



“Pepper-Pot Woman at the Philadelphia Market” (1811)  
by John Lewis Krimmel (1786-1821).

## AMERICA AS FOUND:

### *Englishman John Davis’ Travels in the United States (1803)*

“It was six o’clock before the rain subsided, and I was in suspense whether to return to *Alexandria*, or prosecute my journey, when the tailor informed me, that only two miles further lived a very honest farmer, who accommodated Travellers with a bed. His name was Violet.

But why, said the tailor, not go on to *Mount Vernon*?

What, friend, should I do there?

Why, Sir, a gentleman is always well received.

I made the tailor an inclination of my head; but *Mount Vernon* was as remote from my thoughts as *Mount Vesuvius*.

I pursued my journey, but, after riding two miles, instead of reaching the farm of Mr. *Violet*, my horse stopped before the door of a log-house, built on the brow of a hill. The man of the house was sitting under an awning of dried boughs, smoking in silence his pipe; and his wife occupied a chair by his side, warbling her lyrics over the circling wheel.”

~ Davis, *Travels*, ch. 7

Rather unjustly, if understandably, English-American author John Davis (1774-1854) might be said to have inadvertently and unintentionally suffered the fate of Edward Everett Hale’s Philip Nolan. For although he ended up making the United States his home, historians are traditionally accustomed to designate him as an Englishman. And yet it was in the United States than he composed most of his writings, and most of his writings, whether fiction or non, in subject matter are mostly germane to the United States. So that British readers, unless their interest is America, will generally not be drawn to him; there being ample great British early 19<sup>th</sup> century authors to choose from and get through as it is. Americans who encounter him will be so used to hearing him spoken of as English, that they don’t readily think of him as American. But, indeed, he was *both* English (born in Hampshire) and -- *ultimately* at any rate -- American as well; and fortunately, if belatedly, there has been some effort in recent decades to rectify this misunderstanding.

Davis first aspired to be a sailor before turning to writing. As he tells it himself in his “Memoir,” first published in 1825 and that sometimes appears as an appendix in his works, he hailed from comfortable middle-class circumstances, but was as a lad fascinated by the idea of a nautical life. At age 11, he served as a cabin boy in an East India merchantman, making two voyages to Bombay and the vicinity, and for a while spent some time in South Africa. He subsequently sailed in the Royal Navy as an ordinary seaman, and in 1794 was aboard the H.B.M. *Artois*, Capt. Edmund Nagle, when it fought and captured the *Révolutionnaire* on Oct 21<sup>st</sup> of that year. In the course of much of his time spent at sea, he read profusely; closely training himself in the study of English literature and, further, becoming proficient in French and classical Latin.

In 1798 he embarked from Bristol for New York, and in about the next succeeding five years traveled extensively through New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland Virginia, South Carolina, and Georgia. As well as serving a tutor and school teacher on several occasions while first in this country, he had a number of his works published here; including a translation of *Buonaparte in Italy*, his own *The Letters of Ferdinand and Elizabeth* (1798), a romantic morality thriller; which latter we are told eclipsed

Brockden Brown's *Wieland* in both sales and public interest; much to Brown's chagrin,<sup>1</sup> and *The farmer of New-Jersey; or, A picture of domestic life. A tale.* (1800). In 1802, he returned to England and in the following year published there his *Travels in the United States* (1803);<sup>2</sup> dedicated, with permission, to President Thomas Jefferson. By the winter of 1804, however, he was back in the United States where he ended up settling. 1805 saw his *The Wooden Walls Well-Manned, or A Picture of a British Frigate* (later re-titled *The Post Captain; or The Wooden Walls Well-Manned*) that became the forerunner and precursor of Cooper, Marryat, and a host of others' subsequent naval novels; and was by far the most enthusiastically received of his writings in his own day. In addition to popularizing and reintroducing readers to the story of Pocahontas and John Smith (in his *Travels*), Davis composed a voluminous plethora of poetry; most of it competent enough and passable in quality, but otherwise and admittedly not that terribly scintillating or stirring. Also, and mayhap oddly enough, Davis was a vociferous defender in print, versus such as William James, of the young United States' Navy's record in the War of 1812. Like Cooper, he saw an innate comradery and valued mutual tradition of American and British sailors, and sought to heighten their long-standing affinities and virtual brotherhood; and in truth, seaman in his day, and earlier, from both countries were commonly found serving in the other's navy and merchants ships.

Despite his prolific output, it is Davis' *Travels in the United States* that is most remembered today. This work shows undeniably influence of a number of writers, including among others Smollett, Goldsmith, and William Bartram (see, for example, chapter 3), yet it is decidedly original in its eclectic and copious variety of humor, poetry, tale telling, conversation recounting, moral reflection, and human, animal and landscape description.

