

The Emigrant & The Traveller

The English Traveller in America, 1785-1835

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The emigrant and the traveller in America encountered of course much the same conditions and the same difficulties but their individual experiences, owing to the difference in their aim, were likely to be very dissimilar. Thus they lend themselves to a certain amount of separate treatment, though a great deal that is said of the emigrant applies equally well to the traveller, and vice versa.

Let us imagine ourselves in the position of the middle-class Englishman who, dissatisfied with conditions at home, casts expectant eyes toward this El Dorado of which he has heard so much. He wishes to know the truth about America, and if he is a thoughtful man, he weighs the evidence set forth in the travel literature and the numerous books of advice to the prospective settler.

Besides the generally unfavorable condition of affairs in Europe, there were several good substantial considerations that induced Englishmen to emigrate to the United States. The most obvious was perhaps the fact of the uncongested breadth of the land—a land that was practically unlimited in extent. It was seldom that anyone held such a view as did Ashe that “from the vast extent of America, the industry of man cannot for centuries effect a visible change in the general and primitive face that it bears.” [1] The lack of population usually acted as an encouragement to emigration rather than as a deterrent. Here the man of small means might procure by easy payments to the government sufficient acreage for himself and his descendants for the moderate price of two dollars per acre. If he found himself surrounded by undesirable neighbors, he had the opportunity to sell out and secure another tract in a more favorable, and perhaps a more remote district. The mere extent of land free from overlordship or supervision of any kind was a strong factor in determining emigration.

Freedom from taxes and tithes was, as has been said, another strong inducement. [2] The rapid reduction of the national debt after the establishment of the new republic, the constantly increasing self-sufficiency of the United States in regard to her imports, the unrestricted internal trade, the lack of a state church—all of these considerations helped to reduce the taxes to a minimum amount. This sum was chiefly applied to the repair of existing roads and the construction of new ones. Certain luxuries, as gold watches, for instance, beyond the reach of the average person of the time, were subject to a tax. Immigrants paid no import duty on their clothes, books, household furniture, and tools or implements of their trade. “Thus,” says Thomas Cooper, in 1794, “they may begin their commerce, manufacture, trades or agriculture on the day of their arrival upon the same footing as a native citizen.” [3] It is very evident that the lack of the customary English church tithes was an attraction. A late traveller comments on the generous salary (\$700) which the Independent Church at Hartford, Conn., offered its minister, and adds, “The Americans are said to have no religion because the state is not its nursing father; perhaps they pay so much for religion because they want it, while others want it because they pay so much for it. This exemption from tithes was the direct result of the perfect freedom in the whole matter of religion. This seems to have been always a source of astonishment to the visiting European, who never fails to mention the fact. Practically all comment on it, some seeing in it the secret of much that was good in American life; others deploring it as indicative of instability and consequent failure in the new experiment.

The lack of actual poverty, in fact, equality in every form, whether in wealth, social position, or political rights, is much emphasized. Many observers comment on the astonishingly small number of beggars met with on their travels. [5] The number never exceeded three or four, and more usually there was a single specimen the sight of whom emphasized to the visitor the fact that he was the sole exception to the general rule. Equality in political rights was rather well understood from the very nature of the republican government, but the uniformity of the social life was often a source of astonishment and sometimes of chagrin. English people travelling with servants found themselves helpless in preventing the rapid absorption of republican principles on the part of maids and valets. [6] It was rather embarrassing to both master and servant to find that they were placed side by side at an inn table and that they were generally regarded as equals. To the discontented lower-class Englishman at home, however, who read of this fact, it was indicative of a condition that was very alluring.

James Stuart, after his visit to Mr. Flower's settlement in Ohio in 1830, put the freedom from anxiety in regard to the future at the head of all the assets of emigration. [7] The fact that the English farmer or mechanic could bring his family to a place where possible resources seemed unbounded, and where every man of industry might earn a competence to distribute among his children, made the outlook very bright to those who were accustomed to look forward with dread to the future.

All of these considerations, combined with the attraction of the natural resources of the land and the fertility of the soil, helped to turn westward an ever-swelling tide of hopeful souls.

The factors which operated against emigration were just as numerous, but perhaps not so effectual. A very obvious and practical deterrent, especially in the early days of the period, was fear of the Indian tribes, who made emigration seem a dangerous venture to many. The most was made of this terror by unsympathetic writers who, it is probable, actually prevented a certain amount of emigration. [8]

Much more effectual arguments were those that had to do with the conditions confronting the mechanic and the farmer. [9] In the East in the latter part of this period, there was constant complaint of lack of employment among mechanics. Immediately after the Revolution, while there was not much opening for certain kinds of manufacture, such as woolen, linen, etc., the Americans showing a predilection for articles of British manufacture, there was a great demand for workers in the production of such commodities as glass, gunpowder, and paper. Cooper in 1794 mentioned the fact that there were 400 silversmiths in Pennsylvania alone. We judge from later accounts that this state of affairs did not continue. Faux tells in 1827 that in Philadelphia there were more laborers than could be paid. Eleven thousand men were in a state of unemployed pauperism, while in one prison there were 600 thieves and incendiaries. Fearon in 1817 says that in Cincinnati there was great stagnation of business owing to the surplus of shopkeepers, and that in New York, when he visited that city, he found a great lack of business among cabinet makers, timber merchants, and builders, owing to competition. The same state of affairs was noticed around Boston where no one was advised to come who could not bring from five hundred to a thousand pounds, as many were unemployed and nobody was satisfied. [10]

