is to happen with privation, with want, with sacrifices of enjoyment and ease, and by immense labor. Let no man think a life in the Western wilderness a life of ease, as on a bed of roses. But the hardy yeomanry¹⁴⁶ of the West, for here there are yeomanry, and not slaves, will surmount all. The Union will, in one sense, be **beyond** the Alleghenies. He who expects to see this country must go there, hundreds and hundreds of miles. What a country, I repeat, then ours must be, if we hold together. Rome, when mistress of the world,

¹⁴⁵ Western Virginia — The western portion of Virginia did not achieve separation as an independent State until 1863.

¹⁴⁶ Yeomanry — The class of independent small landowners, naturally supportive of stable government

could never boast of such an empire as an American Congress may soon speak of, **if the Union be preserved.**¹⁴⁷

Guyandotte, (Va.)
May 16th, 1833

I am upon the wing again—once more in Old Virginia, "the land of lost gods and goddesses"—whose Western borders and whose valley I want to look at, as I have already run over a part on the other side of the mountains. There are four routes from Cincinnati northward: one by way of the Lakes, which I do not take, because now I have not time, after lingering so long in the woods of Alabama, among the Creeks; another by way of Pittsburgh across to Philadelphia; a third by way of Wheeling, the most rapid; and a fourth, this way, by Guyandotte—up the Kanawha and across the Alleghenies—which I take, because it is the most interesting in many respects to a traveler who seeks to see more of Old Virginia, her manners, her customs, her feelings, her politics and her improvements.

My travelling acquaintance, Mr. Trelawny, of whom I spoke in a former letter from Georgia,¹⁴⁸ and with whom, by chance and impulse, I have travelled across Georgia, Alabama, through Louisiana, up the Mississippi and Ohio, as far as Cincinnati, now lingers along to the Lakes, to see at the Springs the multitude that by and by will gather there; thence to Canada, and thence Southward, as cold weather comes on, so as to give a fair look at our institutions, our people, and our prospects. You will recollect that he was one of the most intimate friends of Byron, and is the author of "*The Younger Son*." His feelings are those of the Byron and Shelley school. He has seen nearly all of the world, and knows a majority of the great actors in it. I like him much—far better than on an early acquaintance, though we disagree in everything, and almost every object makes a different impression. He has ability, but takes no trouble to display it. In short, he is an odd genius—original in everything, in feelings, manners, thoughts, habits, with some faults but many virtues. His unassuming and quiet deportment, seldom changed but by some provocation, will let him pass

¹⁴⁷ Reference to the widely reported words of President Andrew Jackson's toast at the Jefferson Day banquet, held in Washington on 13 April 1830: "Our Federal Union — it must be preserved".

¹⁴⁸ Trelawny — See letter from Columbus, April 8th.

through the Union without informing a soul who he is, for though he has letters in abundance, he takes no trouble to see the persons to whom he is introduced, and his letters are considered as only necessary auxiliaries, in case he should be taken up "for travelling on the Sabbath," of which there is no danger in the Southern States, or "cheated out of his wits by the Yankees," whose dexterity is a common topic of joke. Thus much of a notice, now we have separated, I owe to him, even in a **published** letter, for I have no notion of permitting him thus to travel *incog*,¹⁴⁹ looking only into our farmhouses, our taverns, our negro hovels, talking only with the market-men and the tavern loungers, though these he ought to see; and breakfasting or supping in everybody's place, where a chance acquaintance throws him, though such are the people and the things he avers he came to see; not cities, for he has seen enough of them; not our great men, for **they** are all alike everywhere; but our rivers, our mountains, our valleys, our scenery, our country, the operation of a free government upon a free people.

I left Cincinnati yesterday morning. The river was rising rapidly. The current was assuming force and power, and the Ohio, usually so gentle and so clear, was becoming turbid, eddying, and full of drift-stuff from the rivers which flow into it from Virginia. Above Cincinnati is a long line of settlements on the banks of the river, extending from three to four miles—steam mills, foundries, factories of various kinds, country houses—in short, the beginnings of a great city, of a little London, to cover the banks of the river, and to be bounded only by the range of hills in the rear. These hills are often large, sometimes covered from the bottom to the top by a stout growth of trees; and, at other times, partly cleared, with some beautiful valleys, in a good state of cultivation. On the Kentucky side of the river, the hills sometimes assume the appearance of a mountain whose base is washed by the Ohio. On the other side, there are many neat little villages, and some towns of considerable importance. On the Kentucky side there are but few, very few of such, which, it may be, is owing to the hills that push so closely upon the margin of the river, or rather (perhaps) to slavery, which allows but few or no villages, but introduces large farms, seldom well cultivated, and in one sense, scatters population, but, in another sense, concentrates it—or, as better expressed, scatters the whites and concentrates the blacks. Maysville in

¹⁴⁹ *incog* (abbreviation of *incognito*) — concealing one's identity

Kentucky, we passed in the night, which is a place of great business for its population, on the main route to Lexington.

As we ascended, the river was rising with great force. Our steamer moved along the banks, under the leaves of the tall trees which were stretching their huge branches over our heads, and forming almost a continual canopy from a warm sun. The trunks of trees floated down, at times struck our prow, but the boat went on unharmed, even over large pieces of timber, and through thick piles of driftwood. We stopped at times to fasten a [flatboat] or gondola to the side of the boat, from which, as it was towed upstream, the deck passengers took large quantities of wood, costing from 1,25 to 1,75 cents per cord, according to its quality—not pine wood, but ash and beech and cottonwood, I believe. We passed the mouth of the Scioto, a small stream in appearance, though of great importance to the interior of Ohio. Above it is the outlet of the great canal which communicates with Lake Erie, and thence with New York. This outlet is not quite finished, but will be in the first low water. Portsmouth, a town of much importance, is just above this outlet. It is a good-looking and highly promising place, situated as it is on the way to New York, near the grand canal—and between Cincinnati, Chillicothe and Columbus.

Unvarying as is the passage from New Orleans up the Mississippi and Ohio, I was not sorry to have a little excitement even from a steamboat race, particularly when our boat was to be the victor, and I could thus participate in common with my fellow passengers in the flush and glow of a water triumph. Soon after, we passed the "*Daniel Webster*", with salt from Kanawha. (You see they have transformed our Northern Bear, as many often term him in Washington—it may be from the clawing he has given the Nullifiers—into a Western Steamer.) Soon after this, we came up with the "*Eclipse*," which started from Cincinnati four hours before us. The firemen stirred up the brands, and thrust in the wood—even the "*Eclipse*" was eclipsed. Then we came up with the "*Envoy*," a boat of much power, whose passengers were just rejoicing in a victory over the "*Eclipse*." We gave chase, and for miles were side by side, dodging each other as we could, and giving our boat full steam; now, almost protected from the sun by the same overhanging trees, and soon, to avoid a sandbar, crossing the stream together, and hallooing to the passengers in the other boat, and boasting in our forthcoming victory. The struggle was a hard one. The boats were nearly of equal power, and we were all interested, so

much so as to forget all sense of danger, and to urge the firemen to look well to their fires. At last, our boat, the "*Juniata*," in crossing the stream, shot ahead, and giving the other boat our back-water, we gradually passed it, when many clapped their hands; goodnight said, and all settled down again into sluggishness and a semi-existence. All this is poor business I know, but there are very few who will be sorry to be aroused from the torpor and sleep of a long journey in a steamboat, where the only sound is the puff, puff, puff of the pipe, and the rattle of the machinery, when even scenery becomes at last fatiguing, and the liveliest of books too dull to be read.

The Big Sandy River, the dividing line between Kentucky and Virginia, was higher than the Ohio, when we passed it; and was discharging torrents of water, foaming and fretting like a mad politician, and whirling and eddying as if it would ape the mighty Mississippi. It was tearing down the trees on its banks and precipitating them into the Ohio. We stopped at its mouth to discharge a passenger, and there the current almost deadened the paddles of our boat, and soon threw us far off into the river. Next, Burlington was in sight on the Ohio side—a town or village remarkable for nothing in its appearance, but a pleasant and increasing place.

Anon we were at the mouth of the Guyandotte river, and at the village of Guyandotte; and with a few other passengers I landed—once more in a slave state—with slave masters—slave, everything about one—contrasting, very suddenly with the free men whom, in like employments, I have just left in Ohio—contrasting too their civil and courteous deportment with the servile, cringing, annoying attentions of a slave, vexing one beyond all patience with their everlasting questions of "*will you have this, and will you have that*,"—and puzzling you to death to say, "*no*," "*no*," "*no*," when your plate is full, and mouth is fuller—for a slave not only ruins and begrimes everything he attempts to cook, but gives one no peace in eating what is cooked. But what inducement have they to do so well, much less to do better!

Excuse this jumble composed of a little of everything. Pray—do remember that many of these letters of mine are written in the snatches of time—in the woods, in taverns, in huts, cabins, in steamboats, in barrooms—everywhere, but in the place which a man would choose—on

many an old tumbling[?] table—with ink soaked from the dried-up cotton—and sometimes finished as the stage horn is ringing in my ears. There is no time to write when one is travelling as rapidly as I go now. Fatigue unfits me—or excitement, and the perpetual change of scene and people and society. I give you this amid a lot of snorers around me, in the tavern house of the fat-looking landlord of Guyandotte. I leave in the stage at 3 o'clock in the morning, on my way home, where I hope to be, not many days after this letter reaches you.

Warm Springs, (Va.)
May 18th, 1833

As the fates will have it, I have the luck to have too much water on the land, and too much land on the water. Thus, I thump on Cumberland bar, and scrape over the sands of Hurricane Island, when ascending the Ohio in a steamboat, or swim the torrent-like creeks of Georgia and Alabama, or am pent up, as I am here, by some inconsiderable rivulet, which a rain makes a river of. It is astonishing to see the rapidity with which a little creek will swell in the Southern and Western States. A stream, scarcely perceptible in common weather, becomes here, after a short rain, a foaming and dangerous torrent, rushing over rocks with great violence, and precipitating everything headstrong.

Last Thursday night, for example, in going up the valley of the Kanawha, a shower fell upon us—a shower nothing remarkable, I thought, but rather heavy and strong perhaps—and all at once I was awakened from a comfortable sleep by a crash among loose rocks, the stumbling of the stage horses, and the rush of a foaming torrent from the mountain on the left. "*Where is one? What is this? How now?*" one asks in such a situation, but the driver appeased our alarm with the answer that we were in no danger, that this was usually a **dry** place, though a large waterfall could not have made more noise, and though the water was over the fore wheels of our stage. Thus, a shower had in twenty or thirty minutes made a little river out of this place, which in three hours hence would be nearly dry again—so swiftly and with so much impetuosity does the rain rush from the mountains. After this little adventure, we enjoyed some of the pleasures of travelling. We got out of our coach on rails laid upon the rocks. We crossed the creek on a stage horse, clinging to the driver. We

walked through the thick darkness, two miles, by the aid of a torch—we brought up at another creek, near which was "an inn," where, after appeasing the dogs, we waked up the landlord, who had but one room, and one bed, as I could see—his negroes sleeping by him on the floor, stretched out at length, and a wagoner who was going over the mountains sleeping in a blanket with his head on a chair, not far from the negroes. I lay down on another chair, with my feet to the fire, threw my *surtout*¹⁵⁰ over me, and was soon asleep again, as comfortable as ever—from which I did not awake till the driver came along with a little wagon and our trunks. All this is hard fare, but it is amusing, and I am growing hardy upon it.