One thing that perhaps is most striking to today's reader is how very modern Davis sounds in his reporting of people and places. His manner and recording of interviews very much resembles that of a tv news essayist or documentary journalist; with a style that is natural and aims at both informing and entertaining without being too judgmental or presuming toward his immediate subject. But such objectivity of outlook has its drawbacks. At times one senses that Davis is not sufficiently clear in his own philosophy to be supremely self-confident as a writer or his own spokesperson. He is, it can't be denied, something of a homeless wanderer; not quite sure where to plant himself, literally or intellectually; though amenable to common sense and insistent on moral decency. At other times he so seeks to please that it makes you doubt the fullness of his sincerity, and isn't sure of himself whether he does or not.

We must not be too ready to receive all his anecdotes as strictly or in all respects authentic. Some, it seems, are fictions or else narrative constructions; albeit based on actual facts and incidents, such as the encounter between the Quaker and the impoverished war veteran or his famous report of Jefferson's first inauguration (that Henry Adams informs us Davis was not present at), but which serve the purpose of making a helpful point or summing up otherwise correct general impressions. This said there are here wonderful and precious vignettes and interviews with such as Aaron Burr, Brockden Brown, Joseph Dennie, and Parson Weems -- to name a few.

Though occasionally brash and forthright in his criticisms, he else is careful not to offend if and where he can avoid doing so. In a word, he is a good diplomat and affable sort, but not either an artistic visionary genius or compelling philosopher or ideologue. His efforts at humor and poetry are not that of a master, and his exercises in these genres are adequate but not outstanding. Still, we admire him for the effort, and assuredly if there is one defect he is free from it is dullness.

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About this period, my friend the Doctor relinquished his house, and rented a little medicinal shop of a Major Howe, who was agreeably situated in Cherry-street. As the Major took boarders, I accompanied the Doctor to his house, determined to eat, drink, and be merry over my two hundred dollars. With some of

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<sup>1</sup> Jayne K. Kribbs, "'Reserved for my Pen': John Davis's Place in American Literature," found in *Early American Literature and Culture: Essays Honoring Harrison T. Meserole* (1992), edited by Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola, p. 215.

<sup>2</sup> The full title is *Travels of Four Years and a Half in the United States of America; During 1798, 1799, 1800, 1801, and 1802* (1803).

the well stamped coin I purchased a few dozen of Madeira, and when the noontide heat had abated, I quaffed the delicious liquor with the Major and the Doctor under a tree in the garden.

Major Howe, after carrying arms through the revolutionary war, instead of reposing upon the laurels he had acquired, was compelled to open a boarding-house in *New-York*, for the maintenance of his wife and children. He was a member of the Cincinnati, and not a little proud of his Eagle. But I thought the motto to his badge of *Omnia reliquit servare Rempublicam*,<sup>3</sup> was not very appropriate; for it is notorious that few Americans had much to leave when they accepted commissions in the army. *Victor ad aratrum redit*<sup>4</sup> would have been better.

In principles, my military friend was avowedly a Deist, and by tracing the effect to the cause, I shall expose the pernicious tendency of a book which is read with avidity. The Major was once commanding officer of the fortress at *West Point*, and by accident borrowed of a subaltern the history of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. He read the work systematically, and a diligent perusal of that part which relates to the progress of Religion, caused him to become a Sceptic, and reject all belief in revelation. Before this period the Major was a constant attendant on the Established Church, but he now enlisted himself under the banners of the Infidel *Palmer*, who delivers lectures on Deism at *New-York*, and is securing for himself and followers considerable grants of land in hell.

~ from Chapter I.

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From *Trenton* I was conveyed over the *Delaware* in the ferry-boat, with an elderly man, clad in the garb of a Quaker. His looks beamed benignity, and his accents breathed kindness: but, as the great Master of Life observes, there is no art can find the mind's construction in the face.

We had scarce landed on the opposite bank of the river, when a poor cripple in a soldier's jacket, advanced towards the Quaker, holding both his crutches in one hand, and taking half a hat from his head with the other: -- Bestow your charity, cried the beggar, on a poor worn-out soldier, who fought for your liberty during a long war, and got wounded by a *Hessian* at the very place you have just left. Refuse not your charity to an old soldier in distress.

Alas! exclaimed the Quaker, this comes of war. Shame on our nature. Beasts live in concord, men only disagree. Had thou taken the advice of scripture, thou wouldest have escaped thy wounds!

What, Master, is that?

Why, Friend, if a man smite thee on one cheek, turn to him the other.

And were you to take the advice of scripture, you would not refuse me your alms.

What, Friend, is that?

Why when a man wants to borrow of thee, turn not thou away.

I remember no such passage, replied the Quaker.

It is in the New Testament, said the beggar.

The text has been corrupted, cried the Quaker, hastening away through a field.

Won't you give me a copper? bawled the beggar, limping after the Quaker.

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<sup>3</sup> [Edit. "He left all to serve the Republic."]

<sup>4</sup> [Edit. "The victor returns to the plow."]

Charity begins at home, said the Quaker, accelerating his pace.

The Lord help thee, exclaimed the beggar, halting almost breathless on his crutch. But here perhaps is a gentleman who has more of the milk of human kindness.