If the emigrant were a farmer, he had very serious problems to solve. Land was cheap, and the unwary newcomer, with an eye to its future value, often indulged in vast tracts. Then he found that superfluous acres were worse than useless [11] because if he employed help sufficient to cultivate such an extent of land, there were no profits left for himself at the end

of the year ; besides, there was often no market for the produce that remained after supplying the needs of his family. When access to markets was easy, these markets were flooded. With no better fate did the ordinary farm laborer meet. There is evidence that in the Atlantic States at least, the market of farm labor was overstocked. Adam Hodgson (1819-21) says that laborers should not come to America no matter how uncomfortable their condition might be ; “ five out of ten may wander about for weeks or months in the agricultural districts of Pennsylvania without finding regular employment or the means of supporting themselves by their labor.” [12]

Granted that the material conditions were favorable, there were still unsurmountable difficulties in the way of enjoyment of the new life. These were sometimes concerned with climate, the extremes and sudden changes of which the Englishman was ill-prepared to endure. [13] The frequent lack of even decent accommodations, of English comforts and pleasures, was not to be ignored. The difference in manners, the daily annoyances to which he was subjected, irritated the Englishman beyond measure. These last considerations often gave pause to the most enthusiastic of lovers of America and produced very often the cautious statement that if a man were at all comfortable and happy in England, he was not encouraged by the writer to leave that country.

Granting, however, that emigration could not be checked, few of those who wrote could abstain from advice to the Englishman who was seeking a new home in America. Some of these advisers, for the most part self-constituted, wrote primarily, some only incidentally, for the emigrant. In the former class were many Americans who tried to direct into the right channel the activities of the newcomers. Men like Benjamin Franklin, for instance, realized the importance of the movement and foresaw its bearing on the future of the United States. Franklin’s “ Information to Those Who Would Remove to America” was referred to constantly by both Americans and Englishmen, and was considered extremely practical in its advice. A much read and very useful book of this type was William Darby’s “ Emigrant’s Guide” (1818) written for those who sought a home in the western and southwestern states and territories. It comprised all the information one might need, in “ one portable and cheap volume.” [14] Not only was it literally a guide book as to roads, etc., but it made a point of explaining a subject little understood by the average emigrant—land-tenure in the newly settled regions. Comprehensive, practical, and unbiased, this book is a fine example of its kind of literature. Most of the American books are of local interest only, and set forth the condition of affairs in only a limited section. This is true of Drake’s “ Account of Cincinnati,” of Stoddard’s, of Brackenridge’s, and of Darby’s “ Louisiana.” It was not until a later date that more comprehensive works appeared.

Another individualized type of guide was that drawn up by such groups of people as the Shamrock Society of New York to encourage emigration. In 1817, this organization published “ Hints to Emigrants from Europe who intend to make a permanent residence in the United States, on subjects economical and political.” This tract offers much useful advice to the emigrant, under three heads : “ First, what relates to his personal safety in a new climate ; secondly, his interests as a probationary resident ; and thirdly, his future rights and duties as a member of a free state.” [15]

Many of the English books written for the emigrant’s direction divided the honors between the United States and Canada ; several of them, in fact, urged the superior advantages of the British province.

One of the earliest of books written especially for the emigrant was Thomas Cooper’s “ Some Information Respecting America” (1794). While the author confined his travels to the

East, he set forth fairly the relative advantages of each part of the country ; for further aid to his readers, he quoted Franklin's tract, " Information to Those Who Would Remove to America." Pickering's " Inquiries of an Emigrant," though dealing with Canada primarily, had much that was useful to all emigrants. John Palmer (1818) affixed to his journal of travels in the United States and Canada a great amount of information relative to all the chief cities in America, together with a variety of other useful information. He declares his aim to have been information to emigrants. The books, however, both American and English, which were written primarily to disseminate information, are in the minority. With most writers, the advice was incidental and found a place in scattered passages or in an appendix. These admonitions make sometimes very amusing reading, and are never the least interesting part of the author's reaction to the new country. They range from the discussion of the dangers of drinking too much cold water to information in regard to the best part of the country for settlement.

Of course, one of the first decisions which the emigrant had to make concerned the time of year when he should travel. Generally, he was advised to make his journey in the early spring to avoid the extreme heat of the American summer. In that case, he might land at New York ; if he started later, he was advised to land as far north as possible, namely, at Boston. The choice of a port depended too on whether the emigrant was going west after his arrival. If his destination was Ohio or any other point in that region, he was advised to land at Philadelphia or Baltimore as being more on the direct route westward. [16]

John Bradbury in 1818 took a journey to the western country in search of data on American natural history. On his return to England, he felt impelled to help obviate the distress he had witnessed on his travels,—distress due to the ignorance of the emigrant. He says that the first step necessary to the prospective settler is to " provide himself with a proper certificate setting forth his trade or profession, and testifying that he has never been employed in manufactures, or machine making, or in works of brass, iron, or steel pertaining to manufacture." This certificate was to be signed by the minister and church wardens of his parish and was intended to satisfy the English law prohibiting the emigration of manufacturers and machinists to the United States. [17]