There were five passengers. Two went with the driver and the baggage, who, by the way, left the coach in the creek; and the other three mounted the stage horses, and started for "the stand," three miles off. It was as dark as darkness could be: no moon, no stars, not even the glimmering of a ray of light except that of the fireflies that filled the air. We were in the valley of the Kanawha, with huge hills and shelving rocks upon our left, and the now noisy Kanawha on our right. The road was narrow but good. We followed the lead of the driver's wagon, and he conducted us in safety to the tavern at the Falls of the Kanawha, where we supped after midnight, and from whence we soon started again on our journey.

But go back with me to Guyandotte. There is a good turnpike from this place—as yet I know not how far, but reaching certainly as far as the Warm Springs—not all finished, but nearly so. A **good** turnpike I say, for do let us give Virginia all the credit she deserves, since she has such a horror of internal improvements, and such a passion to have the most wretched roads of any of the old States. This turnpike, as far as Charleston on the Kanawha, is not remarkably hilly. It winds at times around some of the hills. It gives one many fine views of enchanting scenery. It puts one at times on the verge of the precipice, and then again on the valley of the river. It carries one through a country—not very rich nor very poor, with a few good farms, but more poor ones—by some fine rich houses, one or two palaces (I call them so by way of comparison)—and more log houses, the crannies of which are stuffed with mud, without barns fit for the hogs to live in, or sheds, or any other comforts for cattle. This is not, perhaps,

¹⁵⁰ Surtout — (Definition) a man's long, close-fitting overcoat

a matter of so much importance, as the winters are short, and the spring is early. The land in the valleys, by the margins of the rivers and the creeks, is good. The fences are better than I have seen in many parts of Eastern Virginia. The slaves are few, but there are too many of them. The people in general are thrifty enough and happy; and if, in the word population, there are included the black and the white, this part of Virginia is far better off than parts of Eastern Virginia, though it is not so rich—with not so many slaveholders, and does not make half so much noise or talk half so much politics. Give me the mud houses here, in preference to the palaces, where the master has his hundreds of slaves, and his large plantation, growing poor with all his negroes upon his hands, and finding it difficult to feed and clothe them.

Charleston, 50 miles from Guyandotte, is a flourishing and interesting place. About there—up the Kanawha for eight or ten miles—all is smoke, smoke, smoke from the salt works. The good people of Charleston, I suspect, have caught the mania, and seeing so much smoke, must smoke themselves, for I never saw in so short a time so many cigar-smokers. Every man's mouth was a little steam engine, and puff, puff, puff was the fashion indoors and out. But Charleston is not the place to be abused. The wonder is to me how it ever happened that such a place, with such a business aspect, with so much life, vigor and bustle, should ever rise up in Old Virginia, where trade is not always creditable, where manufactures and tariffs are so much contemned, where it is not so much the fashion to work as to hold slaves. Charleston ought to be in Ohio. It does not belong this side of the river. It has the look of the villages and towns in the Western and Middle States. I can account for it only by the fact that it is so far from Richmond, and thus so far from the influence of Richmond politics, the sum total of which is—it is unlawful for the General Government to do any good, discreditable for the white man to work, and creditable chiefly to talk of politics, declaim against the Tariff, to race horses, to live on plantations and raise negroes for the Southern market. This, I say, is the Richmond school of politics that cripples the powers of a noble and spirited people and humbles in the dust a great State, great in the memory of her ancestors, in her slumbering resources, in

everything that would, under better auspices, make the Old Dominion the New Dominion, and bring the lost pleiad¹⁵¹ of sovereignty back.

The truth is, Virginia—and I am sorry to say it—is just where her great men left her—her Washington, her Jefferson, her Henrys, her Madison—and there she will be, I know not how long—as least so long as she wastes her time in talking political metaphysics. She is fifty years behind the age. I speak now of State actions, State politics, State feeling as manifested in her public men and in her legislature, and not of individuals. Kentucky, her daughter, is getting ahead of her every hour. Ohio is an age in advance, with better internal improvements than Virginia will have in two centuries with her present notions. Even Indiana will soon put the Old Dominion to shame—and her sons in Illinois will reap there those rewards which her politicians will never suffer them to reap at home. There seems to be a paralysis on almost everything here. A noble people to whom I am attached more and more, and of whom I think better the more I see of them, seem to be fettered—to be hampered by something, they know not what. It pains one's eyes to see the mismanagement in everything. It grieves one's heart to see so much State pride so wretchedly humbled wherever it draws a contrast with the old or the new States—in the North, or the West. Will Virginia never open her eyes, and see the cause? Let her sons but step into Pennsylvania, or cross the Ohio, and earnestly inquire what makes the difference, and they cannot be blind enough not to see.

But a truce to politics, and on with my journey. The salt works in the vicinity of Charleston are quite a curiosity. They are very many in number, and are closely connected for six miles above Charleston, often on both sides of the river, but I speak more particularly of the eastern bank. I am informed that the whole extent, up- and downriver, of the salt region, is 15 miles. Hence the quantity of salt that can be manufactured must be immense. The saltwater is below the freshwater—under the bed of the Kanawha—and is obtained by boring through rock, and the introduction of copper or tin tubes into which the saltwater rises as high as the bed of the river, from which it is drawn upward by a forcing pump, sometimes worked by horses, but oftener by steam. Saltwater is often

¹⁵¹ Pleiad — (Definition) a group of seven illustrious or brilliant persons or things (from Pleiades, a prominent star cluster in the northern hemisphere; in Ancient Greek mythology, seven divine sisters)

forced from the margin of the river, through the very freshwater itself. The process of salt-making is by boiling, as is well known. Fortunately, there is an abundance of bituminous coal in the hills and mountains around, which is often drawn to the salt works by a mule on a wooden railroad, descending from the hills.¹⁵²

Warm Springs, (Va.)
May 17th, 1833

The next curiosity we met with was the Burning Spring, a few miles from Charleston. The stage stopped at a shop on the road—and the driver pointed to an old field, and told us there were the Burning Springs. I saw no springs, but, after hunting a little while, I saw something resembling a mud puddle, bubbling as if boiled with a great fire underneath. It was to me a new and interesting spectacle. There was around it a strong sulfurous odor. A fellow passenger took out his cigar match and kindled a newspaper, which he threw with great caution into the spring, dodging it as if the world was to be set on fire. The flame caught rapidly, though it was not very strong, nor very large, but every bubble took fire, and the flame skipped over the little waves, and danced from bubble to bubble. I could have looked at it for hours, but the stage driver sounded his horn—it was evening, and we were soon shut up in our stage prison.

The next morning, we were on the road called by the stage drivers "The Hawk's Nest," but more classically named "Marshall's Pillar." We stepped from the road, over a well-beaten path, some sixty steps to the right, and then we moved on a precipice, terrific in height, and sublime in size, beyond anything I have ever seen. The precipice is said to be a thousand feet of perpendicular descent, though I should think this an exaggeration. I crept on my hands and knees to the verge—and the scene was indeed terrific. I started back, and cared not to try the experiment again. The river, called the New River, now large from the freshet, approached us in front, with the tops of the tallest trees, on its banks, far beneath us. On meeting the precipice, it makes a right angle in its bend. It forms a splendid ravine, now blooming with vegetation on its banks, and

¹⁵² For a more detailed description of the method of salt extraction practiced at the Kanahwa River in 1823, see "Sketches of history, life and manners in the United States", Anne Newport Royall, New-Haven 1826, pp.44-47

quicken and enlivened by the swift-rushing current. It was a glorious sight. One's blood quickens, and one's thoughts are elevated. Man feels more than himself—and yet abashed and humbled before such a display of wonder-working nature. It was sunrise when we were there, and the rays of the morning sun were tingeing the tops of the hills, but not a ray pierced the deep ravine. Only the noonday sun can touch the vegetation at its bottom. I was enjoying all this—the more perhaps, for the time and the hour, and sunrise as it was—when the stage horn again called us. The driver, a little annoyed at our delay, told us "*He never could get passengers away from that place,*" and in that sentence, roughly and ungraciously as it was expressed, there was more of description to be felt than I can give you in a page.

By night of the second day, we were at Lewisburg, 150 miles from Guyandotte. The road was often over huge mountains, one of which was called the Big Sewall, and well deserves the adjective. The mountain valleys are tolerably well cultivated. The people are poor and frugal. The inns are numerous. Our ride was a pleasant, though a hard, one. A few miles from Lewisburg, there are some valleys in a good state of cultivation. The mountainous region ceases for a while, and the limestone region commences, in which there are what are called "sinks"—places where creeks and water drop into the earth and disappear, and emerge, perhaps miles off, dropping through some subterranean passage into some cavern, and then wending their way far from the ken of man. I saw little or nothing of Lewisburg. It is a Virginian town, with some good-looking, but more ill-looking houses—chimneys out of doors—some few of logs stuffed with mud, and many of brick well enough built.

The morning of the third day, by 3 o'clock, we were off from Lewisburg. By daylight we reached the White Sulphur Springs—the famous, perhaps the most famous resort in Virginia during the summer and autumn. They are in a handsome situation, surrounded with cabins or houses, where visitors live. The principal or only spring is well fitted up. I tasted the water, but, like all panaceas, it is a little too nauseous to be taken for pleasure. Some thirty-five miles from this are the Hot Springs, in a beautiful valley, with fine bathing houses, and many conveniences. Of all the springs, this is the most inviting from its situation, from its appearance, its scenery, its household comforts; but, unfortunately, the springs are too hot to bathe in, unless they are tempered by cold water—

and hence it is not so much a place of resort as the other springs. By dinner time, we were here—at the Warm Springs, five miles distant from the Hot Springs. The bath is most delicious, giving you all the luxury of the warm bath, with room for action, and swimming if you please. There is a little sulfurous odor, not noticed after a minute or two. The water is clear and buoyant—and the enjoyment of its bath is a luxury an eastern monarch might envy.

I tarry here, I know not how long—but no longer than the waters detain me, for there is a creek ahead some ten miles off—usually forded, but now so overflowed as to be impassable but on horseback, and then only by a circuitous route. I cannot carry my trunk thus—and a wise traveler never loses sight of his baggage. Now, after living two months in the lowlands, in the pine-barrens of the Carolinas, and the swamps of the Mississippi, I have learned to value the hills. The contrast is so delightful that I shall never complain of them more. Here the air is healthy and bracing. A spring of pure water is conveyed from the mountainside to the very door of our tavern. The valley might be beautiful, if they would cut down the poplars and plant the sycamore or locust or some other tree from our own forests, and knock down the rusty old cabins that disfigure the ground. It is in the midst of the Alleghenies, ridges of which are all around us. The spring is but little more advanced than it is with you. I am having spring after spring as I approach homeward, going from the spring of Charleston to the summer of New Orleans, and thence, inverting the season and finding spring once more in the highlands of Virginia.