To become acquainted with human life, the traveller must not mingle only with the sons of opulence and ease; these know no greater fatigue than the hurry of preparation for a ball, and experience no higher mortification than the disappointment of pride. Such beings who pass their days in solemn pomp and plenty, can display no examples of fortitude, of serenity, or patience; their wishes are anticipated, and their mandates obeyed. It is among the children of adversity that we must look for resignation under misfortune; it is from the indigent only we can be instructed to bear calamities without repining:

Impressed with this conviction, I entered into discourse with the cripple, whom I found to be a man not without reflection. He had seen better days, and hoped for their return. Though my present appearance, said he, shews I am in the most wretched state of poverty, there was a time when I knew the comforts of a home and fireside. These are past, but there is a pleasure in the recollection of them; for no man who has enjoyed the comforts of life, is ever without the hope that he shall enjoy them again.

I had walked about a mile along the bank of the *Delaware*, when the coach to *Philadelphia* overtook me, and finding the road dusty I complied with the invitation of the driver to get into the vehicle. At *Bristol* we took up two young women, clad in the habit of Quakers, whom I soon, however, discovered to be girls of the town; and who, under pretence of shewing me a letter, discovered their address.

A spacious road conducted us to Philadelphia, which we entered at. Front-street. I had expected to be charmed with the animation of the American metropolis;<sup>5</sup> but a melancholy silence prevailed in the streets, the principal houses were abandoned, and none but *French* people were to be found seeking pleasure in society.

The coach stopped at the sign of the Sorrel Horse, in Second-street, where I heard only lamentations over the Yellow Fever, which had displayed itself in Water-street, and was spreading its contagion.

~ from Chapter 1.

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It was at this library [in Philadelphia] that during three successive afternoons I enjoyed that calm and pure delight which books afford. But on the fourth I found access denied, and that the librarian had fled from the yellow fever, which spread consternation through the city.

Of the fever I may say that it momentarily became more destructive. Sorrow sat on every brow, and nothing was to be seen but coffins carried through the streets unattended by mourners. Indeed it was not a time to practise modes of sorrow, or adjust the funeral rites; but the multitude thought only of escaping from the pestilence that wasted at noon-day, and walked in darkness.

This was a period to reflect on the vanity of human life, and the mutability of human affairs. *Philadelphia*, which in the spring was a scene of mirth and riot, was in the summer converted to a sepulchre for the inhabitants. The courts of law were shut, and no subtle lawyer could obtain a client; the door of the tavern was closed, and the drunkard was without strength to lift the bowl to his lips: no theatre invited the idle to behold the mimic monarch strut his hour upon the stage; the dice lay neglected on the gaming-table, nor did the dancing-room re-echo with the steps of the dancer: man was now humbled! Death was whetting his arrows, and the graves were open. All jollity was fled. The hospital-cart moved slowly on where the chariot before had rolled its rapid wheels; and the coffin-makers were either nailing up the coffins of the dead, or giving dreadful note of preparation by framing others for the dying, where lately the mind at ease had poured forth its tranquillity in songs; where the loud laugh had reverberated, and where the animating

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<sup>5</sup> [Footnote in original] \* *Philadelphia* in 1798 was the capital of the United States.

sound of music had stolen on the ear. -- In this scene of consternation, the negroes were the only people who could be prevailed on to assist the dying, and inter those who were no more. Their motive was obvious; they plundered the dead of their effects, and adorned themselves in the spoils of the camp of the King of Terrors. It was remarked to me by a lady of *Philadelphia*, that the negroes were never so well clad as after the yellow fever.

I had been a week at *Philadelphia*, without hearing any tidings of my friend the Doctor, when walking one evening past the Franklin's Head, I recognised him conversing with a stranger in the front room. The physician had arrived only that evening. He had staid six days at *Trenton*, leading a pleasant, convalescent life; from whence he had written me a letter, which I found afterwards at the post office. We were rejoiced to meet each other, and the better to exchange minds, I accompanied the Doctor into Arch-street, where taking possession of the porch of an abandoned dwelling, we sat conversing till a late hour. The most gloomy imagination cannot conceive a scene more dismal than the street before us: every house was deserted by those who had strength to seek a less baneful atmosphere; unless where parental fondness prevailed over self-love. Nothing was heard but either the groans of the dying, the lamentations of the survivors, the hammers of the coffin-makers, or the howling of the domestic animals, which those who fled from the pestilence had left behind, in the precipitancy of their flight. A poor cat came to the porch where I was sitting with the Doctor, and demonstrated her joy by the caresses of fondness. An old negro-woman was passing at the same moment with some pepper-pot\*<sup>6</sup> on her head. With this we fed the cat that was nearly reduced to a skeleton; and prompted by a desire to know the sentiments of the old negro-woman, we asked her the news. God help us, cried the poor creature, very bad news. Buckra die in heaps. By and bye nobody live to buy pepper-pot, and old black woman die too.

I would adduce this as a proof, that calamities usually move us as they regard our interest. The negro-woman lamented the ravages of the fever, because it prevented the sale of her pepper-pot.

Finding all business suspended at *Philadelphia*, and the atmosphere becoming hourly more noisome, we judged it prudent to leave the city without delay; and finding a vessel at the wharfs ready to sail for *Charleston*, in *South Carolina*, we agreed for the passage, and put our luggage on board.