In 1798, cabin passengers were obliged to pay from twenty-five guineas to thirty pounds, for which they were " found" in everything except bedding and linen ; steerage passengers escaped with a payment of eight to ten pounds, children at half price. [18] There were other advantages in travelling steerage ; the emigrant's baggage escaped the custom house officers, as his goods were entered by the captain of the ship on which he crossed. Later, the steerage passenger found his own provisions. [19] He was admonished to remember, in making out his list, that he and his family would probably be seasick and unable to cook, therefore enough cold food for the voyage must be provided. Tea, coffee, sugar, biscuits, butter, cheese, hams, salt, soap, and candles were part of the essentials, with some oatmeal and molasses if there were small children—of all these things there must be enough to last eight weeks at least. Bottles of vinegar for disinfection of ship's quarters were included ; to that same end, a red-hot piece of iron dipped into a kettle of pitch was often employed when practicable. [20] Cooper advised the traveller to take plenty of lemons and apples or other fruit that would keep, as they were invaluable in cases of seasickness. Of the latter he says, " This complaint is not dangerous, and is better submitted to than prevented. It goes off earlier by exercise upon deck in the open air than by staying below in the cabin ; and it is better cured by gentle dilution than by loading your stomach with food or by any preventive or curative medicines. On landing, your health will be better for having been sick at sea. This is at least as true with respect to females as the male sex." [21]

Little furniture was carried by the newcomer as it was for the most part cheaper in the United States than in Great Britain. [22] Bedding was taken of course, as it had to be provided for the voyage. Small articles like glasses and crockery were to be packed in large boxes or trunks, preferably the latter, as they were the easier to handle. Clothes enough for a year's wear were recommended. If a man intended to farm in America, he often took seed wheat or hay seed with him for convenience. His farming implements were all made in America. [23]

Arrived at an American port, the emigrant presented his letters of introduction, if he possessed them, and prepared to find a place in which to settle. [24] Whether he was a farmer or a mechanic he was advised to go westward. In 1812 the expense of travelling by stage from Philadelphia to Pittsburg was \$20, and 12½ cents for every pound of luggage beyond fourteen. "The charges by the way," says Melish, "are about \$7. The whole distance is 297 miles and the stage travels it in six days. The expense of travelling by waggon is 5 dollars per cwt. for both persons and property ; and the charges by the way are about 12 dollars. A waggon performs the journey in about twenty days." [25] If the man of the party chose to walk over the mountains, the family went much more cheaply. Provisions were cooked in a camp kitchen set up by the road-side, and a comfortable bed was available in the wagon. [26] These vehicles had "a canvass cover stretched over hoops that pass from one side to the other, in the form of an arch. The front is left open to give the passengers within the vehicle the benefit of a free circulation of cool air." [27]

"If the newcomer went as far as the Ohio and wished to descend the river, he was advised to buy an ark for the purpose, in partnership with three or four other families. These arks were flat-bottomed and square at the ends, and were all made with the same dimensions ; fifty feet in length and fourteen feet in breadth. They were covered, and were managed by a steering oar. The usual price was seventy-five dollars and they were often sold at the end of the journey for nearly what they cost. [28]

That the unsuspecting emigrant again and again fell into the hands of rascally speculators, of whom the western country particularly was full, is very evident from the repetition of admonitions to look well to one's purse, and to invest carefully. The man who came into the new country with even a little money must use caution to conceal the existence of it or he would prove a victim to the importunities of landsharks of all nationalities. [29] Money was provided in gold and silver rather than in notes, especially in those of distant states.

A besetting sin to which the emigrant often yielded, and against which he was warned, was intemperance. Much is said of the cheapness of spirits and the facility of obtaining them. There was a theory in Europe that the intense heat of the American summer forbade the use of cold water and that the natives took to strong drink instead. This theory is the basis of much that is said about the intemperance of the Americans, as we shall see later.

By such intimate and detailed information did those who were interested in emigration, whether native Americans or travelled Englishmen, try to guide the thousands of weary but eager feet that sought Utopia. Courage was needed for the enterprise, and a sense of humor, and adaptation to circumstances. All of these were enjoined on the traveller and emigrant. He was warned that he would meet with many hardships to which he was unaccustomed, and that nothing could be gained in America without labor, and plenty of it.

What classes of men, then, were to surmount these difficulties and eventually to become prosperous and desirable citizens of the republic ? For what types of people was such a change beneficial ? [30] The extreme poor, of whatever trade or occupation, were always

bettered by emigration to America if they were industrious and willing to work. Except in the eastern congested districts, it was always possible to find employment with a tradesman as an apprentice, or with farmers who had more land than they could manage to cultivate. In a year a man was generally proficient in his new trade. Manufactures of other than useful articles found slight foothold in America in the earlier part of the period under discussion. Luxuries had little place in American life, and the production of them was relegated to countries with wealth to buy them and leisure to enjoy them. Merchants, tradesmen, and shop-keepers, unless they had previously formed connections, found it hard to establish a patronage until they had served a sort of local apprenticeship. Once established, they usually succeeded, though shopkeeping became, as we have seen, an occupation very much overdone. Most professional men were in the early days decidedly out of their element, unless an exception is made in the case of lawyers, who seem to have been always extremely busy with the vast amount of litigation over land titles, etc. Divines apparently succeeded as schoolmasters rather than in their original capacity. The student of the fine arts and the literary man as such seem to have had small reason for coming to this country.