Charlottesville, (Va.)
May 22nd, 1833

After being weary of the confinement of high waters at the Warm Springs, I contrived enjoying a little high life in a Winchester wagon, to ford the Cowpasture River. These Winchester wagoners are a race peculiar to themselves, somewhat alike the Mississippi boatmen. They stand in Baltimore, and take a freight, it matters not much where, whether it be to Knoxville (Tenn.) or Pittsburgh (Penn.) They are jolly and happy—and when I was weary of being cooped up under the canvass, moving with all the speed of a wagoner's ideas, three miles or less an hour, they loaned me a heavy-hoofed horse and a saddle, and then, after fording the rivers,

"Calf Pasture, Great and Little Calf Pastures, and Bull Pasture," splendid names for Virginia rivers—I came to Clover Dale, a pretty valley in the midst of the mountains, where the farmers are now thinking of plowing and planting corn. Here there was no stage—and keeping pace with the driver, I started again on horseback, at 3 A.M., and by 11 A.M. we were in Staunton, a flourishing town in appearance, surrounded by a country—for Virginia, unusually flourishing—distance from Clover Dale 35 miles.

But more of this part of Virginia. After passing Jennings's Gap, the traveler comes into what is termed "the valley of Virginia," where slaves are less numerous than in Eastern Virginia, and where, probably, the people in a mass are far more prosperous and happy. I observed, about six miles west of Staunton, some superb farms—not immense fields of wheat as one sees this side of the Blue Ridge, but good fields, good houses, good barns, all which reminded me of the North and of New England. This was accounted for very soon. I travelled not far before I came to many laborers upon the road. They were not all black, as is usually the case (and of course all slaves), but the proportion of blacks was not one to ten. There is the secret of the good agriculture I saw. There free men work! Then nature rewards the husbandman with fruits proportioned to his toil!

We stopped but a short time in Staunton. I saw little or nothing out of the view of the stage tavern. An elegantly-built lunatic hospital was not far off, in which, if Virginia would confine her politicians—her greatest madmen—she might do something worthy of her high renown, and her past glory. Waynesboro was the next important town that we passed, where we took in, or on, a negro-purchaser and his slave, just bought for 500 dollars, to be carried to Georgia. The slave dropped a tear or two as he parted with his companions, but, ten miles over, he was as cheerful as ever, so readily do these people seem to forget all past associations. Then we crossed the Blue Ridge, a towering range of mountains, which divide Western and Eastern Virginia, and towards evening I was in my hotel at Charlottesville.

Charlottesville is a town of considerable importance. It is the shire town of Albemarle county, and there is the Court House, there the University of Virginia, and there or near there, the far-famed Monticello. I determined to stop a day, to see the place where Virginia, I hope, is rearing a wiser

race of politicians, and then to make my pilgrimage to the grave of Jefferson.

I looked about the fine houses in Charlottesville, in not very well-arranged streets, and strolled at last about one mile from the village to the University. I do believe that, at this season of the year, it is one of the most beautiful retreats in the Union. I ascended the dome of the Rotunda, the principal building, and an elegant building it is too, where on your right was the Blue Ridge, on your left Monticello and the range of mountains in its neighborhood, and before you the University, its spacious lawn ornamented with flourishing locusts, its groves, its gardens, its neat and well-devised architecture. All was imposing, charming and cheering—and its repose and calmness would soon woo the most wayward scholar, if not to his classics, at least to its scenery. The form of the grounds is alluring. A lawn is in the middle, extending the whole range of the building. This is bordered by locust trees. There are four ranges of rooms for the students, all one story high. In the midst of these rooms, equidistant and opposite, are scattered the houses of the professors, all of a different order of architecture. The Rotunda, in which is a superb library room, is at the head of the oblong figure. At the right are an anatomical hall, hotels, &c. &c. The library is well arranged, and the books are well guarded and kept. The library room is perfectly round, and has three galleries. The light comes in from the glass in the dome. In the third gallery, there is a collection of minerals, and a sort of whispering gallery formed by echoes for the pillars and the dome.

In the afternoon, I took a horse and rode to Monticello, which is distant about three miles from Charlottesville. I went by one or two fine plantations—with fine buildings upon them, forded a small creek, the water in which was now high—wound round the mountain on a wretched road, among stones and gullies—and, after passing two or three gateways, came to one which I supposed led to Monticello, for it looked different from the rest, hanging suspended on a semi-stone wall, a semi-rail circular fence. I opened the gate, and rode perhaps two hundred yards. I met another gate and opened that—when there was an appearance of a graveyard. I was just beginning to call up those reflections, which will come over all men, standing near the graves of "the mighty dead," when, lo and behold, I saw printed placards posted on almost every tree, on every old shed, every old rail. Curiosity prompted

me to read them, which being done, that man must have blunted feelings, whose curiosity alone will prompt him to go further.

The present occupant¹⁵³ talks in a two-columned placard of sundry grievances, "*of having his gate left open, and losing 100 bushels of wheat, and 20 bushels of corn.*"—"of his house being entered by force and his servants bribed,"—and therefore, he cannot put up with it, and therefore,—what? Exclude all from entering as he ought, if he had made up his mind to do so? No, but he offers to peddle out the reputation of Thomas Jefferson for 2,50 cents a person; to show off his letters and his grounds for 2,50 cents apiece; to make money out of the relics and name of a great man whose seat he occupies! Till I came to the mercenary item I had resolved to leave his grounds—an item so unlike, so unworthy of the Virginia character, so different from anything I have ever met with in her poorest taverns, her meanest hovels or her best houses—in her highways or byways—so dishonorable too to the fair fame of the State. But now, if the occupant was ready for a bargain, as a true Yankee I was ready for one too. I would see Monticello, if money could buy a sight, though I could have understood the occupant's feelings, if he had left the mercenary 2,50 cents out of the placard, and would have contented myself with a glance at the grave of Jefferson without going further. I had two objects in view: one was "*to beat him down*" in the price, for amusement's sake, and ask him if he would not take less; or, if "*he would not show me a little for half price,*" or "*take pay in barter,*" for in truth I was angry, and of course impudent, at this unmanly traffic in a dead man's name. My other object was to get a bill, which I presumed would read after this sort:

¹⁵³ Ownership of Monticello — After Thomas Jefferson died in 1826, the burden of debt obliged his family to sell the property in 1831 to a Charlottesville druggist, James Barclay. After his project to establish a silkworm farm failed, he sold the house and land to Uriah Phillips Levy in 1834.

Mr. B _____ Dr. to _____

Dr. B _____ ly.

To viewing the county of Albemarle from Monticello	\$1,00
To going into the chief of the rooms in Monticello,	\$1,00
To my attendance (for a servant said, he attended <i>himself</i> .)	,25
To turning the keys,	,25
To viewing the grave.	,00

Received Payment,	2,50

I was perfectly serious about the bill, and would have had one, or I would not have paid—for it would have looked so well, all in print—and then to be circulated in Virginia. Full of these resolutions, I went to the house. A dog's bow-wow-wow was the first salutation. I found a servant, and inquired for the master, but the master was away—at Charlottesville with his family, and thus no bill was to be obtained; and, what was worse, none of the interior of Monticello was to be seen. I waited awhile, but in vain. I found the grave of Jefferson in a small graveyard. But a brick covering is at present upon it, level with the surface of the earth. I am told, however, that a monument is in preparation. The dirt is now washed over the bricks. Many of the bricks themselves are washed away. The stone wall around has fallen down. Old leaves and old bushes have accumulated, till everything about has a wild and neglected aspect. Indeed, Monticello itself has an air of desolation. The roads are washed out. The barns and sheds are falling, or have fallen. The roofs of the negro apartments look rusty and mossy. All is desertion, desolation. One cannot now, on the summit of Monticello, participate in the agricultural enthusiasm of Jefferson, when in his letters he spoke of his peas and his clover, or respond to his oft-used quotation, "*Flumina amo, sylvasque inglorius*,"¹⁵⁴—striking though it may be, for its commanding view of surrounding scenery, and for its associations, and as enfolding in its bosom the relics of the great, the admired, the gifted, the learned; and, oh that I was able to add the good-hearted Jefferson, not that I care for his religion, his politics, or the injuries his popularity is daily inflicting upon the whole Southern country in the misuse that is made of his opinions, but I cannot forget his published letters, and his prejudices, his malignity,

¹⁵⁴ Translation — *I, who am without fame, love the waters and the woods*

and rank hostility there displayed. **Can** the heart be good where rankles so long the remembrance of petty political contests?

But adieu to the grave of Jefferson. I feel proud of being his countryman, and am only sorry that I cannot stand over his remains with the same hallowed, chastened, and unmingled feelings of love and admiration with which I have rested on the tomb of Washington. Happy Virginia, in having such sons—happy, but happy in the memory of *the past*. The days when your matrons gave birth to Henrys, Madisons and Marshalls are over; or, if not over, such spirits cannot rise or breathe amid the palsy of your politics, your prejudices, and the corrupting air of a State growing old in slavery. Give us of New England your fame of **the past**, and you may take all of **the future**, till you reform or revolutionize, or cease to talk politics, and are not too proud to work. The very negligence of your institutions, the laziness and carelessness that slavery is inflicting upon them, is visible even about the tombs of your great men. Think you, Washington or Jefferson, if sons of New England, would be as they are? We might not build over them monuments or cenotaphs, but an air of neatness, and order and beauty would be about them. We would make their graves in some delightful Mount Auburn,¹⁵⁵ and deck them with the laurel, the locust, or the willow—and we would have there a striking similitude to the elegance, order and thriftiness of the villages and towns around, that their services have enabled us to create.

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Our correspondent informs us that he has hesitated some, as to the propriety of publishing his remarks upon the occupant of Monticello, and therefore, reserved his letter till he reached Baltimore, before he mailed it. On inquiring all along, he learns that the occupant has the universal reputation of being churlish and disobliging, and therefore, he is not unwilling to aid in the redress of the public grievances, and turn knight-errant once more, an office never desirable, but often necessary. Monticello, though private property, is public property, in part. Did the occupant expect never to see an American by the grave of Jefferson? If he took none of these little vexations of life into consideration when he purchased this far-famed

¹⁵⁵ Mount Auburn — Located near Cambridge (Mass.); America's first rural cemetery, built in 1831

mountain, he must indeed have been blind, and should say nothing when strangers from afar wander over his grounds. Above all, tear down the insulting placards—and strike out the 2,50 cents. No Yankee peddler, the worst that ever travelled in "chivalrous" Virginia, would be guilty of peddling the fame of Thomas Jefferson—by his own house, and within eye-shot of his own grave!

Orange Court House, (Va.)
May 23rd, 1833

I left Charlottesville a little before midnight in the mail stage, and found myself here by daylight this morning, distance thirty miles. As Mr. Madison's plantation is only five miles distant from this, I resolved to stop, and to visit almost the last of the Romans. I took a horse, raining though it was, and after going over a Virginia road, about three miles—which you probably know is one of the worst in the world, for here it is "unconstitutional" to have good roads—I came to a bye-path, a sort of a carriage road that led into the woods, when I kept on riding and riding for nearly two miles, or one and a half, passing one gate that led to a plantation, till I came to another where I met an old negro, who told me the way, and added that his "*Old master would be glad to see the young gemman,*" that "*Mr. Madison raised him,*" and that he (the negro) was now "*sixty-one years of age,*" and "*Mr. Madison was a good master,*" and "*would not let his overseer make fight with the men,*" thus running on with communicative loquacity, seeing he had found a white man to listen to his talk. I rode on then through a well-built gate—on the roadway—leading through an immense field of rye—by yet another gate—and came at last to a large and elegant brick house, built in the Virginia fashion, with wings, a projecting portico, a walk in front, &c. &c.