~ from Chapter 1.

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Wolves were sometimes heard on the [South Carolina] plantation in the night; and, when incited by hunger, would attack a calf and devour it. One night, however, some wolves endeavouring to seize on a calf, the dam defended her offspring with such determined resolution, that the hungry assailants were compelled to retreat with the tail only of the calf, which one of them had bitten off.

Wild cats are very common and mischievous in the woods. When a sow is ready to litter, she is always enclosed with a fence or rails, for, otherwise, the wild cats would devour the pigs.

I generally accompanied my pupil into the woods in his shooting excursions, determined both to make havoc among birds and beasts of every description. Sometimes we fired in volleys at the flocks of doves that frequent the corn fields; sometimes we discharged our pieces at the wild geese, whose empty cackling betrayed them; and once we brought down some paroquets, that were directing their course over our heads to *Georgia*. Nor was it an undelightful task to fire at the squirrels on the tops of the highest trees, who, however artful, could seldom elude the shot of my eager companion.

~ from Chapter 3.

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<sup>6</sup> [Footnote in original] \* Tripe seasoned with pepper.

The negroes on the plantation, including house-servants and children, amounted to a hundred; of whom the average price being respectively seventy pounds, made them aggregately worth seven thousand to their possessor.

Two families lived in one hut, and such was their unconquerable propensity to steal, that they pilfered from each other. I have heard masters lament this defect in their negroes, But what else can be expected from man in so degraded a condition, that among the ancients the same word implied both a slave and a thief.

Since the introduction of the culture of cotton in the State of *South Carolina*, the race of negroes has increased. Both men and women work in the field, and the labour of the rice-plantation formerly prevented the pregnant Negress from bringing forth a long-lived offspring. It may be established as a maxim that, on a plantation where there are many children, the work has been moderate.

It may be incredible to some, that the children of the most distinguished families in *Carolina*, are, suckled by negro-women. Each child has its *Momma*, whose gestures and accent it will necessarily copy, for children we all know are imitative beings. It is not unusual to hear an elegant lady say, *Richard always grieves when Quasheebaw is whipped, because she suckled him!* If *Rousseau* in his *Emile* could inveigh against the French mother, who consigned her child to a woman of her own colour to suckle, how would his indignation have been raised, to behold a smiling babe tugging with its roseate lips at a dug of a size and colour to affright a ‘Satyr’?

Of genius in negroes many instances may be recorded. It is true, that *Mr. Jefferson* has pronounced the Poems of *Phillis Wh[e]ately*, below the dignity of criticism, and it is seldom safe to differ in judgment from the Author of *Notes on Virginia*. But her conceptions are often lofty, and her versification often surprises with unexpected refinement. [Joseph Brown] *Ladd, the Carolina poet*, in enumerating the bards of his country, dwells with encomium on “*Whately’s polished verse;*” nor is his praise undeserved, for often it will be found to glide in the stream of melody. Her lines on *Imagination* have been quoted with rapture by [Gilbert] *Imlay*<sup>7</sup> of *Kentucky*, and *Steadman* the *Guiana Traveller*; but I have ever thought her happiest production, the *Goliah of Gath*.

Of *Ignatius Sancho*, *Mr. Jefferson* also speaks neglectingly; and remarks, that he substitutes sentiment for argumentation. But I know not that argumentation is required in a familiar Epistle; and *Sancho*, I believe, has only published his Correspondence.

~ from Chapter 3.

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It is, indeed, grating to an *Englishman* to mingle with society in *Carolina*; for the people, however well-bred in other respects, have no delicacy before a stranger in what relates to their slaves. These wretches are execrated for every involuntary offence; but negroes endure execrations without emotion, for they say, *when Mossa curse, he break no bone*. But every master does not confine himself to oaths; and I have heard a man say, By heaven, my *Negurs* talk the worst English of any in *Carolina*; that boy just now called a bason a round-something: take him to the driver! let him have a dozen!

Exposed to such wanton cruelty the negroes frequently run away; they flee into the woods, where they are wet with the rains of heaven, and embrace the rock for want of a shelter. Life must be supported; hunger incites to depredation, and the poor wretches are often shot like the beasts of prey. When taken, the men are put in irons, and the boys have their necks encircled with a “pot-hook.”

The *Charleston* papers abound with advertisements for fugitive slaves. I have a curious advertisement now before me. -- “Stop the runaway! Fifty dollars reward! Whereas my waiting fellow, *Will*, having eloped from me last Saturday, *without any provocation*, (it being known that I am a *humane*

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<sup>7</sup>[*Edit.* The same quondom paramour of Mary Wollstonecraft.]

master) the above reward will be paid to any one who will lodge the aforesaid *slave* in some jail, or deliver him to me on my plantation at *Liberty Hall*. *Will may be known by the incisions of the whip on his back*; and I suspect has taken the road to *Coosohatchie*, where he has a wife and five children, whom I sold last week to *Mr. Gillespie*."