The introduction of English servants was not generally encouraged. They seem to have been too sophisticated to be a success in the employ of the average American ; indeed, most foreign servants, not understanding conditions, seem to have been generally at a loss and unsatisfactory. [31] The most useful class were the German and Swiss peasants, many of whom came to Pennsylvania, and beginning as assistants to farmers and country gentlemen, soon earned enough to buy a home and thus to become landed proprietors. Bradbury says that the reason for the greater success of the German, Dutch, and Swiss was not their greater industry or economy but their more judicious mode of settling. They were more likely to plan ahead and usually engaged an agent. When arrangements were made, they moved over in a body. [32]

In the selection of the region to which they were to emigrate, newcomers had a wide field for choice. This selection was governed by several important considerations. For instance, we find very few new settlers emigrating to the Southern states. Though curiosity often led travellers thither, almost none sought a new home there. One great drawback was the enervating climate, another greater one was the presence of slavery with all its accompanying evils as the European saw them. [33]

In the more thickly populated states on the seaboard, land became so dear as to be beyond the means of the majority, and early reached its maximum value as an investment. Those who felt that they could afford to settle here were again limited by their aversion to the cold climate of Maine and the mosquitoes and agues of New Jersey. Western Pennsylvania was an extremely attractive location, as it possessed “ a healthy climate, a good soil, abundance of coal, iron-ore, limestone, sandstone, and salt springs,” but he who settled there had no market facilities for disposing of his produce. The same was true of western New York until after the Erie Canal was completed in 1825. [34] Besides, the winters of New York were more severe than those of Pennsylvania. In the seventeen nineties, an English colony was proposed in Pennsylvania on the Loyalsock Creek, about 170 miles west of Philadelphia. This site was supposed to represent the most favorable situation in the whole state, in climate, in height above sea level, and in fertility of the soil. [35]

The great crowds that pressed westward over the Alleghanies were significant of a condition which was made more manifest by the fact that so many thousands of inhabitants of the Eastern states joined the throngs of new arrivals. John Palmer in 1818 remarked on the fact that Vermont and New Hampshire were but slowly increasing in population, for so many

people emigrated to the new states. Some towns had lost as many as forty families in a year. "In several instances," he says, "I have seen elderly people about to quit good farms on which they were getting a living, to go and form new connections in the west. This is carrying the thing to excess, but Americans on any part of the continent are at home ; and it certainly is better for their children, as in the west there is a milder climate and plenty of room for centuries to come." [36]

The country north of the Ohio was very fertile and attracted great numbers of people. Blowe says it was settled not with regard to health but for gain. [37] Mechanics and farmers were very much in demand here, but the wise settler chose a site at some distance from the river, as the tendency of the Ohio to overflow its banks caused fever and ague, which rendered the victim practically incapable of employment. All settlements along the Western rivers were unhealthful ; all swampy places were to be shunned by the prudent settler.

Proximity to the Ohio offered, however, a very practical advantage ; it provided a free water route to New Orleans, a city which was expected to rival and indeed to surpass New York in commercial activity. Many curious facts are revealed by travel literature in regard to the prevailing attitude toward New Orleans. Unhealthful to an extreme, a veritable pest hole of yellow fever, this city was called "the wet grave," as it was built so near the level of the water that graves dug for the reception of the dead were filled with water before the coffin could be lowered. [38] Yet there seems to have been something extremely fascinating to the stranger in the gay life, the mixed population, the atmosphere of romance that shed a glamor over the vice and dissipation, and above all, in the practical commercial possibilities of the city.

The land south of the Ohio presented a marked contrast to the northern tract. True, it too was extremely fertile, and therefore offered great advantages, but these were offset by local drawbacks. A very serious one to the farmer, especially, was the prevalent insecurity of land titles. The Kentucky region was surveyed very early and very poorly, and mistakes were constantly being made in regard to the possession of the land. Therefore, the region was the scene of endless and complicated litigation, which fact kept it in bad repute. [39] In the second place, the wildness of the country, its isolation in spite of the fact that one of the roads to the West passed through it, gave a peculiarly uncivilized character to the inhabitants, and many were the wild tales narrated of the gouging and gander-pulling, drinking and gambling of these people to whom the travellers, albeit reluctantly, had to concede the virtues of generosity, hospitality, and warmth of character. [40] Fevers of all sorts were prevalent here. Fearon says that about every twelfth house in Louisville in 1818 was a doctor's. [41] Slavery, too, proved a drawback to settlement in this region.

Though little was known in the period under consideration of the region along the Missouri, it was supposed to be rich in coal, silver, lead, and other minerals, and was credited with great advantages in soil and climate. [42] Flint says that the difficulty of navigating the river deterred many. [43] Most of the people along both banks of the Mississippi were "squatters" ; many of them maintained a precarious ague-stricken existence by supplying wood to the Mississippi steamboats. They were credited by people who passed on the river with being outcasts, criminals, and "men of broken characters, hopes and fortunes who fly not from justice, but contempt." [44]

The section which seems to have represented a combination of the good features of other places, with few of the drawbacks, was the territory of the Illinois. One authority says : "There is perhaps no country in the world where a farmer can commence operations with so

small an outlay of money and so soon obtain a return, as in Illinois.” [45] The land was cheap and of great fertility. In 1830, there were only 150,000 people occupying a tract of land greater than England. It united the advantages of rich soil, a ready market for produce, good climate, no slavery, and a proportionally great number of schools and churches. James Stuart advised all who wished to settle in that region to take certain precautions : “ What I would recommend to the stranger emigrating to this country would be that he should apply at the land offices at Springfield or at Vandalia, or at any other of the land offices, and get the surveyors to show him those situations which they look on as most desirable ; *first*, in point of health ; *secondly*, in point of soil ; *thirdly* in being provided with good water and a sufficient quantity of wood, which is not always the case in the prairie land, and ought most especially to be attended to, strong wooden fences being indispensable ; and *fourthly*, in point of convenience of situation, including the neighborhood to a town, schools and churches, and the means of communication by roads and rivers.” [46]

Evidently, therefore, the region west of Pittsburg and the Alleghanies offered more advantages to the emigrant than did the more densely populated east. To the farmer the superiority of this section was obvious ; to the man in trade, the profits in business were greater and the expense of living much less ; to the European generally, the climate, lacking the extremes of heat and cold of the Atlantic States, was much more suited to his constitution. The benefits accruing to the man who had the courage to make the journey with his family seem in most cases to have more than repaid him for the toil and hardship undergone.