What on earth could send a man here, I said to myself—here, so far from the road, so far from neighbors, so far from the village, the Post Office—in this hide-and-go-seek place in the woods, where it is difficult to find a dwelling, no matter how conspicuous it may be. But, such is the Virginia fashion. The Virginians get off from the road with the same zeal that we crowd on, and here you may travel where there are no signs of life, but where, if you were to sound a trumpet to call men together, they would jump up as from the earth. Truly this is retirement, this habitation in such

a field—in such a valley—with the morning music of the whippoorwill and the evening song of the nightingale—undisturbed but by the little bustle in the neighboring negro camps, or the solitary traveler who, perchance, strays here, as I have done, to pay the homage that is due to character, to patriotism, to an upright and well-done political career. As I fastened my horse, and drew near to the door of the yard, with a well-fitted and well-painted fence, I was musing much on the changes that come over a man in the course of a long life. How can we accustom ourselves to such a solitude after all the bustle of an active life to which we have been habituated? How can we withdraw and forget men and things, and live and feed on the thoughts within us, and with the few and unvarying companions that our own home affords? Cicero, in that admirable treatise of his *De Senectute*, puts into the mouth of Scipio—I think it is he, but my memory of the readings of other days is even now growing rusty—the true lesson for enjoying a happy old age, or a change of life, or meek submission to circumstances. It was not long before I saw a living exemplification and [practitioner] of all these lessons, with yet another aid for the enjoyment of a happy old age than Cicero has spoken of.

I rapped at the door. A servant, courteous, well-bred and well-dressed, came to my call. I sent in my card, for, not expecting to return home this way, I had refused letters offered me by friends in Washington to Mr. and Mrs. Madison. The card was carried to Mr. Madison, and I was invited into the parlor, in the center of the building, full of the portraits of eminent individuals, among which were those of Washington and Jefferson, and Lafayette—I think, but am not certain—and of paintings also, representing different scenes and passions, but chiefly of a religious character. The furniture was of that rich old cast which, while it keeps up the idea of magnificence, carries us back to other days, and reminds us that we are in the houses of our ancestors, or our fathers. Mrs. Madison soon appeared, and after a little conversation, carried me into her husband's room, and presented me to Mr. Madison. He was lying on his bed, in a thick silk robe—reading, with the book near at his side, and his spectacles put in to preserve the place. His reception was generous and courteous. His conversation fluent, agreeable, vigorous and frank—and displayed, even on common topics, instruction and interest.

There is no decay of mind—not the least visible decrease of that intellectual vigor which ever distinguished him. His memory seems to be as good as ever, and he speaks of trade, of improvements, of public health, and of the different sections of the country, with all the interest of a man who is calmly but zealously surveying what his countrymen are doing. In speaking of his eyesight, he remarked that it was but a short time since he began to use spectacles. He attributed the long duration of his visual powers to the fact that he was near-sighted—and I was interested in hearing his argument to sustain the position, founded as it was on an intimate knowledge of the science of optics. Of course, I avoided, as all persons would, intimate friends excepted, any allusion to the passing politics or scenes of the day, though I should have been interested in hearing him speak of his own Virginia. As to his health, he said it was as good as could be expected, though he was slightly afflicted with rheumatic pains. Old age was his chief disease. He then eulogized the air and climate he lived in, and Mrs. Madison remarked that there were in this vicinity a large number of very old people. These remarks reminded me of a conversation I had at breakfast at a tavern in the mountains west of this. I enquired of the lady of the house, "*What are your prevailing diseases?*" "*We have none.*" "*Any consumptions?*" "*No.*" "*Fevers?*" "*No.*" "*What do you die of?*" "*Oh, of old age.*" Such being the good reputation of the air and climate in this part of Virginia, I hope Mr. and Mrs. Madison will live many years yet.

I tarried as long as politeness would seem to justify. Both pressed upon me, with a hospitality distinguishing almost every Virginian, a continuance at dinner, which, though I would have gladly accepted for the sake of a few minutes more conversation with the venerable man, I felt constrained to decline. I parted with both—they offering me their hands, and wishing me with great kindness a prosperous journey homeward.

The character of Mr. Madison I have ever pre-eminently admired. I think him the model of what an American statesman ought to be. Among all our great men, he is my favorite, if not the chief, at least one of the chief. And surely as I look at his fine plantation, his well-housed and happy negroes, his flourishing fields of grain, his flocks of sheep, and see him in his old age, though stretched upon the bed, there nourishing his mind with books and amusing his idle hours, which else would hang heavy upon him, I

cannot but think he is enjoying the true *otium cum dignitate*,¹⁵⁶ and realizing the picture of a happy old age that Cicero has so touchingly and beautifully described—thus adding to the character of the statesman and the patriot that of the philosopher.

I have said Mr. Madison has yet other aids, for the enjoyment of a happy old age, than Cicero speaks of. Added to his own resources, his own house and plantation, he has for a companion, his wife, a lady who even now well sustains her old reputation, that of being one of the most accomplished women in America. With such a companion, he ever has society, interest and conversation by his own bedside. The picture of domestic enjoyment they now exhibit is one of the most attractive I ever witnessed. How sweet must even old age be when thus softened and watched over! How glorious and good the life of a man after such services, ending thus, with such a companion to administer to his wants and comfort! The fame Mr. Madison has won, the glory he bequeaths to posterity, and the bright pages which his name is to occupy in his country's story, are, after all, not of so much worth to him as the possession of such a wife.

Baltimore, (Md.)
May 27th, 1833

I have had, during this visit, an opportunity to see more of Baltimore than I have ever seen before; but, as the city itself, her monuments, her fountains, her splendid women—with the combined beauty of the North and South, for matters of interest—have been so often described by tourists, I shall pass over all, and take you with me on a Sunday's excursion among the churches. I went to St. Paul's (I think it was) in the morning, and as it was Whitsunday, the audience was regaled with music from a choir of unrivalled power and excellence—such as is seldom heard in our churches of the North, South, East or West. There is great musical talent in Baltimore among the ladies of the city—talent well cultivated and refined, and adapted to the playfulness of the social circle or the gravity of the church.

¹⁵⁶ Translation — *Leisure with dignity*

I went with some friends in the afternoon to the chapel, on the Catholic grounds, near the Catholic seminary, and as the hour of assembling was late, we patrolled the grounds in the vicinity. There is almost always associated with Catholic institutions an appearance of neatness, elegance, economy and utility—something to woo the student to his studies, or to awe the visitor to his devotions. There were on these grounds three Catholic chapels, a seminary for common education, and a theological school. The principal chapel is furnished with an organ of considerable power, is built in the style of imposing architectural beauty, copied from some Grecian model—I have forgotten what. The ladies occupy the lower floor. The gentlemen are put in the gallery. The priests occupy a position, of course, in front, and they are numerous— more so than I have hitherto seen in my journeyings, this being the focus of the church and the school. The priests were chanting vespers, and this continued for an hour and a half—with one unvarying chant upon the organ, all in Latin of course.

Before this, we wandered into the other chapels, neat, elegant little places for retirement and silent devotion. Our Catholic friend dropped on her knee before every altar that we passed; and after being absorbed in reflection for a moment, resumed her conversation and her guidance over our motions. We saw a confessional, a describable[?] little closet, into which, and out of which penitents were entering and retiring according to their turns. We went back of the chapels, upon a captivating little walk, in the center of which a little hill had been built—by which were the graves of a few distinguished Catholics, and upon which were shrubbery, small trees—in short, all the appearance of a wood, so that you had to take but a few steps from the city to be in the solitude of the country. All this wandered over, we went upon the grounds of the seminary. A bright little boy, some twelve or fourteen years of age, raising his hat, inquired of the ladies if he could be of service, and then politely offered to conduct us about. We accepted his offer, and we passed many of the boys of the school, who, with a priest at their head, were not exactly playing, but exercising, taking the air; and the priest, with his whole heart and soul, was participating in their feelings, their amusements, all their sayings, and yet preserving his dignity, and with but [a] slight clap of the hands awing them to silence whenever they became obstreperous. This was an interesting sight, and one worthy of imitation. Indeed, the more I see of Catholic priests, in private, in the social circle, in schools or colleges, the better I think of them; of what seems, at least, to be genuine

piety, rigid devotion, and admirable adaptation of means to ends. Here was this priest, probably as learned as any of the faculty of the college—and in learning the Catholic priests of this country, generally speaking, are preeminently distinguished—clothed in his long black robe, and yet with all the sanctity of a preacher to preserve on the Sabbath too, and the dignity of an instructor to guard, affectionately guiding the pupils in their exercises, silencing them with the least reproving nod; and then, this over, leading them willing to the chapel and to their devotions. In but few, very few of our institutions, are things managed so happily.

We went to the gardens, among the flowers of the hothouse, where they are cultivating specimens of almost all sorts, for the eye of the amateur as well as of the botanist. All was interesting, all was beautiful. Our little guardian escorted us till the bell sounded for vespers, and then all of us wended our way to the chapel and participated in the services.

I have something to say of the Medical College at Baltimore, a flourishing, well-endowed, well-provided and popular institution, where a medical friend carried me—much more to say of Baltimore itself, its brisk and lively appearance, its streets resounding with the music (strange use of a word, you will think, but there is much music worse than this)—with the music of drays, carts, trucks and Winchester wagons—playing notes, I dare say, that thrill the hearts of the money-makers. Yes, I have much more to say of Baltimore enterprise and Baltimore merchants, who are making this a great and a grand city—because they dare invest their capital as the public good, as well as common sense, dictates. But this letter is quite long enough, and I will stop where I am; only adding that Baltimore, centering as it does a portion of the Southern and South-Western trade, and with its railroad, the Western trade, and on the highway to Washington from Norfolk, and the North and the East, must ultimately be the focus of no small portion of the enterprise, intelligence and spirit of the American people.

Boston, (Mass.)
May 31st, 1833

I have but little more left to say, except to record my wanderings homeward, to my own New England, the land of enterprise, of energy, of

republicanism, of learning, of all that constitutes the pride and strength of a State, and in this my last record of a long journey, through or upon the borders of every State of the American Union, (Connecticut and Vermont except, where I have been) I will be as brief as possible, only intending to state the rapidity of travelling on the Atlantic coast, with a few ordinary reflections that press upon one's attention.