A. Levi.

Thus are the poor negroes treated in *Carolina*. Indeed, planters usually consider their slaves as beings defective in understanding; an opinion that excites only scorn from the philosopher. The human soul possesses faculties susceptible of improvement, without any regard to the colour of the skin. It is education that makes the difference between the master and the slave. Shall the imperious planter say, that the swarthy sons of *Africa*, who now groan under his usurpation of their rights, would not equal him in virtue, knowledge and manners, had they been born free, and with the same advantages in the scale of society? It is to civilization that even *Europeans* owe their superiority over the savage; who knows only how to hunt and fish, to hew out a canoe from a tree, and construct a wretched hut; and but for this, the inhabitants of *Britain* had still bent the bow, still clothed themselves in skins, and still traversed the woods.

~ from Chapter 3.

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The old lady at the boarding-house, informed me that she hardly knew what to make of Mr. *George*; sometimes he would be sociable, and chat round the parlour fire with the rest of her boarders; but that oftener he shut himself up in his chamber, and pored over an outlandish book; or, wandering alone in the woods, was overheard talking to himself. Alas! for the simplicity of the woman! She little knew the enjoyments of a cultivated mind, or the delight a poet felt in courting the silence of solitude, and *muttering his wayward fancies*, as he roved through the fields.

It, however, appeared to me, that Mr. *George* was not so enamoured of the Muses, but that he had an eye for a fair creature, who lived within a few doors of his lodgings. He manifested, I thought, strong symptoms of being in love. He delighted in the perusal of the Sorrows of *Wert[h]er*, perfumed his handkerchief with lavender, brushed his hat of a morning, and went every Sunday to church.

Mr. *George* had a supreme contempt for *American* genius and *American* literature. In a sportive mood, he would ask me whether I did not think that it was some physical cause in the air, which denied existence to a poet on American ground. No snake, said he, exists in *Ireland*, and no poet can be found in *America*.

You are too severe, said I, in your strictures. This country, as a native author observes, can furnish her quota of poets.

Name, will you, one?

Is not *Dwight*, a candidate for the epic crown? Is he, Sir, not a poet?

I think not. He wants imagination, and he also wants judgment; Sir, he makes the shield of *Joshua* to mock the rising sun?

Tis not *Barlow* a poet? Is not his *Vision of Columbus* a fine poem?

The opening is elevated; the rest is read without emotion.

What think you of *Freneau*?

*Freneau* has one good ode: *Happy the Man who safe on Shore!* But he is voluminous; and this ode may be likened to the *grain in the bushel of chaff*.

What is your opinion of *Trumbull*?

He can only claim the merit of being a skilful imitator.

Well, what think you of *Humphreys*?

Sir, his mind is neither ductile to sentiment, nor is his ear susceptible of harmony.

What opinion do you entertain of *Honeywood*?

I have read some of his wretched rhymes. The bees, as it is fabled of *Pindar*, never sucked honey from his lips.

Of the existence of an *American* poet, I perceive, Sir, your mind is rather sceptical. But, I hope, you will allow that *America* abounds with good prose.

Yes, Sir; but, then, mind me, it is imported from the shores of *Great Britain*.

Oh! monstrous! Is not *Dennie* a good prose-writer?

Sir, the pleasure that otherwise I should find in *Dennie*, is soon accompanied with satiety by his unexampled *quaintness*.

Of [Brockden] *Brown*, Sir, what is your opinion?

The style of *Brown*, Sir, is chastised, arid he is scrupulously pure. But nature has utterly disqualified him for subjects of humour. Whenever he endeavours to bring forth humour, the offspring of his throes are weakness and deformity. Whenever he attempts humour, he inspires the benevolent with pity, and fills the morose with indignation.

What think you of the style of *Johnson*, the Reviewer?

It is not *English* that he writes, Sir; it is *American*. His periods are accompanied by a yell, that is scarcely less dismal than the warhoop [sic] of a *Mohawk*.

~ from Chapter 4.

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During my visit at *George-town*, [S.C.] the melancholy tidings were brought of the death of General *Washington*. The inhabitants of the town were crowding to the ball-room, at the moment the courier arrived with the dispatch. But the death of so great a man converted their hilarity into sorrow; the eye of many a female, which, but a moment before had sparkled with pleasure, was now brimful of tears; and they all cast off their garments of gladness, and clothed themselves with sackcloth.

The following Sunday, the men, women, and children, testified their veneration for the Father of their Country, by walking in procession to the church, where Mr. *Spierin* delivered a funeral oration. Never was there a discourse more moving. Tears flowed from every eye; and lamentations burst from every lip.

Nor were the orators of *America* silent at the death of their hero. They called all their tropes and metaphors together; collected all the soldiers and statesmen of history, and made them cast their garlands at the feet of his statue.