The settler’s first care after acquiring his new land was to cut down trees for his log house, which was often finished in a few days and at a moderate cost for labor, if he could secure labor at all. The next task was to clear the land, to root out underbrush and small trees, which were burnt upon the land. Next came the felling of trees immediately around his house, both for the sake of living conditions and for the necessary supply of fence rails. The land was then lightly ploughed or scratched with a harrow, the grain was sown, and the new life begun. Later a frame building replaced the log hut, more and more land was cultivated as resources increased, communities were formed, churches and schools built, and the locality took on a definite character, largely determined by the nature of the previous life of the settler and the part of the world from which he had emigrated.

Before bringing to an end this discussion of the emigrant, we must notice one particular type of settler who is mentioned frequently in travel literature. This is the “ redemptioner,” a foreigner who could not afford to pay his passage to America and who, as a result, became “ bound out” for a certain number of years to the captain of the vessel on which he sailed. [47] This master, in turn, sold the services of these unfortunates to settlers who needed them. A great deal is said of this practice, and the cruelty of captains to their victims was made a subject of reproach to Americans. Parkinson even went so far as to say that the men who published the favorable accounts of the United States were hired by Americans to contract with captains of ships to bring over such as were unable to pay their passage that they might buy them when they arrived in America.

These redemptioners were supposedly governed by very severe laws formed for English convicts before the Revolution. Irish and German societies tried to mitigate the cruelty of them, and did a great deal toward alleviating the distress of their countrymen. The Irish especially came over in great numbers. Priest mentions that he saw at Baltimore in 1802 a large vessel from Ireland, that he found three at Newcastle and one in Philadelphia. Each vessel probably held about 250 passengers. He tells a harrowing tale of cruelty that was perpetrated on a ship loaded with Irish redemptioners. Owing to the small provision of food

and water doled out by the captain, a contagious disorder broke out on board, which carried off great numbers. Priest saw and talked with one of the survivors, who confirmed all that he had heard.

Fearon's disgust with this practice was extreme, and was expressed with his usual emphasis. While at Philadelphia, he visited a vessel of this type. "As we ascended the side of this bulk a most revolting scene of want and misery presented itself. The eye involuntarily turned for some relief from the horrible picture of human suffering which this living sepulchre afforded. Mr. ——— enquired if there were any shoemakers on board. The captain advanced ; his appearance bespoke his office ; he is an American, tall, determined, and with an eye that flashes with Algerine cruelty. He called in the Dutch language for shoemakers, and never can I forget the scene which followed. The poor fellows came running up with unspeakable delight, no doubt anticipating a relief from their loathsome dungeon. Their clothes, if rags deserve that denomination, actually perfumed the air. Some were without shirts, others had this article of dress but of a quality as coarse as the worst packing cloth. . . . Such is the mercenary barbarity of the Americans who are engaged in this trade that they crammed into one of those vessels 500 passengers, 80 of whom died on the voyage. The price for women is about 70 dollars, men 80 dollars, and boys 60 dollars. When they saw at our departure that we had not purchased, their countenances fell to that standard of stupid gloom which seemed to place them a link below rational beings." Even after a century, it is pleasant to know that Robert Walsh took up this statement of Fearon's in "An Appeal from the Judgments of Great Britain" (1819), and showed that not only were the ship and the captain English, but that of the vessels that entered the port of Philadelphia in the years 1816 and 1817, laden with redemptioners, the greater number were foreign, of which half were British.

Other Englishmen, while deploring this custom, gave a less prejudiced view of it. R. Sutcliffe, a Quaker who visited America in 1804, 1805, and 1806, was a guest in a family who employed two servants of this class. He says that though the situation of these redemptioners naturally aroused a feeling of compassion, they generally enjoyed kindly treatment. John Palmer, in 1818, saw great numbers of redemptioners in the streets of Philadelphia. He says that captains sometimes treated them with great cruelty, but that this barbarity was an incidental circumstance and that laws were already being framed to protect this unfortunate class of people. Nine-tenths of them were bought out by their own countrymen and treated with kindness during the period of their servitude, which was usually three years.

It remains to discuss in more detail the conditions of travel that presented themselves to both the emigrant and the stranger whose stay in America was limited in length. We must therefore enter into a discussion of the means of transportation from place to place, the houses of entertainment, and the reception accorded the stranger by the native American.

In this period, one had small choice in the means one was to take to cover distance. The two conveyances most often used in travel were the stage coach by land, and, after Fulton's invention, the steamboat by water. It is true that one might enjoy a pedestrian journey, as did John Davis or Isaac Candler, but most travellers found this too slow and too arduous. One travelled sometimes on horseback and sometimes in one's private hired carriage, but the majority of people who came to see the new country were obliged to mingle with their fellow travellers in the enforced intimacy of the stage coach. Of this useful vehicle in its palmy days we have many descriptions. [48] Most of us probably are familiar with pictures of it standing before an inn door, as it was usually represented, while the driver, in a hat which was a cross between a western sombrero and the old fashioned "beaver," obligingly cracked his long whip over the backs of the four stationary horses. Though the Englishman was acquainted with his

native stage coach, he was continually surprised at the changes which the Americans had made in evolving their type. The latter was a ponderous sort of vehicle ; the body was swung on great leather straps which served as springs. The top was rounded, therefore no baggage was carried except at the back, where the impedimenta rested on broad leather thongs. The American coach that was typical throughout most of this period carried nine people inside, and one on the low seat beside the driver in front. No one rode outside, perhaps because it was considered dangerous on account of the roughness of the roads. The nine inside passengers sat in three seats, facing the front of the coach. The three people who occupied the middle seat used for a back a broad leather strap which passed across the coach. Vigne says that this occasionally became unhooked as the vehicle passed over a forest road, and that the heads of the passengers on the middle seat were instantly thrown in contact with the stomachs of those who were behind them. Side panels of either leather or oilskin were let down in wet weather, but seem to have been generally unsuccessful in preventing discomfort. The choice seat for the traveller was the one beside the driver ; not only could one elicit use-ful information from the latter, who was often an interesting character, but he could foresee all the bad places in the road and fortify himself against much of the jolting and other dis-comfort. [49]