I left Baltimore at 2 o'clock and thirty minutes, Tuesday afternoon, after dinner, paying two dollars for a passage to Philadelphia. I state this fact to show the cheapness of travelling by steam, for I have paid ten dollars on this route over land, by Havre de Grace. Our steamer went swiftly over the waters of the Patapsco. Soon we were on the broad Chesapeake, and then passing a few plantations, a few mansions in the distance on Elk River. By early evening we were entering the railroad cars, over sixty miles distant from Baltimore, and then on a flying journey, to New Castle, Delaware, a locomotive leading the way. The moon was not yet up, and there we were, journeying in darkness, with a horse of fire moving of his own guidance, puffing and panting, and throwing sparks and flame, as it were, from his nostrils. I have gone over a railroad, with a locomotive, but never before in the evening—and so it seemed a strange sight to be thus careering over land—of ourselves as it were, carrying our own fire in front, that answered for a lantern as well as for a creator of steam. In an hour, sixteen miles and a half were passed over—a distance sometimes gone over in 42 minutes, often in 45, but we were now longer, for in the darkness we deemed it prudent to tame the spirit of our fire-horse. A comfortable steamer awaited us on the Delaware. There we took tea. Black faces began to be scarcer, and white ones plentier. By eleven o'clock in the night we were at the wharf in the "*Philadelphia*;" we, who were going on, comfortably asleep in our berths, and they, who went no further, making for their homes.

By 4 o'clock next morning, (Wednesday morning,) I began a stroll about Philadelphia, through her markets, finely furnished with all the good things of the season, and among her market men, with long rows of wagons—not slaves, such as attend the market in Charleston, and elsewhere in slave States, but free white men, the yeomanry of a country. The hotels were disemboguing¹⁵⁷ their sleepy tenants, and others,

¹⁵⁷ Disembogue — (Definition) To pour out from, as if from a container

hurrying to the steamboats. Hack men, porters, all were clattering over the pavements. I had time to read the morning newspapers which boys were hawking about for a "fip"¹⁵⁸—when, it being 6 o'clock, four boats at the same time pushed off with their passengers, two for Baltimore and two for New York. Let me say here, interpolation though it may be, that in 1791, Jefferson said at Monticello, he was eleven days in travelling from New York, a distance that can now be travelled over in very little more than two days and a half.

Our steamboat was ahead, going up the Delaware, for New York—fare three dollars, (I mention price again to show the cheapness of travelling here)—with a boat of the rival line close in our rear, but there was no racing. We went by the fine farmhouses on the Delaware, the rich towns and villages that proclaim, "*here is the work of the freemen,*" "*this is the result of man acting for himself, and reaping the rewards of his own industry.*" Soon after breakfast we were in the rail cars at Bordentown. We passed the habitation of Joseph Bonaparte¹⁵⁹—were drawn by horses, for the locomotive is not yet put on, through deep culverts, over high bridges, at the rate of from eight to ten miles an hour. Soon we were at Amboy—and by dinner time, half past two P.M., we were in New York.

I rambled around—saw the multitude crowding to see the balloon go up¹⁶⁰—enjoyed a little of those odors, written and unwritten, that so distinguish New York, the kitchen of American cities, not two percent better off than New Orleans as to filth, &c. and where the cholera is a blessing if it only wakes up "the authorities"—and then by four o'clock, P.M. the same day, I embarked in the "*Franklin*" for Providence.

Nothing remarkable happened here. Everybody talks of Hurl Gate—of Point Judith and seasickness there, and of Newport also. All I have to say is, that I would give much to take many of my Southern friends from their

¹⁵⁸ Fip — Originally, a Spanish silver coin worth six and a half cents; the local term "fip" (a contraction of *fippence* = five pence) remained in use for a long time in Philadelphia

¹⁵⁹ Joseph Bonaparte (1768-1844) — Elder brother of Napoleon Bonaparte; lived in U.S. 1817-1832, part of this time on the Point Breeze estate, at Bordentown NJ

¹⁶⁰ Balloon — Between 1830 and 1833, Charles F. Durant made 12 hot-air balloon ascents (in New York, Boston, Baltimore and Albany); the public paid admission to observe his take-offs.

rich alluvial bottoms to the borders of Narraganset Bay, and show them the rocks, and the fine houses and flourishing farms, thereabout, and then ask them "*How do you suppose the Rhode Island farmers live?*" The Mail Pilot line at Providence, a furious fiery concern—coursers of the sun like, took some of us to Boston, distant from the wharf forty-two miles, in four hours short—in time for a three o'clock dinner in Boston; and thus, you see: one leaves Baltimore in Maryland, Tuesday after dinner, and dines in Boston on Thursday, for less than one quarter of the sum that it costs to travel from Washington to Charleston. I can come now from Baltimore to Portland in two days and a half, and when the railroad between Washington and Baltimore is done, and the railroad between Providence and Boston is done, both under way, I can come all the way by steam in two days. I have not a doubt that in twenty years, from the improvements in preparation, that the journey will be made in forty hours.

I bring you this letter in the "*Connecticut*," and so save the postage, and thus there is an end to your troubadour Editor.

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APPENDIX: OBSERVATIONS ON NEGRO SLAVERY

Editorial Note

James Brooks devoted several articles (see below) exclusively to search for a formula that would bridge the slavery gap between North and South. For him, the possibility of war, or of secession, was real, but unthinkable. He theorized that the Southern economy would fall progressively further behind, because only free peoples are motivated to improve their productivity. However, this idea does not come across as likely to have convinced rich cotton planters. Statesmen of vastly wider experience than he would continue to grapple unsuccessfully with this “viper in the nest”.

Personally, he was an opponent of slavery, but exclusively on moral grounds: human beings were entitled to be treated as free and equal. He was no apologist for the black population, whether slave or free, although he saw it as debased by centuries of mistreatment.

Brooks was certainly ambivalent on the ability of freed slaves to shoulder the responsibilities of citizens. At one point, he went so far as to state that some Southern freed slaves had less intelligence than a well-trained dog. It is open to conjecture whether he was referring to a lack of innate capability, or to uncooperative behaviors, caused by lifelong rejection and abuse by the dominant white culture. At the same time, he denied that blacks were an inferior race, and speculated that under supportive conditions, the offspring of slaves, or their offspring's offspring, would be capable of returning to full humanity. Yet again, confounding nature and nurture, he was convinced of the superior intelligence of mulattos, invoking a prevailing line of scientific thought which ascribed it to their different (whiter) physiognomy.

Perhaps his confusion was a reflection of his youth, and inexperience of living in a slave-owning society (at this date, he had spent little more than a year in Washington DC). How far his beliefs were acquired earlier in life, or whether they were modified by observations and opinions gathered on his Southern travels, it is not possible to determine.

Charleston, (S.C.)
c. April 3rd, 1833

My object being to obtain information, I ask questions of everybody and talk with everybody I meet with. Hence, I hold conversations with all sorts of people. From the best information I can gain, from masters and slaves themselves, the slaves are in general well treated. There are exceptions to this remark. Some of the slaves are not well fed; some are not well clad; some are whipped and beaten too much by cruel overseers, and it is said even by Northern people to be a fact, that Northern masters are more cruel than Southern masters. But the slaves as a body are well treated, well fed, and well clad. They have on this account but little to complain of, and but few, very few, do complain. The great majority of them are happy and well contented. The more ignorant they are, the more contented they are. Some few of them can read and write. Many can read, and many take a kind of blind interest in the discussions of the day. I have heard some of them, when chattering in crowds at corners of the streets, say, "*Me's a State Rights man,*" "*Me's no Union man,*" or something of the sort. Many masters have objections to their learning to read or write. They do not like to give their slaves information, nor the ability to read the newspapers of the day which, however, are not in much danger of being read, even by those who can read. Newspapers with the usual high wrought and flattering encomiums on liberty are left all loose for hours upon tables, where negroes can read them, if they desire.

An intelligent physician in this city, whose practice is such as enables him to speak from actual knowledge, says that over one half—I think he said, two-thirds—of the colored population of Charleston is mulattos! The mulattos are, in general, quick, active and intelligent. They are as bright as white men in the same circumstances. Many of them have fine figures, and fine faces. Some are beautiful brunettes. They have a great disinclination to associate with the blacks and seldom or never marry one of a blood darker than their own. Their highest ambition is to marry a white person—and on the plantations, the females often have such an estate from their fathers as enables them to command a poor white husband, whose situation is not equal to theirs, color except. This physician thinks that one tenth of the colored population in the country is mulatto. Their sympathies are with them, and in any trouble, they would probably side with the white population. But it is not improbable,

for they are increasing with great rapidity, from causes which reflection will teach the reader,¹⁶¹ that in course of time, they may become arbiters of this part of the country. If educated, they would have as much intelligence as the whites. They have not the negro head, the negro lip, and negro chin, nor the negro sloping forehead. They have none of that brute look, which hundreds of the negroes here have, and by which a person that is in the habit of examining faces can see, that they are in intellect little above the brutes, unless it be that they have the faculty of speech.¹⁶² Whether the mulatto population, thus increasing in numbers, and them destined to increase from the very immorality of their masters, may not in time rebel, and attempt to throw off their bondage, and succeed too, as intelligence will direct **their** steps, is a question which time will determine.

There is no doubt that a tincture of white blood elevates the black race in intellect. The truth is, the blacks have for so long a time been kept in ignorance that many of them are little better than animals. They do not compare with the intelligent negroes at the North. I never met such stupid negroes in a Northern city as I constantly meet here. There are some into whom vitality cannot be infused, and who know neither their ages, nor their own history, and hardly their own names, and whom you cannot trust to do the simplest errand. Such usually have almost the head of an animal, the long projecting chin, and thickly-built lips, and receding forehead. I am much a believer in physiognomy and phrenology, though ignorant of both as a science, and speaking only from that instinct and observation which we all have on these subjects, that I believe such men's heads must be remodeled, before they can be taught anything—before they can combine, arrange, invent or reason. I do not agree with many whom I meet with here, and who say, judging from what they see, that the negroes are an inferior race of men, and therefore "*we have a right to make them subservient to us.*" This is not my creed. I deny the premises,

¹⁶¹ After importation of slaves to the U.S. became illegal in 1808, replacement and growth of the enslaved workforce had to be achieved by reproduction within the pre-existing negro population. Brooks' oblique remark, concerning the increase in the number of mulattos, refers to the (forcible or consensual) impregnation of negro slave women by their white owners and overseers.

¹⁶² The beliefs expressed repeatedly by Brooks on the significance of certain black physical characteristics, though widespread in his day, are scientifically discredited.

or granting them, deny the inference. I can find negroes, very many even here, who are active and bright and who, if educated, would make a figure in the world—who are better gifted, and better instructed also, than some of the whites on the sand hills, or the pine-barrens—but the great mass of the whole black are deplorably ignorant, deplorably incapable. Some of the freed negroes are the most stupid animated matter I ever met with. The well-trained dog has more intelligence than they have.¹⁶³ Others about house, who come in daily contact with their masters and their families, are bright, more or less, comparatively speaking—thus showing that it is ignorance, want of education or association with educated men that [brutalizes] them, and I have observed very often, that where there is the greatest mass of ignorance, there is the most [brutalized] face.