I look back both with pleasure and satisfaction on the time I passed with my friend, at the confluence of the rivers *Waccamaw* and *Winyaw*. Our conversation was commonly on the writers of the



Augustan age, and I corrected many errors I had imbibed by solitary study. The taste of Mr. *George* had been formed on the polished models of antiquity; to these he always recurred as to the standards of elegant composition. It is recorded, I believe, of *Euler*, that he could repeat the whole of the *AENEID* by heart; but the memory of Mr. *George* had not only digested the [A]*Eneid*, but also the *Georgics* and *Eclogues*.

~ from Chapter 4.

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The salary allowed the President is only twenty-five thousand dollars a-year; that is, about £5,300 sterling; a sum that may enable him to ask a friend to dine with him *pic nic* [sic], but will not qualify him to impress a foreign Ambassador with much veneration for the first executive office of *America*.

It may be advanced, that it is not expected from a Republican Magistrate to regale his guests out of a gold cup. But for the manners of a Republican Chief to be absolutely characteristic, he ought, like *Fabrizius*, to pare his own turnips, and boil them himself.

To *Franklin* must we look for the source of this sordid oeconomy. It was he who, by diffusing the maxims of poor *Richard*, made the government of the United States a miserly body-politic; tenacious of a farthing, or, in popular language, a nation penny wise, and pound foolish. *Franklin*, when a child, delighted to hawk ballads for a halfpenny; and when he became a man, to save the expence of an errand-boy, he trundled his wheelbarrow through the streets.

Notwithstanding the vaunted philosophy of *Franklin*, and his discoveries in electricity, he is certainly at best but an ambiguous character. His dereliction of religion has already done more injury to the rising generation in *America*, than his maxims will do good. Where *Franklin* has made one man frugal, he has converted a hundred men to Deism. I heard the infidel *Palmer*, at *New-York*, enjoin his hearers no longer to suffer passively the flagrant impositions of the Scripture, but catch a portion of the spirit of a *Franklin*, and avow themselves disciples of Natural Religion. And, I doubt not, but this argument of this preacher succeeded; for where a man has one vice of his own, he gets twenty by adoption.

Let me now come to the object of my journey to *Washington*. The politeness of a member from *Virginia*, procured me a convenient seat in the Capitol; and an hour after, Mr. *Jefferson* entered the House, when the august assembly of American Senators rose to receive him. He came, however, to the House without ostentation. His dress was of plain cloth, and he rode on horseback to the Capitol without a single guard, or even servant in his train, dismounted without assistance, and hitched the bridle of his horse to the palisades.

Never did the Capitol wear a more animated appearance than on the fourth day of *March*, 1801. The Senate-Chamber was filled with citizens from the remotest places of the Union. The planter, the farmer, the mechanic and merchant, all seemed to catch one common transport of enthusiasm, and welcome the approach of the Man to the chair of Sovereign Authority, who had before served his country in various offices of dignity; who had sat in the famous Congress that produced the Revolution, acted as Governor to his native State, and been Minister Plenipotentiary to a foreign nation.

Mr. *Jefferson*, having taken the oaths to the Constitution, with a dignified mien, addressed the august assembly of Senators and Representatives. "*Friends and Fellow-Citizens...*"

~ from Chapter 6.

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On the north bank of the *Occoquan* [in northern Virginia] is a pile of stones, which indicates that an *Indian* warrior is interred underneath. The *Indians* from the back settlements, in travelling to the northward, never fail to leave the main road, and visit the grave of their departed hero. If a stone be thrown

down, they religiously restore it to the pile; and, sitting round the rude monument, they meditate profoundly; catching, perhaps, a local emotion from the place.

A party of *Indians*, while I was at *Occoquan*, turned from the common road into the woods, to visit this grave on the bank of the river.

The party was composed of an elderly Chief, twelve young War Captains, and a couple of Squaws. Of the women, the youngest was an interesting girl of seventeen; remarkably well shaped, and possessed of a profusion of hair, which in colour was raven black. She appeared such another object as the mind images *Pocahontas* to have been. The people of *Occoquan*, with more curiosity than breeding, assembled round the party; but they appeared to be wholly indifferent to their gaze; the men amused themselves by chopping the ground with their tomahawks, and the women were busied in making a garment for the Chief.

Among the whites was a young man of gigantic stature; he was, perhaps, a head taller than any of the rest of the company. The old *Indian* could not but remark the lofty stature of the man; he seemed to eye him involuntarily; and, at length, rising from the ground, he went up to the giant stranger, and shook him by the hand. This raised a loud laugh from all the lookers on; but the *Indians* still maintained an inflexible gravity.

When I saw the squaws a second time, they were just come from their toilet. Woman throughout the world delights ever in finery; the great art is to suit the colours to the complexion.

The youngest girl would have attracted notice in any circle of *Europe*. She had fastened to her long dark hair a profusion of ribbons, which the bounty of the people of *Occoquan* had heaped upon her; and, the tresses of this *Indian* beauty, which before had been confined round her head, now rioted luxuriantly down her shoulders and back. The adjustment of her dress one would have thought she had learned from some English female of fashion; for she had left it so open before, that the most inattentive eye could not but discover the rise and fall of a bosom just beginning to fill.