In 1794, Wansey, in going from Boston to New York by stage, paid four pence a mile and was allowed fourteen pounds of baggage. [50] Thomas Cooper, at about the same time, estimates that the expense of travel between Philadelphia and New York, both as to carriage and living by the way, was about one-third cheaper than between the metropolis and any of the great towns of England. [51] The fares were collected piecemeal because of the frequent changes from one vehicle to another, of which travellers often complained.

Where stage lines were not available, the traveller himself had to assume the responsibility for his transportation. Candler says (1824) : “ In the newly settled parts, and in the bye-roads of the older, the traveller must content himself as well as he can in a light tilted wagon, in which, if the road be rough, he will experience a jolting painful to flesh and bones. Great command of temper is necessary for one who ... is for the first time seated in one of these wagons when travelling on what is technically called a gridiron road, that is, a road formed ... of trunks of trees placed across from side to side, covered with a layer of soil. On such a road, I have found the jolting so great as to knock my head violently against the sides and top of the vehicle, besides its making my hip bones quite sore.” [52] This type of wagon was some-times called the “ coachee”—we have one detailed description of it. “ The body of the coachee is rather longer than that of the coach ; the front of it is quite open, down to the bottom ; and the driver sits on a bench under the roof of the carriage : within are two seats for the passengers, who are placed with their faces toward the horses : the roof is supported by props ; it is likewise open above the pannels on each side of the doors, and as a defence against bad weather, it is furnished with a leather curtain which encloses the open part.” [53]

The horses which drew the stage were many times the subject of admiring comment. Much was said of their remarkable qualities,—their endurance and sagacity, and of the perfect understanding which seems to have existed between themselves and their drivers. Seldom did a traveller see a blind, spavined, or lame stage horse. [54] The driver, too, was the recipient of universal if sometimes reluctant admiration. He could be trusted in all sorts of difficulties by the way ; nothing disturbed his equanimity or his good nature, though his vehicle broke down repeatedly in the course of one day’s journey, and the time-honored robbing of the snake fences for rails with which to extricate the party from a bad mud hole, had to be perpetrated ad infinitum. He was often poorly dressed and wore no indication of his profession ; “ a man in rusty black, with the appearance of a retired grave-digger”—thus Thomas Hamilton describes the driver of his coach. He might be almost anybody—a district judge, a farmer, or

a captain in the army, and many a traveller discovered incidentally that he was being driven to his destination by one of the most influential citizens of the community. [55]

The stages were necessarily built heavy and very strong to resist the effects of travel over the notoriously bad roads. Everywhere, one meets with mention of this condition of the thoroughfares, and each traveller, as he goes through the country, believes that he has discovered the worst road in America—until he has occasion to take the stage again in another locality. Weld said, just after the Revolution, that the worst roads in the United States were undoubtedly in Maryland. [56] Here the stage passengers were obliged to shift from side to side constantly, on signal from the driver, to prevent the coach from overturning in the ruts. Later Francis Hall claimed the same distinction for Virginia, with its stiff clay soil through which the traveller floundered helplessly. [57] Harriet Martineau could conceive of nothing worse than the roads of Georgia, unless it were those of the Michigan woods. [58] New Jersey, western Pennsylvania, and even Massachusetts, received their share of condemnation ; indeed there is very little favorable mention of any of the American roads unless it were those of central New York, which met with occasional praise. [59] James Stuart expressed astonishment that the thorough-fares were as good as he found them, considering the method of building them. They were usually made and kept in repair by the inhabitants themselves. Small stones were not used, as in the present method, but holes were filled with clay, and brush and saplings were pressed into service in muddy spots. When possible, the way led over a ridge as being more likely to remain dry here than on low land. [60]

Mention has already been made of the gridiron or corduroy roads. These connected isolated communities or led from them into the more settled parts. Despite the harm which they did to both the body and the disposition of the unfortunate wayfarer, they seem to have been looked upon for many years as the only expedient. Tudor says of them (1831) : “ They are formed of many miles in succession of the stems of trees placed together transversely, and afford to a person troubled with indigestion an excellent opportunity for the due secretion of the gastric juice, though like all other remedies of a medicinal nature, accompanied by somewhat of inconvenience ; for the unceasing jolts occasioned by passing over them threatened not infrequently to counter-balance this advantage by a rather uncomfortable dislocation. These anti-bilious communications . . . are designated corduroy roads, and I think the unhappy wight who has once travelled over them would never be inclined to wear a garment made of the stuff whence the name is borrowed, however fashionable it might become, from the ungrateful association that would always be connected with it ; as a sympathetic ache of the bones would naturally accompany the direction of the eye when regarding its mimic ridges.” [61] There was a story current that a Scotchman, packing his baggage for a stage ride, unwisely left some silver dollars in his clothes. When he arrived at his destination, he found that the coins, from the continual jolting, had escaped from their confinement and had literally cut his clothes to pieces. [62]