Southern gentlemen sometimes inquire, if you would set such a mass of ignorance loose at once, and give it freedom. I never have made up any opinion on this question or any other, then this—that it is none of my business, but theirs; and that I would not live in a country where such a state of things existed, and where there was so much danger. Southern gentlemen, in general, affect to despise the danger. But if they do, their wives and daughters do not. Indeed, they do not. They dare not speak freely on this subject at a dinner table, when a slave is within hearing. Such conversation is obscure or in whispers. So far, they are slaves themselves, that in the presence of their slaves, they must keep a guard on their conversation. They do not go to bed at night with the same ease and freedom that we do. They call their military to their aid, and keep their slaves under martial law. The cities of Richmond, Charleston and Savannah keep up a military guard. No small portion of the white population must watch under arms, while the other portion sleeps. Tell me there is no belief of danger, when the military watches over one's bed and one's property. John Randolph hardly exaggerated, when he described the Richmond mother as more tenderly pressing her infant to her bosom, at each sound of the clock, or toll of the bell at night.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ Brooks' words are needlessly offensive. He has just said that blacks are not sub-human. He now explains that the appearance of stupidity is due to their upbringing in an environment devoid of education, and opportunities for self-improvement.

¹⁶⁴ The exact wording was: "I speak from facts when I say, that the night-bell never tolls for fire in Richmond, that the mother does not hug the infant more closely to her bosom." These words "on the danger arising from the black population", spoken by Representative John Randolph to the US Congress on 10th December

Now what is the state of things? One of the chief evils is, that where there are so many slaves, there can be no free schools, and no other good schools. There can be no schools—and private tutors obtained at great expense, must be relied upon—because slavery forbids the existence of thick settlements, and throws the white population far apart. I mean to say, there can be none of those schools which in New England are brought home to men's doors. The consequence is, that the poorer part of the population must be in exceeding ignorance. So far as my observation has extended, such is the fact, notwithstanding all that Mr. Calhoun has said of the intelligence and general diffusion of knowledge in South Carolina, and his assertion that no people on earth were so well instructed in all the great questions of constitutional government and liberty. This may be in part true of the backcountry near Pendleton, in which Mr. Calhoun resides, but it is not true of the people on the sand hills and pine-barrens—not true of the countrymen, and many poor people whom I have met. I do believe there are many, very many among them, who cannot read or write. There is among some, with whom I have conversed, a deplorable ignorance of the country and the constitution, and of the great questions on which they were going to hazard their lives. They are brave, I do not doubt it, but we have no population in New England that I have met, not even the most ignorant, half so ill acquainted with the history of their country, the progress of politics, or of constitutional law. And how can it be otherwise? They have no free schools. They can have no private schools. Such are too poor to hire tutors for their children. They then must be ignorant, or educate themselves.

I notice these things as the natural operation of negro slavery upon the white population, and to set the public right upon Mr. Calhoun's assertion that the Nullifiers are the best instructed people in the world—for it so happens, with some exceptions, I am informed, that the best-informed districts, and parishes, and people, are for the Union, while the Nullifiers carry a large portion of the districts where the people are idle, ignorant and, of course, are discontented. South Carolina cannot, from the very vice of her institutions, become the best-informed State in the Union. Education cannot be brought home to her doors—and though she

1811, were reported in *The Life of John Randolph of Roanoke*, Hugh A. Garland, Appleton New York and Philadelphia, 1851, 1:295

produces great and splendid men, yet the mass of her population cannot compare in the diffusion of knowledge, with the mass of New England population. Her very great men are her nobility—more generally educated as the sons of English noblemen are educated—educated for politics and debate—with exceptions, I know, as in the case of Mr. McDuffie, whose fortune is of his own creation.

Slavery then, I assert, carries with it a moral evil, entailed not only on one's self, but upon one's posterity. The North is wrong, I am convinced, in the general belief that the slaves are treated with unkindness; and a moment's reflection will teach us so. It is the interest of the master to treat his slave well. Self-interest, that strongest of all impulses, impels him to do right—just as the owner of a valuable house or any valuable animal, will take care of his property. Hence negroes are well taken care of in sickness, for their lives are valuable to their masters—and the best of advice is given them, at the master's expense of course—in order to preserve them. Their health is well guarded for a similar reason. No poor population then, in any city, is so well off as the slaves are here, the moment sickness has brought them to their beds. When old age comes upon the slave, the master is obliged to take care of him; and he usually fares as well as the rest of the servants.

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If I were asked the best means of operating upon public opinion at the South, so as to effect the abolition of negro slavery—after saying that immediate abolition is a chimera, a scheme that is impossible to realize, and in attempting which we but rivet the chains of a slave for a longer time by prejudicing public opinion (for public opinion in a mass is against it, and it can only be done by the sword and the bayonet) and this public opinion is justified by the interest which each slaveholder has in his property (an interest which he will not surrender, any sooner than a Northern man will surrender his ship or his farm, and slaves are the best property to command cash at the South)—after premising this, I think the best way to operate upon public opinion here, is to appeal to the interest of the slave-holding States, and to convince them, which is a fact, that slavery palsies their energies, keeps them poor, prevents them from advancing as free States advance, and must finally put them behind, far behind, the free States of the Union. Added to this, let us attempt to

convince them, that it is not impossible to get rid of slavery. Let it be proved that the emancipation of slaves, and their colonization to Liberia, or to some distant part of our own territory is possible; and next, that the slave has mind, the faculties of man, dormant though they may be, yet capable of being quickened and displayed in freedom; and lastly, that if the slave himself cannot be educated, in time his offspring may be, and thus all be brought back to that civilization and manhood, from which I believe the black men as a body have fallen, if we may credit early historians—fallen, because of barbarism, cruelty and bondage.

If we hope for success in our attempts to instruct public opinion here, we must convince the public of what I believe is the fact—that we have no **interest** in freeing them from their slaves, but an interest in their keeping those slaves in subjection. The interest we have in their holding slaves is, that in a free community, there must be more enterprise, a better educated white population taken as a mass, and more industry than in a community where slaves are held—for there the working man is held in better estimation—consequently more property is acquired by labor, invention accomplishes more, emulation does more, and where man works for himself, he will bring more to pass, than where he works for a master. Thus, also, we can become a manufacturing and a commercial people as well as an agricultural people, while the slave-holding States, if they attempt it, under any and all law, will find it impossible to match on equal terms their slave workers against our free workers. I have no doubt that if South Carolina had no slaves, her population, with her rich staples, would be the wealthiest in America as a mass, for small farms and divided labor would then take the place of her present feudal system. Thus, I think, it is no difficult task to convince public opinion at the South, that slavery paralyzes public energy, and keeps slave States behind free States. For, once convince the public, and such is beginning to be the impression, that slavery **is** an evil, not only a moral evil, but an evil sapping the very foundations of State prosperity—and soon, very soon, with the life and enterprise now abroad in the world, the people who are subject to the evil, will make an attempt to be rid of it.

Southern gentlemen, of all parties, are speaking of Yankee enterprise. Our roads are better. Our stages are better. Our ships are better. Our population is thriftier and more prosperous. We are ahead of them, they grant, in all that contributes to national power and national wealth. Of

course, they will not give us their "chivalry," and their "love of liberty," and their "courage,;" and, of course, they abuse us a little at times, to pay for the compliments they grant us. Now I believe the public opinion of all enlightened men is, that the prosperity of the Northern States is chiefly owing to their exemption from the vices of slavery. Surely, we are not more intelligent, more wise, more inventive, or have more men of that far-reaching power called mind, than they have! They will not grant that! Oh, no. And I will do the intelligent part of the population the justice to say, that there is not a better or a nobler body of men, I think, on earth, than their intelligent men are. We have no better men than they have. We have no stronger minds. We have no more inventive genius—but our invention is active, theirs is dormant. Seeing for ourselves, and working for ourselves, and having no slaves, thank God, to work for us, intellect is ever on the stretch. If the North was afflicted with their population, it would be the most miserable country on earth. We should starve as well as freeze.

I say then, Northern prosperity and activity is to be accounted for only on the principle that men must there think and work for themselves, and in doing this, call into exercise all their faculties, mental and physical; while, at the South, the white population only does the thinking, and fritters away its energies in amusements, and politics, and that stuff called **cheating**. **We** think and work. **They** think—and hence the people that do two things will be more prosperous than the people who do but one, prosperity being dependent chiefly upon labor. Again, all of us have such a natural aversion to labor, that no man will labor if he can avoid it, but in proportion to its necessity: so the exertion, and so the production, which is prosperity.

Having no interest—I speak now not as a philanthropist, but as man all self—in freeing the South from slavery, but rather an **interest** in seeing the South hold slaves, thus keeping them under the necessity of consuming our productions, the productions of our **wits**, not of our **soil**, let us show them that we are willing to contribute our exertions and our wealth to free them from the evil, whenever they desire it, determining at the same time never to interfere as politicians, or in any other manner than public opinion at the South will approve. **Wealth**, I say, for whoever imagines that philanthropy can work without wealth—such

comprehensive philanthropy grasping such a prodigious purpose—is greatly mistaken.

If the slaves were liberated tomorrow, standing armies must be supported at enormous expense, to awe a population whom the whites will, on a principle of natural law, keep in one kind of subjection if they do not in another. Great Britain sees this, and in proposing to liberate the slaves of the West Indies, also proposes to dispatch there a large, a very large, military force. I wish to see no such standing army in our free country; and, therefore, I abandon the idea of immediate abolition at home. I do not believe it would better the condition of the slave. I am almost confident it would make him more of a slave than he is now—the slave of a military power, of armed men, and of distrusting citizens, who would have no interest in guarding, feeding, or preserving him. The **wealth**, then, I say, of the free States, will be necessary to do justice to the plan of philanthropy. If colonization is attempted, millions may be spent. I fear there is, then, another question, staring the public in the face—the question of making one part of the community to surrender its property to another part. But this surrender will not be made unless it be attempted by the sword and the bayonet, and I am no admirer of such a war—this surrender, I say then, will not be made, unless the South is thoroughly convinced that it loses more than it gains by slavery.

The word **Property** as applied to a slave, will strike many a Northern ear as a harsh one. No man is another man's **property**, I am told. Well, grant it, but even a philanthropist must look at things as they are, if he expects to do good. There are men held by men as **property**, bought and sold as property, whom our fathers in forming the Constitution recognized as **property**, and to whom as property, "as machinery," they are allowed a representation in Congress. And what is more, this property is not in our community, but in a community with which we have nothing to do on this question—as politicians. Now we must look at things as they are, and if, in the present state of public feeling here, a slave is taken from the master, in the eye of the public and the law, it is theft, it is robbery, it is plunder. The owner would be as indignant as the Northerner when robbed of his purse.

This is a strange feeling, I allow. I cannot understand it. I cannot understand how a man can talk of **liberty** and hold another man in

slavery. I should think he would be ashamed to speak the word. But the vending of slaves in the public market is looked upon as nothing. They are felt of and looked at as horses, or cattle. Public opinion receives no shock. Thus, are people educated. Thus, in their youth, they are accustomed to such sights. They are in this respect as the Mohammedans and fire worshippers, looking upon things and doing things strange to us, but natural to them. The best of men, or such as at the North would be called the best of men, are slaveholders—Christians—ministers of the gospel of all denominations, I believe—men ardently attached to liberty, philanthropists also—all buy and sell slaves, and think nothing of the practice. Now in such a community, it is impossible to operate but cautiously and gradually—and any attempt to shock it at once is fatal to the success of the project attempted, and but rivets the chains of the slaves.