The covering of this young woman's feet rivetted the eye of the stranger with its novelty and splendour. Nothing could be more delicate than her *moccasins*. They were each of them formed of a single piece of leather, having the seams ornamented with beads and porcupine quills; while a string of scarlet ribbon confined the *moccasin* round the instep, and made every other part of it sit close to the foot. The *moccasin* was of a bright yellow, and made from the skin of a deer, which had been killed by the arrow of one of the *Indian* youths. Let me be pardoned for having spoken of this lady's foot, with such minuteness of investigation. A naturalist will devote a whole chapter to the examination of a bird, count the feathers in its wings, and declaim with the highest rapture on its variegated plumage; and a Traveller may surely be forgiven a few remarks on the seducing foot of an *Indian* beauty. *Utrum horum mavis accipe?*<sup>8</sup>

Of these *Indians*, the men had not been inattentive to their persons. The old Chief had clad himself in a robe of furs, and the young warriors had blacked their bodies with charcoal.

The *Indians* being assembled round the grave, the old Chief rose with a solemn mien, and, knocking his war-club against the ground, pronounced an oration to the memory of the departed warrior.

“Here rests the body of a Chief of our nation, who, before his spirit took its flight to the country of souls, was the boldest in war, and the fleetest in the chase. The arm that is now mouldering beneath this pile, could once wield the tomahawk with vigour, and often caused the foe to sink beneath its weight. (*A dreadful cry of Whoo! Whoo! Whoop! from the hearers.*) It has often grasped the head of the expiring enemy, and often with the knife divested it of the scalp, (a yell of *whoo! whoo! whoop!*) It has often bound to the stake the prisoner of war, and piled the blazing faggots round the victim, singing his last song of death. (A yell of *whoo! whoop!*) The foot that is now motionless, was once fleetier than the hart that grazes on the mountain; and in danger it was ever more ready to advance than retreat. (A cry of *whoo! whoo!*

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<sup>8</sup> [Edit. “Whether (or which) of these do you prefer to take?”]

*whoop!*) But the hero is not gone unprovided to the country of spirits. His tomahawk was buried with him to repulse the enemy in the field; and his bow to pierce the deer that flies through the woods.”

No orator of antiquity ever exceeded this savage chief in the force of his emphasis, and the propriety of his gesture. Indeed, the whole scene was highly dignified. The fierceness of his countenance, the flowing robe, elevated tone, naked arm, and erect stature, with a circle of auditors seated on the ground, and in the open air, could not but impress upon the mind a lively idea of the celebrated speakers of ancient *Greece* and *Rome*.

Having ended his oration, the *Indian* struck his war-club with fury against the ground, and the whole party obeyed the signal by joining in a war-dance: -- leaping and brandishing their knives at the throats of each other, and accompanying their menacing attitudes with a whoop and a yell, which echoed with ten-fold horror from the banks of the river.

The dance took place by moon-light, and it was scarcely finished, when the Chief produced a keg of whiskey, and having taken a draught, passed it round among his brethren. The squaws now moved the *tomahawks* into the woods, and a scene of riot ensued. The keg was soon emptied. The effects of the liquor began to display itself in the looks and motions of the *Indians*. Some rolled their eyes with distraction; others could not keep on their legs. At length, succeeded the most dismal noises. Such hoops, such shouts, such roaring, such yells, all the devils of hell seemed collected together. Each strove to do an outrage on the other. This seized the other by the throat; that kicked with raging fury at his adversary. And to complete the scene, the old warrior was uttering the most mournful lamentations over the keg he had emptied; inhaling its flavour with his lips, holding it out with his hands in a supplicating attitude, and vociferating to the by-standers *Scuttawawhah! Scuttawawhah!* More strong drink! More strong drink!

A disquisition of *Indian* manners cannot but be interesting to a speculative mind. The discovery of *America*, independent of every other circumstance, is of vast importance to mankind, from the light it has enabled us to throw upon man in his savage state; and the opportunity it has afforded us to study him in his first degrees of civilization. It has even been advanced that before the discovery of the western continent, the natural history of the human species was very imperfect. The ancient philosophers had no other resource but to study the characters of the *Scythians* and *Germans*; but in the *Indians* of *America*, a much wider field is opened to investigation. The moral character of the *Scythians* and *Germans* was brutish insensibility; the moral character of the *American Indians* discovers little of that quality.

The *Indians* dwell in wigwams, which are formed of mats, or bark, tied about poles, that are fastened in the earth; and a hole is made at the top to let out the smoke. Their principal diet is *Nokehick*; parched meal diluted with water; but, where the woods invite hunting, they kill, and devour the deer, the bear, the moose and racoon. Their meat and fish they do not preserve by salting but drying.

Every man is his own physician; but in dangerous cases the patient requires the co-operation of a priest. There is but one mode of cure for all disorders. The sick man descends into a heated cave, or sweating-room; from whence, after having evacuated much of the morbid matter through the pores, the patient is dragged to the river and plunged over head and ears. Should the case be desperate, a *Powaw* or Priest is summoned, who roars and howls till the patient either recovers, or his pulse ceases to beat.