Lambert attributes the excellence of the central New York roads to the existence of turn-pikes. These came to be very much in evidence in the Northern and Middle States. They were roads made in the more settled districts by stock companies ; “ the expenses are defrayed,” Lambert says, “ by shares subscribed by a certain number of persons who form themselves in a company under an act of the legislature. It is a speculation that few have failed in, for the traffic on the road soon increases the value of the capital.” [63] These roads were of course supported by tolls. “ Turn pike tolls were not payable by persons going to and from public worship, funeral, grist-mill or blacksmith’s shop—for physician or midwife, or passing on public business as jurors, electors or militiamen. There is an exemption for those who reside within a mile of the gate, except carriers, etc.” [64]

When interest in the new railroad system was at its height, we find that many hitherto popular roads became neglected and almost impassable, because so great were the hopes entertained of the new venture that it was not considered necessary to repair and keep in order the old highway. This seems to have been especially true of the roads in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

The difficulties of travel were increased in the isolated parts by the lack of bridges, or their poor quality where they existed. [65] Usually a stream had to be forded ; if a bridge had been made, it was of slippery logs, so poorly put together that the unwary passenger often found himself thrown from his vehicle into the stream or driving through water which came up to the seats of the wagon. Basil Hall had the latter experience when he tried to cross the Yam Grandy River in Georgia. He and his party had to maintain a footing on a bridge that consisted for part of the way of one log, while his driver took his chances with the carriage fording the stream.

Less difficulty confronted the traveller who journeyed by boat on the water courses of the United States. Before the days of the steamboat, the sloop was, in the East, much in evidence. This was a safe but slow means of transportation. Its place was taken on the Western waters by the keel boat, or the flat boat, of which some mention has already been made. After 1810, the Americans could offer to the travelling European a means of locomotion of which they themselves were extremely proud, and which met with universal admiration from the travelling public. [66] The steamboats that navigated the Hudson were especially commended. The "Chancellor Livingston," Fearon says, (1818) "was equalled by none in the world." It was a "floating palace," with an eighty-horse-power engine. Much wonder was expressed at the speed of these boats ("five miles an hour against wind and tide"), the luxurious furnishings, the general air of elegance, the good food, and the cheapness of it all. Palmer travelled on the "Chancellor Livingston," and paid a fare of seven dollars from Albany to New York, plus a state tax of one dollar toward the expense of building the Erie Canal. Though he grumbled slightly at this extra charge, he considered that the fare was extremely reasonable. After 1810, no visitor to America who had not travelled on one of these boats between Albany and New York deemed his trip complete. The only complaint seems to have been that no separation was made on these boats between the genteel and the less polished people. [67] Rules for behavior, however, were many and strict, playing cards and smoking in the cabin were forbidden, and the only dissipation seems to have been heated political controversy, which no man could have checked by any rules, even if he had wished to do so. [68]

It was estimated that in the period from 1811 to 1831, there were over 300 steamboats built to navigate the great Western rivers. [69] The awkward and dangerous keel boat was quickly supplanted by this new mode of locomotion, which shortened the voyage from Louisville to New Orleans and back from six or seven months to a little over three weeks. [70] The Western boats were comfortable, but were generally conceded to be less luxurious than those on the Eastern rivers. They burned wood exclusively, usually a cord an hour, at a cost of about three dollars a cord. The "Constitution" on which James Stuart travelled in 1830, burned twenty-six cords a day. The trip from St. Louis to Louisville took a little over eleven days and the fare was thirty dollars. [71] In 1830, Ferrall paid twenty-five dollars to go from Louisville to New Orleans in a very comfortable boat, and was "found in everything except liquors." [72] Much has been written about the dangers of navigating the Mississippi, and the pilot of the steam vessel found that increased speed of travel did not meet with a corresponding accession of safety in navigating. The treacherous "sawyers" and "planters" of the Mississippi lay in wait for the steamboat as well as for the slower flat-boat, and the shifting sediment on the banks often brought her to grief. To these dangers was added that of falling sparks from her smoke-stacks ; the history of early inland navigation is full of instances of the

burning of steamers, especially on the Western rivers. [73] Nevertheless, the early form of steamboat played a great part in opening up the New West to the pioneer of the first part of the nineteenth century.