For one, I believe in the ability of the nation, under an amendment of the constitution, or without, with the sanction of the constitutional metaphysicians, to rid itself of this over-shading misfortune. It would not be prudent without the solicitation of the Southern States, to attempt anything of this sort. In time, I should not be surprised if the Southern States were to beg for this aid from the free States, when the free States on the ground of interest would refuse it. It must be the work of years, but the energies of man and time, what can they not do?

I also am convinced that the intellect of the black man is as bright as that of the white man, and that the lamp which God has given him can, after long and patient trimming and proper refinement, burn as bright as the lamp which God has given the white man. The slave cannot be everything forthwith. His son may not be rid of the palsy which ignorance has imposed upon the father. But the son's son will improve, and the soul will become itself again. Education and association, gradually operating upon each, will exalt each. The mulatto here is above the black man. The mulatto often becomes so white that at times he presents himself here at the polls as a white man, and claims the right to vote, and *does* vote. Thus, the race by the mere intermixture of blood is not only changed in color, but exalted in intellect. Even so can it be, I believe, by education and association, for if a man lives with cattle, he will be little above the cattle, but if he lives with man, he will become a man: such is the tendency of

minds, as well as of matter, to mingle and combine, and borrow and reflect.

I cannot but think that the people of the South are doing injustice to their children. They acknowledge the danger they are entailing upon their prosperity, for they cannot shut their eyes to the fact that the black population is increasing upon them, and that, some day or other, the danger is to be met, and that then it may be a question of life and death. They are thus bequeathing to posterity a question to be agitated and a battle to be fought under circumstances less auspicious than the present, when they, perhaps, cannot dictate the terms of settlement so well as their fathers. It is vain to disguise the fact that the question is to be met. It is vain to believe that a large mulatto population, as shrewd, or as capable of intelligence as the white, and a population increasing, not slowly, from the habits of a portion of society—it is vain to believe that such men will submit in quiet to the organization of Southern society. At least they must be elevated and made the allies of the whites, or be kept down by physical force, and then insurrections, murder and desolation succeed.

Now is the time, not so much for us, as for the South to meet the question. It is **their** question, we grant. As politicians, we will have nothing to do with it. As philanthropists, we are ready to follow their bidding. If they have the enterprise they ought to have, or courage, or affection for their children, they will take the bitter cup from posterity, and share it themselves. It is not impossible to accomplish the broad plans of our great statesmen who have met and discussed this subject. Nothing is impossible, that man or mind can do, to a great nation like ours, operating in a mass, and with mutual goodwill and hearty confidence. If Southern statesmen have the courage to brave the question, and to risk a momentary unpopularity, they can now begin the settlement of an evil, the removal of a **vice**, which their children otherwise must settle and remove for them.

Editorial published June 18, 1833

We owe an apology to our readers for the publication of these articles now, but they were written in Cincinnati, intended for publication long ago—and what writer, editor especially, likes to lose any of his scribblings in these hard times for ideas, when many of us have to sit, pen in hand, an hour or so, hunting for some straggling notion that may perchance have shot through the brain. Our remarks on slavery are not intended so much for this meridian as for another. It is an important point to convince the South that our feelings on this subject are unprejudiced, and that we are acting and thinking against our interest, our selfish morbid interests as partisans of this section of the confederacy—in whatever we say or do in behalf of the Colonization Society, the Anti-Slavery, or any other of the like societies. We think we now know what Southern feeling is on the subject; and whenever we agitate the question, we will do it in such a manner as to create no sectional prejudices, for one may speak strongly if he speaks in a proper way. But we cannot refrain from saying that the illiberality of our Southern countrymen toward this section of the Union, is a shame and disgrace to them. There is no such illiberality here¹⁶⁵ toward the South. The feeling of the intelligent and of the majority is as ardent and as elevated, as the best-hearted Southern man can desire. We do not deserve the names and appellations charged upon us, and at all times, when seriously charged, New England men should throw them back with spirit and indignation.

This Union of ours should be knitted and linked together in the strongest bonds of fraternal attachment. But it never can be till we are better acquainted with each other, till information circulates more rapidly and at less expense—till Southern roads are better, and Southerners of all parties travel more, not in our cities, but in our villages and country towns. Slavery is directly or indirectly the cause of all these mischiefs, in enhancing the expense of travelling, in suffering roads to be miserable in old States, in the thin population, in the bad farming—in short in everything where we surpass in industry and enterprise our Southern countrymen. It is the root of all the mischief and all the bad feeling toward us in the South. And we solemnly believe the Union cannot stand forty years,¹⁶⁶ unless something is done gradually to be rid of this vice. Hence it is an all-important or momentous question, to Virginia in particular, a question of life and death.

¹⁶⁵ Here — The reference is to Maine, where the article was published.

¹⁶⁶ Forty years — In the event, the American Civil War broke out just 28 years later.

And there the question must be met, and immediately too, unless Virginia is willing to descend from her proud position on the pages of American story to be the slave nurse of the South-Western States.

Hence our hands are bound. We can do nothing, but talk, talk, and pay and contribute. The man that introduces the question in Congress, at present, breaks up the Union; and though the Union is not of half so much value to us as to the South, yet the preservation of this Union is worth more to human freedom here and everywhere, worth more to the human race through a long series of years than the whole of the African race suffering in slavery among us. We mean to say, it is better for mankind that slavery shall always exist, yes always, than that the American Union should be broken up. The South is asleep, shamefully shoving upon their children a burden they dare not undertake themselves. But in our warmth, we have forgotten that we are putting into the porch of our articles matter intended for the articles themselves.

Cincinnati, (Ohio)
May 12th, 1833

I find on looking over the newspapers here, for **here** and Louisville are the only places where a traveler can see **newspapers, old papers** being plenty, very plenty south of Charleston, on account of the irregularity of the mails, I find that I have had the misfortune to offend the *Richmond Compiler* in my description of a slave auction, on the one side, and some few of my New England friends on the other—with views, as some of them think, too liberal for the slaveholder. Nevertheless, it is my object to get at the truth, and to see and to speak of things as they are; and while I condemn slavery, and believe that he has a heavy account to settle with his conscience and his God, **he** who traffics in human souls and bodies; and while I believe slavery is unnecessary everywhere, and without the shadow of an excuse in Virginia, in Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, Missouri, and the Northern parts of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi (as yet unsettled)—yet, I shall not hesitate to say, slavery is none of our business as politicians, that the slaves in general are well-treated, that total and immediate abolition is a madness no unprejudiced man will indulge in after travelling over the Southern country; nor shall I hesitate to describe slavery as it is, with all its miseries, its afflictions, its

dangers; adding all the while that I believe, if **interest** is alone consulted, it is the **interest** of the free States that the Southern States should hold slaves **forever**. I have taken unwearied pains to get at the truth, both from the master and the slave, by hearsay and personal observation; and if the *Richmond Compiler*, (the editor, it is said, is Mr. Ritchie) cannot stand a fair account, its sensibilities are quite too keen.

Southerners knowing nothing of us Yankees, (I like the name of a Yankee and will adhere to it) laugh at our speculations, our money-getting propensities, our wooden hams, wooden clocks, wooden nutmegs, codfish, &c. &c., and where is the Yankee, who ever thought of being offended? who does not smile in reading these witticisms? who does not enjoy them, though they turn hard upon his people? If, then, I go among a people who are ever boasting of democracy and liberty, and who call us all aristocrats—and describe a slave auction word for word, pray do not jump upon your dignity and take offense. The Nullifiers introduced me late into their very Citadel, and I laughed at all their follies, even before their faces, and they laughed at the rocks and snows and peddlers of New England, and doubted whether their pockets were safe with a Yankee, and yet did either of us think of taking offense? They have republished in the *Mercury* the description of their ball, and enjoyed the joke in common. But alas, the *Richmond Compiler* takes offense because I have described, as it was, a slave auction, and then moralized, and then hints, Yankees will not be received courteously in Virginia. I will try it and see. I shall come home through Virginia. I will see more of a land which, as an American, I reverence for what it has been—*Ilium fuit*,¹⁶⁷ but which when I see crippled and palsied by the curbs of slavery, blessed as she is by heaven with the best of climates and of production, coming with almost everything that can administer to the comforts and luxuries of life, and yet losing her best blood in the wildernesses and Alabama and the West, and suffering her noble rivers and majestic mountains to be almost as the savage left them¹⁶⁸—when I see all this, and know that Virginia ought to be the paradise of America, and could be, if she would throw off her slave population, and work with the energies of **free men**, I cannot but apostrophize her in the poetry of Byron.

¹⁶⁷ Translation — "*what it has been*"

¹⁶⁸ Footnote in original (incomplete) — "Perhaps I speak here too strongly..."

"Ancient of days! august Athena! where,
Where are thy men of might? thy grand in soul?
Gone, glimmering through the dream of things that were:
They were, and pass'd away—is this the whole?
A school-boy's tale, the wonder of an hour?"

Jefferson, Virginia's demigod, was an adversary of slavery, as his letters prove, both for the *principle* and the *interest* of Virginians. He knew that "*All men could not be free and equal*," if half were slaves. He knew that where there were **eaters** and but **half-producers**, the State afflicted with such a population must suffer in comparison with the free States. And the event has justified and confirmed the opinion, as New York, for example, starting in the Union with free labor, has far outrun Virginia; now outnumbering her in population, in wealth, and with the best internal communications in the world. New York is flourishing, and Virginia, at least Eastern Virginia, is decaying. New York is gaining by emigration, and Virginia is losing. Virginia **was** the empire State; New York **is**. De Witt Clinton had a free people to act upon—and Jefferson and his successors had a people but free in part.

See the difference. See Western Virginia herself contributing to the wealth of the Empire State. See her own members of her legislature traversing other States to reach their homes! for her roads are often impassable; her mountains at times almost an inaccessible barrier, as wild as the Alps when Hannibal stormed them! See her waterfalls idle. See her villages partially deserted, her many ruined farmhouses, her ragged fences, her sluggish agriculture, and her productions consumed, and herself saved almost from beggary by the very States that she curses. All this among a people with hearts as noble as ever beat in a Roman bosom, proud, patriotic, magnanimous and generous to a fault! All this, because there are slaves to do what man ought to do for himself, slaves with their vices, idleness, wastefulness, horseracing, gambling and whiskey-drinking perhaps, with their dangers, a military guard, and mothers with hearts ever palpating for the lives of their children, their husbands and themselves—with their consequences, theft, knavery, plunder, dirt, and kitchens often too dirty to look upon! All this, I say, among a people, who are to be esteemed for almost every quality that adorns the human character: frankness, liberality, candor, honesty, magnanimity and generous ambition.

But why do I, as a Yankee, preach such a homily? It is for the **interest** of my own New England to foster and feed this appetite for slavery with its concomitant politics. Let Virginia keep her slaves if she chooses; let man never be free across the Potomac. Let that be the barrier of the freeman and the slave. For why should not a Yankee be content? Surely the sons of New England will seldom or never leave her hills nor her rocks to settle among slaves. Her tide of emigration will never roll to any but a land of freemen. They will populate the West. They will give Ohio her millions of souls, and Indiana her million, and Illinois her proportion—and leave Virginia where she is—to breed the slaves of the Mississippi slave-traders, to load her ships, not with the products of her industry and her genius, but with the bodies and souls of men and women and children for a market at New Orleans. Poise upon your dignity, Old Virginia; let your corn and cotton be consumed abroad. Don't dirty your hands in trade. Don't disfigure your valleys with steam engines, or your waterfalls with factories. Be where you are for a hundred years to come, where your Jefferson and Madison, and Henry left you—while your sister States, struggling with climate and soil, are prospering everywhere. Deny the General Government all power to aid you. Fold up your hands, and spurn at tariffs, at internal improvements, and Northern fanatics. It is our **interest** to have you do so.