They cross rivers in canoes, which are constructed sometimes of trees, which they burn and hew, till they have hollowed them; and sometimes of bark, which they can carry over-land. It will be readily credited that their astonishment was very great on first beholding a ship. They were, says a pious colonist, *scared out of their wits, to see the monster come sailing into their harbour, and spilling fire with a mighty noise out of her floating side.*

The men in domestic life are exceedingly slothful. The women perform all the household drudgery they build the wigwams, and beat the corn. The active employment of the men are war and hunting.

The division of their time is by sleeps, moons, and winters. Indeed, by lodging abroad, they have become familiar with the motions of the stars; and it is remarkable that they have called *Charles Wain*, *Paukunnawaw*, or the Bear; the name by which it is also known to the astronomers of *Europe*.

~ from Chapter 8.

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A *Virginian* church-yard on a Sunday, resembles rather a race-ground than a sepulchral ground; the ladies come to it in carriages, and the men after dismounting from their horses make them fast to the trees. But the steeples to the *Virginian* churches were designed not for utility, but ornament; for the bell is always suspended to a tree a few yards from the church. It is also observable, that the gate to the church-yard is ever carefully locked by the sexton, who retires last; so that had [James] *Hervey* and [Thomas] *Gray* been born in *America*, the Preacher of Peace could not have indulged in his Meditations among the Tombs; nor the Poet produced the Elegy that has secured him immortality.

Wonder and ignorance are ever reciprocal. I was confounded on first entering the churchyard at *Powheek* to hear

*Steed threaten steed with high and boastful neigh.*

Nor was I less stunned with the rattling of carriage-wheels, the cracking of whips, and the vociferations of the gentlemen to the negroes who accompanied them. But the discourse of Parson [Mason] *We[e]ms* calmed every perturbation; for he preached the great doctrines of salvation, as one who had experienced their power. It was easy to discover that he felt what he said; and indeed so uniform was his piety, that he might have applied to himself the words of the prophet: "My mouth shall be telling of the righteousness and salvation of Christ all the day long; for I know no end thereof."

In his youth, Mr. *Wems* accompanied some young *Americans* to *London*, where he prepared himself by diligent study for the profession of the church. After being some months in the metropolis, it was remarked by his companions, that he absented himself from their society towards the close of the day; and conjecturing that the motive of his disappearing arose either from the heat of lust, or a proneness to liquor, they determined to watch his conduct. His footsteps were traced, and they found him descending into a wretched cellar that augured no good. But their suspicions were soon changed on following him into his subterranean apartment. They found him exhorting to repentance a poor wretch, who was once the gayest of the gay, and flattered by the multitude, but now languishing on a death bed, and deserted by the world. He was reproving him tenderly, privately, and with all due humility; but holding out to him the consolation of the sacred text, that his sins, red as scarlet, would become by contrition white as snow, and that there was more joy in the angels of heaven over one sinner that repented, than over ninety nine persons whose conduct had been unerring.

Of the congregation at *Powheek* church, about one half was composed of white people, and the other of negroes. Among many of the negroes were to be discovered the most satisfying evidences of sincere piety; an artless simplicity; passionate aspirations after Christ, and an earnest endeavour to know and do the will of God.

After church I made my salutations to Parson *Wems*, and having turned the discourse to divine worship, I asked him his opinion of the piety of the blacks. "Sir," said he, "no people in this country prize the sabbath more seriously than the trampled-upon negroes. They are swift to hear; they seem to hear as for their lives. They are wakeful, serious, reverent, and attentive in God's house; and gladly embrace opportunities of hearing his word. Oh I it is sweet preaching, when people are desirous of hearing! Sweet feeding the flock of Christ, when they have so good an appetite!"

How, Sir, did you like my preaching? Sir, cried I, it was a sermon to pull down the proud, and humble the haughty. I have reason to believe that many of your congregation were under spiritual and scriptural conviction of their sins. Sir, you spoke home to sinners. You knocked at the door of their hearts.

I grant that, said Parson *Wems*. But I doubt (shaking his head) whether the hearts of many were not both barred and bolted against me.

I had been three months at *Occoquan*, when I so often caught myself stretching, yawning, and exhibiting other symptoms of *Ennui*, in my chair, that I began to be of opinion it was time to change my residence. My condition was growing irksome. There was no light, airy vision of a female disciple, with expressive dark eyes, to consider my instructions oracular; but I was surrounded by a throng of oafs, who read their lessons with the same tone that Punch makes when he squeaks through a comb.

I, therefore, resigned my place to an old drunken *Irishman* of the name of *Burbridge*, who was travelling the country on foot in search of an *Academy*; and whom Friend *Ellicott* made no scruple to engage, though, when the fellow addressed him, he was so drunk that he could with difficulty stand on his legs.

I remonstrated with Friend *Ellicott* on the impropriety of employing a sot to educate his children. “Friend,” said he, “of all the school-masters I ever employed, none taught my children to write so good a hand, as a man who was constantly in a state that bordered on intoxication. They learned more of him in one month, than of any other in a quarter. I will make trial of *Burbridge*.”

~ from Chapter 8.

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