- [1] Ashe, p. 83.
- [2] See, on this point, Welby, p. 297 ; Harris, p. 77 ; Cooper, pp. 52-53 ; also, pp. 209-210 ; Kendall, I, 135 ; Flint, p. 174 ; D'Arusmont, p. 136.
- [3] Cooper, p. 218.
- [4] Abdy, I, 248-240.
- [5] For some mention of lack of beggars, see Boardman, p. 12 ; Tudor, II, 412 ; Fowler, p. 218 ; Alexander, II, 126-127 ; Rich, p. 87 ; Fearon, p. 6.
- [6] See, for instance, Fidler, p. 82.
- [7] Stuart, II, 241; see also Cooper, pp. 52-53.
- [8] Parkinson, p. 160 ; also the refutation by James Hall, " Letters from the West," p. 850.
- [9] For facilities for employment see the following : Duncan, I, 338 ; Holmes, pp. 127-128 ; Hodgson, II, 101; Faux, p. 80 ; Cooper, pp. 59-60 ; Kingdom, p. 8, also p. 7 ; Fearon, p. 25, also pp. 224-226 ; Bradbury, p. 323.
- [10] Faux, p. 66.
- [11] Dalton, pp. 221-222 ; Parkinson, II, 26-27; Duhring, p. 173. Darby (" Emigrants' Guide," pp. 297-298) issues a warning against this.
- [12] Hodgson, II, 101.
- [13] For extremes of climate, see Holmes, p. 124 ; Candler, p. 494 ff. ; Davis, Stephen, p. 29.
- [14] Darby, " Emigrants' Guide," Preface, p. 1.
- [15] See " Hints to Emigrants," p. 7.
- [16] Cooper, p. 80.
- [17] Bradbury, pp. 318-320.
- [18] Cooper, p. 80.
- [19] Flint, p. 115.
- [20] Bradbury, Appendix, pp. 321-322.
- [21] Cooper, p. 82.
- [22] Bradbury, Appendix, p. 320.
- [23] Cooper, pp. 88-84.
- [24] Bradbury, Appendix, p. 322.
- [25] Melish, II, 52 ; Holmes, p. 141.
- [26] Bradbury, p. 324 ; Harris, p. 123 ; Kingdom, p. 2.
- [27] Flint, p. 66.
- [28] For the Ohio River ark, see Bradbury, pp. 324-326 ; Flint, pp. 96-97 ; Baily, pp. 162-163.
- [29] Bradbury, p. 329.
- [30] For a discussion of the classes of people who should, or should not emigrate, see Fearon, pp. 437-442 ; Davis, Stephen, pp. 146-147 ; Duhring, pp. 171 and 175 ; Cooper, pp. 58-59, 62-64; Candler, pp. 494-496 ; Wilson, C. H., Appendix, p. 1078 ; Weston, pp. 168-169.
- [31] D'Arusmont, p. 338.
- [32] D'Arusmont, p. 342 ; Sutcliffe, p. 34 ; Bradbury, p. 338.
- [33] Holmes, p. 142; Cooper, p. 7.
- [34] Flint, pp. 181-183 ; Cooper, p. 16. " New York State laws do not permit aliens to purchase, transmit or convey landed property," see also on this. Holmes, p. 142.
- [35] Cooper, pp. 73-74.
- [36] Palmer, p. 202 ; also see, on emigration from New England, Bradbury, pp. 300-310, 818 ; Blowe, p. 163 ; Cooper, p. 79.
- [37] Blowe, p. 163.
- [38] Alexander, II, 30.
- [39] Winterbotham, p. 315 ; Flint, p. 184, also note ; Ouseley, p. 138..
- [40] Melish, II, 94 ; Fearon, p. 243.
- [41] Fearon, p. 243.
- [42] Bradbury, p. 250 ff.

- [43] Flint, p. 191.
- [44] Hamilton, n, 187.
- [45] Shirreff, p. 446.
- [46] Stuart, II, 223.
- [47] For “ redemptioners,” see Janson, pp. 461-462 ; Parkinson, I, Introd. p. 20 ; Priest, p. 142 ff.; Fearon, pp. 148-151; Palmer, pp. 164-170 ; Weld, I, 120-122 ; Sutcliffe, pp. 32-34.
- [48] For a few of the descriptions of the American stage coach, see the following : Palmer, p. 11 ; Fidler, p. 119 ; Vigne, I, 60-61 ; Duncan, n, 6 ff., also 316 ; Hamilton, I, 146-148 ; Mrs. Trollope, I, 270 ; Candler, p. 40 ; Boardman, p. 121 ; Twining, T., p. 59.
- [49] Abdy, n, 294. [51] Cooper, p. 140.
- [50] Wansey, p. 31. [52] Candler, pp. 40-41.
- [53] Wakefield, p. 11.
- [54] On stage horses, see Palmer, p. 42 ; Wansey, p. 36 ; Hamilton, I, 147.
- [55] For interesting descriptions of the stage driver, see De Boos, pp. 98-99 ; Twining, p. 64 ; Weld, I, 38 ; Hamilton, I, 148 ; Shirreff, p. 49 ; Holmes, pp. 367-360.
- [56] Weld, I, 37 ; see also Palmer, p. 41.
- [57] Hall, F., p. 208.
- [58] Martineau, I, 215.
- [59] Hamilton, I, 148, also II, 308-309 ; Melish, II, 355.
- [60] Stuart, I, 180 ; Holmes, pp. 320-321 ; Duncan, II, 8 ; Weld, I, 37.
- [61] Tudor, II, 434. [62] Palmer, p. 45.
- [63] Lambert, II, 33; Hamilton, II, 308 ; Maude, p. 33 ; Twining, pp. 62-63 ; Palmer, p. 178 ; Melish, I, 126.
- [64] Abdy, I, 327 (note).
- [65] For difficulties with bridges, see Martineau, I, 217-218 ; Flint, p. 131; Melish, I, 257-268 ; Hall, B., III, 266 ff. ; Duncan, II, 9 ; Twining, pp. 60-61.
- [66] For praise of the American steamboat, see Lambert, II, 37 ; Daviss, p. 78 ; Fowler, pp. 38, 168 ; Stuart, I, 40-42 ; Duncan, II, 314 ; Martineau, II, 21 ; Fearon, p. 75 ; Flint, p. 40 ; Neilson, p. 44 ; Duncan, I, 306-307 ; Palmer, pp. 247-248. [67] Candler, p. 39.
- [68] Lambert, II, 43; also Hamilton, I, 131 ff.
- [69] Martineau, II, 21.
- [70] Tudor, n, 36.
- [71] Stuart, II, 164 ; Alexander, II, 61 ; Hall, B., III, Chap. XV (entire).
- [72] Ferrall, p. 179.
- [73] Alexander, II, 72 ; Stuart, II, 16 ff.

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