It is well for us to see you the consumers, and ourselves the producers. It is good for us to have no competitors in enterprise, activity, energy, promptitude and decision; for our Yankee shrewdness teaches us this lesson, that if you act toward us as we are willing to act toward you, if you participate in the general diffusion of the **blessings** of our united government, demanding and receiving those appropriations to which you are by your position entitled, if you live as we live, and work as we work, and are all producers, all working men, then we must desert the cherished hills and valleys and associations of our homes, and fly to another land for a livelihood; for how can we live in New England, with no marketable productions, no cotton, no rice, no sugar, no tobacco, with competitors having all these productions, and the joyful spring and teeming summer of a Southern clime? How can we, with our shores and our ice, and our reluctantly yielding soil, match with the bottom lands, the alluvials, of the slave States? No, no, our preservation is slavery, your consequent inactivity, your idleness. Thus, if you **will** be "our colonies,"

it is not for us to complain. It is not for us to make you the laborers we are, and to teach you our arts and appliances of life. I tell you a truth, when I say the great mass of the intelligent people of New England think what I have said, and though they are ready, whenever you name the hour, to open their purses, and give their services to aid in freeing you from this curse, yet as politicians, they have resolved to have nothing to do with the liberation of your slaves.

The constitution has guaranteed to you certain rights. It is their **interest** to keep up the guarantee. But make the move, make the attempt to be rid of what you confess a vice—and see if there is a cold calculating spirit in New England. Talk of Northern fanatics, Northern madmen, Northern meanness, Northern cupidity! How little you know of the people whom many so often abuse! How little you know of that self-sacrificing spirit which will do everything and suffer everything for the Union, for liberty, for the common glory of the whole country. New England is in the counting room, at the money box, and, in business hours, may not be all that one could wish; but, New England at the fireside, in the social circle—in her schools, her public spirit, and her institutions, is a land to be proud of. I had rather be one of her sons than a Grecian or a Roman in the lustrous days of their glory.

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I shall now state why I think it is for the **interest** of the North that the South should hold slaves **forever**, and as some of my Southern friends have done me the honor of copying many of my letters, I hope they will at least read this, and let their readers know that "Yankee cupidity" is not the governing motive in whatever anti-slavery feeling there is at the North—of which, by the way, there is not over-much, except that feeling which makes us thank heaven our case is not their case, our situation theirs, or their apathy and blindness ours.

The South with slaves can have no yeomanry, "*their country's bulwark and their country's pride*,"¹⁶⁹ unless they call their slaves their yeomanry.

¹⁶⁹ The spirit of these words is found in earlier English writing, such as here: "Employ the poor, instil a spirit of industry, a sentiment of honest independence, in the mind of the peasant, and he forthwith becomes *his country's bulwark and his country's pride*". (Ref. "Improvement of Ireland ...", John Beare, London 1827, p.19)

Labor is not creditable. The white free man, no matter how poor he may be, does not like to work with the negro slave. In many places, very few but the Irish will submit to what is considered the degradation. Slave labor, as all observation teaches us, is not of one third of the value of free labor, and yet slaves eat as much and commune as much, as the free man. Out of the yeomanry of a State spring sailors, the daring navigators of the ocean, who enrich a country with their enterprise, but few of which the South can ever have with a slave population.

Now I lay down two advantages which the North gains from these facts; **first**, our soil and climate, unequal to that of the South by nature, are made more than equal by superior cultivation, industry and enterprise; **second**, the North can have ships and a commerce and the South cannot. Hence, we are their carriers, and they must ever pay us a good proportion out of their staple products to have them freighted to the North and to Europe.

Bad agriculture, I lay down as one of the chief miseries of slavery. This can be seen by every traveler in the Southern States, particularly Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia. The Northern farmer will be surprised when I tell him it is the practice in some parts of the Southern States and Tennessee to settle upon a plantation of new land, and after girdling the trees so as to kill them, instead of felling them as we do, to wear out, to exhaust, actually to ravage, and desolate this plantation, and then move to another. I met with a Tennessean who had then desolated one plantation in Tennessee—then moved to Alabama, there desolated another—and now with his negroes, a "force," as he termed them, was going to the Red River, there probably to desolate another, if it is possible even to wear out the rich bottom lands of that river. This is slave agriculture! This is already giving some of the new and once rich fields of Alabama the appearance of the old worn-out districts in Italy. Georgia in many parts looks like a country settled before the flood. All this assuredly is for the **interest** of the Yankee, if we, as Southrons say, hate the South.

The South, with no slaves, can have little or no very active capital to be invested in banks, in stocks, in railroads and canals. I might rely upon the assertion that such is the fact among a people who are in truth rich, that is, rich in lands and in negroes, but poor in ready money. I have heard **rich** Virginians confess it difficult to raise money enough to visit the

North, when almost the poorest mechanic with us, can raise money to traverse the Union. But it is a truth, that though the planter of South Carolina realizes from four to eight percent, and sometimes ten percent, on his cotton crops, yet he does not make money, while the New England farmer **does** make money with profits of not two or three percent. There are two causes for this; one, the wastefulness of slaves in the consumption of what is entrusted to their care for apparel or consumption, or for their master's tables; and, second, the wastefulness of the master who, realizing a profit not of his own earning, carelessly consumes what is not won by his own tact or his own genius. Another great cause of the deficiency of the South is what is termed "capital," is that merchandize is not as honorable with them as it is at the North. To have a plantation and negroes is the summit of human glory, even with the citizen of Charleston or Richmond; and I am quite confident that if the aristocracy of Richmond confess the truth, they will say that a merchant is not so respectable with them as the owner of negroes and a plantation.

The Lawrences and the Perkins¹⁷⁰ of Boston, the like who have given that city so much of high renown, from the days of John Hancock¹⁷¹ to the present moment, would be far different men as mere merchants in Richmond. They must have their plantations and negroes, I was going to say, even to figure in the circles of "the good society." All this discourages commerce, trade, and the accumulation of capital; for, why do we labor, but for influence, or power—it may be of one kind, it may be of another—but for power to be exercised in one way or another. All this too is borrowed from England, where noblemen consider trade vulgar, though her merchants have done more for her empire and her fame than all her aristocracy, from the days of Richard the Lion to the present William. All is the result of holding negro-slave-property, and that consequent division of society into two classes, and but two classes, the Lords or *Barons*, with their estates, and the **villeins** or slaves, who do the work; or, in other and plainer words, no more, no less than the two classes of the **nobleman** and the **slave**: for I have seen almost as many free white slaves, if you can understand the term, in some parts of the Carolinas and Georgia, as there are black slaves. The slavery of the South, disguise it as

¹⁷⁰ The Lawrence and Perkins families had been prominent in Boston upper class ("Brahmin") society since the Revolutionary period

¹⁷¹ John Hancock (1737-1793) — Wealthy New England (Boston) merchant, Patriot of the American Revolution, twice Governor of Massachusetts

we may, is their feudal system, this distinction, that in feudal times whites were slaves, and now blacks are, the difference of color being the only distinction, and but a partial distinction too, for black slavery forces down to its level no small proportion of the white population.

The South with slaves is, and will be, only a peculiar kind of agricultural population. Though agriculture is the foundation of all employments, yet, in these times, a State devoted exclusively to agriculture must be comparatively poor. Agriculture, commerce and manufactures, it has been said, are the three legs upon which a State is to stand—and surely then a State will be but badly poised with one alone. The habits of the slave-holding States are such from the idleness that slavery inflicts upon a white population, and the absence of that burning stimulus, which makes men active, ambitious and practical, that they never will be a commercial people. Hence commerce must be left to others, commerce that aggrandizes a people abroad and enriches them at home.

Again, the South with slaves can never have free schools to any extent, from the thinness of the whites among the slave population. Education, I consider, of immense importance to a people, not only in a literary and political, but in a mercantile point of view. Hence it is a fact, that the white population of the South—I speak of the mass, and not of many highly gifted minds in the Southern States, whose talents are an honor to their country—are not near so well educated as the white population of New England. From the mere free schools, we Yankees make money out of the South; and hence our **interest** is again against our action on the slavery question: for Yankee schoolmasters cluster thickly in the Southern States, and after they have hoarded up a good sum, return home or go off to the West. It is seldom you can persuade a Yankee to stop and spend his money among a slave-holding people, unless he can do well in some city. What make our traders so thick in Southern cities? Yankee free schools. What gives so many the command of the pen and the press? Yankee free schools. Intelligence exalts the soul of man, and inspires him to thought and to action. Hence our population, all more or less educated, are that busy, daring people that know no fear, and stop at no risk when anything is to be done. It is the free schools of New England that first kindles in the bosoms of hundreds of poor boys that burning for knowledge which, by and by, becomes unappeasable.

The tendency of slavery is to make rank and influence hereditary, even when counteracted by the abolition of the law of primogeniture, and to give the son the honors of the father. Hence, though in such situations there may be brilliant men, the whole population cannot have a stimulus to action. There is not that pushing of the poor to get upward which our free schools are the cause of exhibiting. There is not so much stimulus in the body politic. And hence there is not so much industry, so much enterprise and so much wealth.

I might enlarge upon what the planter loses, in being forced to entrust his property in part to slaves who have no interest in it. The slaves are [...] guilty of thieving. Nothing is safe with them. For example, on some of the rice plantations in Carolina, the cases are very few I think—but a peck¹⁷² of corn a week is allowed the slave for his food—with some other little privileges to get food, not amounting, however, to much. This corn is made into hominy. Now a peck of corn a week will not well support a laboring man. But those negroes who seem to live on this corn, are fat, heavy, greasy, happy fellows, whose board, it may be, costs their masters six or ten dollars a week. For they steal everything they can lay their hands on, everything that is food, and everything that will buy food. I might enlarge upon the fact that the daughters of Carolina are sent northward to be educated, for there can be but few good schools among the prejudices of a slave-holding people. Valuable men will not long teach school where they are not as highly respected as others. I might enlarge upon the wastefulness, the idle and expensive habits of children brought up from birth among slaves, all of which impoverishes a people. I might prove that almost everything is done badly, when slaves are entrusted with doing it. I might take my readers to Richmond, and show them how that city imports almost everything from the North, and make no bad argument in proving that it always will be so with a slave population. I might show them carriages from New Jersey in the interior of Georgia, and furniture from the North in the house of many a planter; for enterprising, skillful mechanics will not work with slaves, nor will they work where work is disgraceful—but to do all this would be tedious; and it is a well-known fact that, though the South have always had, by our political divisions, the power of making what laws they pleased, and in the exercise of this power have made and unmade tariffs, embargoes, &c.

¹⁷² Peck — Liquid measure equal to 2 gallons

&c., yet, let them make what laws they may, the North without slaves will always be wealthier than the South with slaves; yes, **wealthier**, though we do not own each other.

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THE END